

PROGRAMME UPDATE



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

TAJIKISTAN

26 July 2001

This Programme Update is intended for reporting on Annual Appeals.

Appeal No. 01.63/2001

Appeal Target: CHF 6,361,778

Programme Update No. 1; Period covered: 1 January - 31 May 2001

"At a Glance"

Appeal coverage: 30.2%

Related Appeals: 26/00; Tajikistan: Drought

Outstanding needs: CHF 4,438,562

Summary: The Federation is carrying through on its objectives of assisting the RCST in strengthening its capacity to respond to disasters, however a lack of donor support for institutional development and disaster preparedness programmes has had a negative impact on the implementation of planned activities. Despite this, the ongoing drought emergency operation has served as an opportunity to directly involve the National Society in operational management, and, through on-the-job training and specific seminars, to strengthen its disaster response capacity, especially on the branch level. Technical support to the National Society is being provided through monitoring of the programme implementation and training in various aspects of programme management. The National Society is demonstrating a steady improvement in specific areas of disaster relief and preparedness.

Operational Developments:

Over the years, Tajikistan has remained the poorest country in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). In spite of its recent slight economic recovery and three consecutive years of the real GDP growth¹, effects of the civil war, destroyed or damaged infrastructure, and continuous drought in the past two years, have deepened and diversified the general poverty of the population. According to the 2000 UNDP Human Development Index, 96 percent of the population have an income below the level of the minimum consumption basket. Average salary is less than 10 US\$ a month, and the official unemployment rate accounts for some 30%, according to the World Bank. Vulnerability is high both in urban and rural areas. In towns, people live without any financial resources, and with no possibility of growing their own food. Pensions are extremely low, the minimum being 1.6 US\$ per month. In rural areas, the drought has particularly severely affected small farmers with crops from rain-fed land as the only source of income.

Water and sanitation structures, health care services and social welfare are highly dysfunctional or non-existent. A significant increase in communicable diseases, such as malaria, TB, HIV/AIDS, anthrax and brucellosis, has been noted in recent years. Contrasting climatic conditions, as well as the lack of adequate sanitary services add to a steady increase in outbreaks of diarrhoea, dysentery and waterborne diseases.

¹ Source: Economist Intelligence Unit: Country Report Tajikistan, July 2000

The International Federation and the Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan (RCST) have been implementing a number of programmes aiming at assisting the population in coping better with the lack of conditions for minimal standards of life. This has been carried out over several years, through supplementary feeding, health, water and sanitation, disaster preparedness, and a number of other programmes. Special focus has been put on building the capacity of the National Society in order for it to assume a leading role in disaster response activities in the country.

In the summer of 2000, a serious drought affected the country, following three years of reduced rain and snowfall. Its effects were devastating for almost two million people, completely crippling their already limited coping mechanisms. As part of larger inter-agency efforts, the International Federation launched an emergency appeal to assist 250,000 people with food, seeds, water and sanitation and public health activities. Subsequently, most of the Federation's and RCST activities in the first half of 2001 were concentrating on a successful management of this large-scale operation. For details, please refer to situation reports on the appeal 26/00. However, in spite of the stretched capacity both of the delegation and the RCST, regular programmes planned in our appeal 2001-2002 have been implemented according to the plan, and as per the available funding.

Disaster Response

Food Assistance to the vulnerable in Tajikistan

Objective 1: To distribute food to 25,000 people in four districts of the capital Dushanbe over a 10-month period.

Achievements

The initial objective set was in accordance with the ongoing ECHO support to the food aid programmes in Dushanbe, which started in August last year and is currently in its final month of implementation. Each beneficiary receives a standard ration of 50 kg of wheat flour, 10 litres of oil and 2 kg of iodized salt, split in two distribution rounds. Due to high fluctuations of the Euro at the time of procurement (carried out by the Finnish Red Cross), the initially planned amounts of wheat flour and vegetable oil could not be procured, and the targeted number of beneficiaries had to be reduced to some 21,820. At the same time, ECHO allocated an additional 200,000 Euro in support of this operation, which represented part of its larger response to the drought emergency in Tajikistan. As a result of this complementary contribution, an additional 8,000 beneficiaries were assisted. Finally, a separate Finnish Red Cross donation in-kind was used to extend this programme. All in all, approximately 40,000 people in Dushanbe and Rayons of Republican Subordination (RRS), around the capital, were provided with supplementary food to this date. This largely surpasses the initial objectives set, and will possibly continue to do so, depending on the confirmation of ECHO funding for the 2001-2002 cycle.

Constraints

In addition to the above-mentioned drastic changes in the prices of wheat flour and oil on international markets, caused by a sharp devaluation of the Euro, significant delays were encountered in the procurement process, partly caused by these unforeseen circumstances. Although the food consignments arrived to the country only in late January, it has been decided to shorten the time-span between the two planned distributions, in order to contain major delays in the implementation of the programme. Finally, in spite of a three-month delay in the procurement and delivery of food stuffs, the operation has been implemented with only one month of extension, and will be completed by the end of July.

Objective 2: To distribute agricultural inputs to 10,000 beneficiaries in three districts of RRS, close to the capital Dushanbe.

Achievements

Also within the framework of the ECHO-funded programme, this final year of the three-year food security cycle targeted 12,000 beneficiaries in the regions of Leninsky, Tursunzade and Shakhriyev in the RRS region with food and fertilizers. Out of the total, 10,000 people received supplementary food parcels, containing 25 kg of wheat flour, 5 litres of oil and 1 kg of salt, as well as fertilizers. The remaining 2,000 beneficiaries received only fertilizers belonging to the groups selected one year earlier and thus being in their final year of the food-security cycle.

In addition to the programme being negatively affected by last year's severe drought, a need was established to evaluate the overall performance in this programme component and create tools to better plan the coming programme cycle. For that reason, the Federation organized an external evaluation of its food-security activities. The evaluation was carried out in April, and presented a number of findings. It has been recommended to review the beneficiary selection process, and give priority to beneficiaries with access to irrigated plots of land thus ensuring that the seeds given will be grown with a degree of success. In addition, a higher level of technical support and guidance to beneficiaries needs to be given prior to and during the growing season. The main findings of the evaluation were used in the development of the ECHO-funding proposal for the year 2001-2002.

Objective 3: To continue strengthening the capacities of the RCST throughout the operation.

Achievements

The RCST is actively involved in all aspects of operational planning and implementation, alongside the Federation. Through previous contracts, the National Society has developed skills and knowledge in areas such as beneficiary selection, monitoring and distribution. Through on-the-job training, as well as specific workshops for volunteers on warehousing, distribution and monitoring, the Federation is further building the overall RCST disaster-response capacity.

Public Canteens

Objective 1: To provide supplementary food of good nutritional value to some 2,000 vulnerable elderly people in urban areas.

Achievements

The RCST runs its 15 public canteens throughout the country with relatively minor technical and financial support of the Federation. Some 2,000 people receive a hot meal 3 times a week. The canteens produce up to 39,600 meals per month, addressing the increasing needs of the urban vulnerable in Dushanbe, Leninsky, Kofarnihon, Tursunzade, Gissar, Chkalovsk, Kurgan-Tube, Kulyab and Khujand.

Constraints

Since the beginning of the year, the National Society has been facing serious financial constraints, with the announced phasing out strategy of the Swedish Red Cross as the main donor of the programme. In order to maintain the functioning of the canteens and not to decrease the existing number of beneficiaries in spite of the limited funding, the RCST was forced to decrease the composition of meals served, and to base them mainly on rice, vegetable oil, beans and salt. The minimal funding for the first half of the year has been secured, however longer-term support is being sought in order to keep this vital programme running.

Objective 2: To further build the capacity and sustainability of the RCST in the management of the project.

Achievements

The public canteens programme is entirely managed by the National Society. The Federation is merely providing technical support in encouraging RCST to develop a more aggressive fund-raising strategy.

Constraints

No major success has been achieved in trying to strengthen the financial sustainability of the project. A number of new initiatives are currently being considered which will hopefully bear fruit before the end of the year.

Disaster Preparedness

Disaster Preparedness of the RCST

This being one of the core areas for the Federation and the RCST in Tajikistan in view of the country's high susceptibility to natural and other disasters, a number of objectives have been identified in the annual appeal. Unfortunately, an almost total lack of funding to this date has prevented the Federation from attempting to achieve them. However, a number of initiatives has been undertaken as part of the drought emergency appeal, mainly in the field of training of branch staff and volunteers in a wide area of topics related to disaster preparedness and response, such as early nutrition warning systems, rapid assessment, and others. For more details on those activities, please refer to situation reports on the Federation's appeal 26/00 - Tajikistan: Drought.

Disaster Mitigation in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region (GBAO)

The Federation developed a comprehensive programme aiming at reducing the risk of landslides in the most vulnerable areas of the GBAO through the building of irrigation canals, conducting tree-planting campaigns, and training of rural communities in management of water resources and forestation. The Finnish Government via the Finnish Red Cross confirmed three-year funding of the programme in March this year. Since then, preparatory meetings were held with FOCUS (USA), who will act as an advisor to the programme and the State Emergency Committee (SEC) representatives - the principal programme partner. The terms of reference for the assessment of four locations, as requested by the SEC, have been drafted. The assessment is expected to take place in the coming month, and will be followed by a detailed plan of action and prioritization of selected locations.

Health and Care

Medical Relief Programme

Objective 1: To assist 180 dispensaries and 250 health posts in the Khatlon region, southern Tajikistan, with supplies of essential medicines and medical equipment.

Achievements

As part of the ongoing ECHO-funded programme, medicines and medical supplies were procured and imported into the country by Pharmaciens Sans Frontieres (PSF) as per the co-operation agreement signed between the partners. A total of 769 kits for primary health care units (FAPs and SVAs) arrived in Tajikistan by January 2001. Medicines for CRHs (central rayon hospitals) were received in bulk. The distribution was carried out in January and February. The remaining period was used to carry out regular monitoring of health institutions, and provide health staff with guidance and ad-hoc training on the case management of most common diseases and the rational use of drugs. Health professionals provide feed-back on the appropriateness and usage of medicines, numbers of patients treated in primary health-care facilities, and numbers referred to hospitals or other specialized institutions. In addition, patients are interviewed on services provided, advice given and drugs prescribed, through random household visits. The monitoring has shown that the remaining stocks of medicines provided in January 2001 as part of this programme are limited and will last for one to two months more. Furthermore, additional efforts need to be made by the management of institutions to improve registration of patients and recording practices. These identified areas will be further strengthened in the new programme scheduled to start in July 2001, provided that continuation of ECHO funding for the coming year is confirmed. In addition, monitoring teams will be collecting the disease surveillance data from selected institutions on a quarterly basis, and this information will be analyzed by the Federation and the RCST health team in order to follow the impact of the assistance provided. This information will also be made available to the Ministry of Health and partner-organizations.

Objective 2: To assist the RCST in promoting the shift to the primary health-care system through training of medical staff and general education of the population.

Achievements

In addition to regular training of medical staff on the case management of most common diseases as part of the monitoring process, as described above, the RCST is providing regular and systematic first aid training for health professionals in primary health-care units. To date, some 460 staff have benefited from this training throughout the operational region. All participants received first aid kits following the workshops. In the coming programme, the quality and methodology of training will be further improved, and seminars possibly expanded to other regions of the country, depending on the available funding.

In the efforts to expose the population at large to basic health messages, the RCST and the Federation produced series of posters, calendars and leaflets treating different topics, such as hygiene, nutrition, prevention of water-borne diseases, etc. In April, RCST youth volunteers started health education campaigns in secondary schools of Dushanbe, focusing on the same topics. Similar to the first aid training, the public health programme component will be strengthened and possibly expanded to other regions of the country.

Objective 3: To assist the RCST in strengthening its organizational capacity and strengthening its co-operation with the Ministry of Health, as well as other agencies active in the field of health.

Achievements

The National Society is directly in charge of the management and implementation of the key programme components, essentially the first aid training, monitoring of health institutions, as well as production of public health material. Having gained a considerable expertise in these activities through several years of the running of the programme, the National Society is having a leading role in its management, while the Federation's function is gradually shifting to the advisory one. This is also proven through the interest expressed by some international organizations to use RCST first aid expertise in their activities. The plans to expand some components of the programme to other regions also aim at further enhancing the visibility of the National Society vis-a-vis the authorities and partner-organizations.

Tuberculosis pilot project

To date the tuberculosis pilot project, aiming at developing capacities of the RCST to assist the Ministry of Health in the battle against the disease, has not been initiated. This is due to the fact that DOTS treatment was not officially adopted and initiated by the Ministry of Health in Tajikistan to date, this being the condition for the RCST and Federation involvement. In the last months, some changes have occurred in that respect, and WHO, Project Hope and Global Drug Facility (GDF), are planning to start TB DOTS programme in the country. The Ministry of Health and WHO recently approached the RCST to assist the programme with observation of TB patients in pilot areas and with health education. While the details of the RCST involvement will be decided at a later stage, it has been proposed that in the early phase of the project National Society visiting nurses observe between 50 and 100 patients in Dushanbe, during their visits to RCST-run public canteens where the patients will receive supplementary meals three times a week.

Water and sanitation programme

Due to the lack of funding, the objectives set in the appeal have not been achieved to this date, with the exception of public health activities successfully implemented within the framework of the above-mentioned medical relief programme. It should, however, be mentioned that the water and sanitation component was included in the drought emergency appeal where a number of achievements were realized. For more details, please refer to situation reports on appeal 26/00.

Institutional and Resource Development

The implementation of objectives identified in the appeal were seriously hindered by the lack of funding available for the RCST's organizational development, as well as to the lack of a Federation delegate responsible for providing constant guidance and support in the National Society's development process. However, in spite of these serious limitations, the following was achieved:

- The Federation organized training for RCST programme co-ordinators and regional committee chairpersons in project planning, design, monitoring and reporting, as well as in financial management and reporting. Financial reporting systems were established and reporting formats suggested. This training is planned to be expanded to branches and will be tailor-made to satisfy specific regional needs.
- The assessment of the branches is currently ongoing, on the basis of which a two-year development plan will be developed. In order to facilitate the process of gathering and analyzing the data collected, a new branch profile form has been developed in co-operation with the national society development department. It will serve for an assessment of the resources, activities and organization of the local Red Cross branches and regional Red Cross committees.
- The membership campaign, initiated in 1999, is ongoing, and is expected to be finalized this year. Following the establishment of the RCST youth department and hiring of four regional youth co-ordinators, a volunteer recruitment campaign has been initiated and seminars for young volunteers organized in co-operation with the ICRC and the Federation. A working group, consisting of young volunteers, has been set up to develop a proposal for the structure and statutes of RCST youth. A first draft will be submitted to National Society branches for review in August. The statutes are expected to be finalized and adopted by the end of the year.
- As part of the plan to hand-over specific operations and responsibilities to the National Society, final steps were made for the opening of the RCST vehicle workshop scheduled for the coming month. The logistics co-ordinator finalized a three-year logistics development plan of the five Central Asian National Societies, following a series of visits and participatory workshops held throughout the region.

Coordination and Management

Throughout all its programmes and activities, the Federation is assisting the RCST in strengthening its capacity to respond to disasters. Lack of donor support for institutional development and disaster preparedness programmes has had damaging effects on the implementation of the objectives set. However, the ongoing drought emergency operation served as an opportunity to directly involve the National Society in the operational management, and, through on-the-job training and specific seminars, to strengthen its disaster response capacity, especially on the branch level. Technical support to the National Society is being provided through monitoring of the programme implementation and training in various aspects of programme management, as elaborated above.

Special attention is being given to raising the visibility of the National Society with the government, other humanitarian organizations, as well as the general public. This is being achieved through active utilization of local and regional media, and external relations. The drought emergency operation raised the RCST's visibility through co-operation with external partners and local authorities in the implementation of its specific components.

In spite of the lack of funding for some of its most important programmes, the National Society is demonstrating a steady improvement in specific areas of disaster relief and preparedness, which results in its taking over of certain responsibilities previously held by the Federation delegation, as mentioned earlier. This trend is expected to continue in the future.

Outstanding needs

Long-term donor support is needed for the RCST's priority areas for the future: organizational development and disaster preparedness programmes.

For further details please contact: Susanna Soderstrom; Phone: 41 22 730 4424; Fax: 41 22 733 03 95; email: soderstr:@ifrc.org

All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>.

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Tajikistan						ANNEX 1
APPEAL No. 01.63/2001		PLEDGES RECEIVED				25.07.2001
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
CASH						
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				6'361'777		TOTAL COVERAGE 30.2%
CASH CARRIED FORWARD						
ECHO (01010)		600'000	EUR	923'040	01.03.01	MEDICAL SUPPLY
FINNISH - GOVT/RC		100'072	EUR	152'039	15.05.2001	DISASTER MITIGATION
SWEDISH - RC		80'000	SEK	13'896	01.03.01	COORDINATION & MANAGEMENT
SWEDISH - RC		125'000	SEK	21'713	01.03.01	INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT
SWEDISH - RC		400'000	SEK	69'840	01.03.01	DISASTER RESP. PUBLIC CANTEENS
SWEDISH - GOVT		375'000	SEK	63'188	23.05.2001	INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT
SWEDISH - GOVT		275'000	SEK	46'338	23.05.2001	COORDINATION & MANAGEMENT
SWEDISH - GOVT		2'200'000	SEK	373'780	23.05.2001	DISASTER RESPONSE, PUBLIC CANTEENS
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				1'663'834	CHF	26.2%
KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
Finland	Delegate(s)			50'595		
Netherlands	Delegate(s)			5'257		
Sweden	Delegate(s)			101'354		
Great Britain	Delegate(s)			102'175		
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				259'381	CHF	4.1%