

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

MENA: REGIONAL PROGRAMMES

12 November 2001

Appeal No. 01.64/01

Appeal Target CHF 3,114,758

Programme Update No. 1

Period covered: January 1 - June 30

“At a Glance”

Appeal coverage: 45.6%

Related Appeals: 01.65/01 Iran; 01.66/01 Iraq; 01.67/01 Lebanon; 01.68/01 Palestine Red Crescent Society; 01.69/01 PRCs: Lebanon/Syria branches; 01.70/01 Yemen

Outstanding needs: CHF 1,693,523

Summary: Funding is still a major problem in terms of the implementation of programmes. Despite this major constraint, the regional delegation has continued to foster its role as a coordinator rather than an implementor and progress has been made in building capacity of the National Societies across the region.

Operational Developments:

This Programme Update highlights the progress of the regional delegation (RD) work done in support of the National Societies (NSs) and Delegations/Representations in relation to the objectives in the Appeal for 2001-2002 under Programme No. 01.64/2001. Sub-regional/Country level programme updates are to be provided directly by the Country Delegations and or Representations.

The overall context during the reporting period is one where the cycle of conflict between Palestinians and Israelis has deteriorated with a potential for wider instability. The adverse effects of sanctions in Iraq also continue to represent a major source of humanitarian concern.

The Middle East represents an increasingly challenging environment which does not favour smooth operations according to set objectives. Despite this, however, considerable progress has been made regarding the implementation of the programmes.

- The positive development in Syria, with respect to the emerging liberalisation in the country, has created a more conducive environment that can improve co-operation between the NS and the Government and other organisations, including the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.
- Increasing NS awareness as to the need for greater understanding and implementation of Strategy 2010 goals has created a more positive environment in which the RD and other Delegations/Representations can work more effectively with NSs.
- An effort to focus on most urgent needs and NSs that are motivated has resulted in constructive engagement with the RD facilitating the development of NS strategic plans as a basis for country/regional assistance strategies (CAS/RAS).

Humanitarian values

Our 2001 Appeal includes an element on Information /Advocacy as part of the effort to promote humanitarian values and the Fundamental Principles of the Movement (a core area of Strategy 2010). Efforts have been made to promote this as an integral part of the other areas - disaster preparedness (DP), Health and Care in the Community as well as Institutional Development (ID). However, no specific activities have been undertaken, as there was no funding to engage a delegate in Information / Advocacy.

Disaster Preparedness

The RD facilitated a disaster awareness workshop in Edlib, Syria, involving representatives of six branches from North Western Syria. In light of the recent disasters in this region (including floods and earthquakes), the objective focused on helping each branch to form its own Disaster Awareness Planning Group.

Integrated DP and Health Programming - Coaching of NS Staff/Volunteers

- The RD is assisting NSs to develop a more integrated approach in terms of planning and implementation of DP and Health initiatives to maximise impact and increase cost effectiveness. A sub-regional meeting was facilitated involving NSs to help them adopt a more integrated approach in which DP, Health as well as the institutional capacities especially at branch level, can be planned and implemented as inseparable components.
- The Syrian Arab Red Crescent has responded to this kind of integrated support and is now in the final stages of preparing its integrated DP and Health activities. A staff on loan from the Syrian Arab Red Crescent is also working with the programme team of the RD as part of the initiative to be implemented in terms of coaching NS staff/volunteers.

A Partnership Approach to DP

Efforts are being made to promote a more interdisciplinary approach to DP in which the Jordan National Red Crescent Society and the Civil Defence as well as the RD and the ICRC will work together to combine aspects of DP, international humanitarian law and the mobilisation and training of volunteers.

Based on the experiences from the detailed VCA carried out by the Palestine Red Crescent Society supported by the RD and the Country Delegation, a preliminary discussion has been held with the MDA in Israel on the possibility of carrying out a VCA exercise of a similar nature.

The Sphere Project

The RD co-facilitated, together with CARE International, a 3-day workshop in Jordan (June 2001) using the Sphere Handbook on Disaster Response. Participants were drawn from the NSs of Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. There were also representatives from CARE in Yemen, Iraq and Palestine, as well from other relevant Governmental and non-Governmental Organisations

Constraints

The main constraints are related to:

- the challenge faced in terms of changing beliefs, as the new DP strategy is based on awareness building as opposed to a previous focus on infrastructures and stockpiling;
- the shortage of funding.

Co-operation with others

In addition to the co-operation with the NSs and the Delegations/Representations, working links have been maintained with the ICRC and the Civil Defence structures.

Main Areas of Focus During the Next Half Year

The main areas of focus during the next half year will include :

- Consolidation of the DP efforts with the NSs of Jordan, Palestine, and Syria
- Expansion of the DP initiative to other sub-regions, Yemen (Gulf-sub-region) and Egypt /Libya (North Africa sub-region)
- Further consolidation of the integrated programming and implementation of DP, Health and ID aspects

Health and Care in the Community

HIV/AIDS

- The RD facilitated the translation of the Training Manual - Action with Youth - HIV/AIDS in which a working group from six NSs (Jordan, Palestine, Libya, Syria, U.A.E. and Yemen) reviewed the translation to ensure that it meets the standards required, including considerations in terms of cultural sensitivity. The RD is currently producing the final version in Arabic which will shortly be distributed to NSs.
- Meetings of the working group in Damascus and Baghdad resulted in the creation of a regional MENA HIV-AIDS network. The terms of reference include piloting a regional training of trainers. This is a pioneering initiative and should promote increased public policy and action against HIV/AIDS based on wider community awareness and participation.
- The RD also facilitated the panel which discussed the theme - Health and Care in the Community - during the 3rd MENA Conference in Tehran, in May 2001. The panel endorsed the recommendations made by the working group regarding the need for a common strategy. This covers addressing the challenges of HIV/AIDS, mobilisation and involvement of communities in relation to preventable diseases, the role of the NSs during emergencies and the need to consider establishing a regional centre for mental health.

- The RD assisted the Syrian Arab Red Crescent to organise a drawing competition on HIV/AIDS during the Annual World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day celebrations in Damascus in May, highlighting the role of volunteers in the prevention of the illness.

Psychological Support

- The RD facilitated the first regional meeting on Psychological Support in Baghdad bringing together representatives from nine NSs to exchange experiences, deliberate on future directions and establish a MENA Regional resource group to deal with psychological support and related concerns.
- The meeting agreed on the terms of reference for the MENA Regional Centre for Psychological Support to be established in Baghdad with some of the immediate tasks of the centre identified in terms of assistance to the NSs on programme development and training of trainers.

Global Road Safety

The RD facilitated the regional workshop on Global Road Safety in Jordan in co-operation with the Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP), in which the NSs of Jordan, Lebanon and Syria were invited to participate. This is expected to increase the role of the NSs in the design and implementation of programmes that can help reduce traffic accidents.

Constraints

The main constraints are a shortage of funding.

Co-operation with others

In addition to the primary line of co-operation with the NSs and Delegations /Representations, useful working relations have been maintained with other concerned agencies including WHO/UNAIDS.

Main Areas of Focus During the Next Half Year

- Further strengthening of the HIV/AIDS network
- Follow-up /strengthening of the MENA Regional Centre for Psychological Support
- Assessment/action regarding the implementation of the global first-aid in the MENA region

Institutional and Resource Development

Yemen Red Crescent Society

The RD has assisted the YRCS in its effort to undertake a planning process based on national/local self-assessment and in relation to the overall priorities and strategic directions established in Strategy 2010 of the Federation. The capacities of the YRCS at HQ and branch levels need to be revamped to respond to the increasing vulnerabilities in the country exacerbated by both man-made and natural agents of disaster.

Syrian Arab Red Crescent

The RD has supported the SARC in its effort to undertake a planning process based on national/local self-assessment and in relation to the overall priorities and strategic directions established in Strategy 2010 of the Federation. The SARC is one of the few NSs with increasing interest to work with the RD in the process of NS capacity building to improve the prospect for the implementation of Strategy 2010's goals.

Iraqi Red Crescent Society

The RD has assisted the IRCS and the Country Delegation in Baghdad in their effort to evolve a development plan for the NS as a basis for developing the next generation of Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) in a more inclusive manner, in which other partners including the ICRC, can participate more effectively.

The NSs in the Gulf Sub-Region

A capacity building/strategic planning 3-day workshop involved all the Gulf NSs (except the Saudi Red Crescent) in Doha in March 2001. Based on analysis of both internal and external factors, the workshop was designed to help the NSs in the Gulf to base their actions on comprehensive and long term NS development plans which can enhance co-ordination and co-operation both within and outside the Movement.

Constraints

Effective NS organisational development (OD) support is prerequisite to enable the NSs in the Region to live up to the challenge to be met in terms of implementing Strategy 2010 goals coupled with the local/national level priorities in the context of each and every NS.

However, the commitment of the NSs to a transparent OD process requires effort, as it prompts change that may challenge existing practices. Moreover, lack of funding presents a formidable challenge.

Co-operation with others

In view of the serious nature of the funding problem faced in the ID/capacity building dimension, a process of interdisciplinary co-operation has been pursued among and between the programme team of the RD. This has encouraged the plugging in of the ID element as a component of the other programme areas, such as Health and Care in the Community and DP.

Main Areas of Focus During the Next Half Year

The main areas of focus during the next half year will include :

- Follow up on / facilitation of the development of the NS strategic planning processes in Yemen, Syria, Iraq and other NSs interested in pursuing similar objectives.
- Follow up on/facilitation of the development of the strategic planning processes among the Gulf NSs and explore the possibility to use NS plans as a basis for the development of regional/ sub-regional Partnership Strategies. The shift towards a partnership, rather than assistance, model is necessary to reflect the reality that the NSs in the Gulf are not recipient NSs.
- Facilitation of the development of CAS/RAS based on the development plans of the NSs.

Coordination and Management

Sub-Regional Meetings

The sub-regional meeting of the Middle East NSs (Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Syria) was held in Beirut, January 2001 to discuss matters of common concern and to follow up recommendations of the 2nd MENA Conference in Cairo, in May 2000. The RD developed the concept sheet and the agenda for the meeting and facilitated the presentation and discussion of NS Self-Assessment based on Strategy 2010 benchmarks and the characteristics of a well-functioning NS.

Co-ordination/ Management meetings

Developing the concept sheet and the agenda, the RD facilitated two co-ordination /management meetings (Beirut, January 2001 and Geneva, June 2001). The meetings were attended by all the Heads of Delegations/Representations in the Region and MENA Department in Geneva. The meetings focussed on a progress review in the various areas of engagement and explored possibilities to improve performance.

Information Progress Review Meetings with Participating NS Representatives

The RD participated in and facilitated the two meetings held with PNS representatives (Beirut, January 2001 and Tehran, May 2001). In both cases the meetings helped to spotlight the funding problems the MENA region faces and explored improving the situation.

MENA Field Structures and Functions Reviewed

A review of the MENA field structures and functions was carried out. Recommendations emphasised the need for more streamlined functions and structures to enhance performance. The review is expected to be discussed leading to a process of reorganisation of the MENA field structures and functions.

Annual Performance Objectives

The performance objectives and annual targets for 2001, using the new format circulated by the Secretariat, have been prepared.

Mission to Iraq

The Head of the Regional Delegation undertook a mission to Iraq where he visited the HQ and the three Governorate branches in the northern part of the country. The need to strengthen the capacities of the NS at all levels, based on a well formulated strategic plan, was agreed at the concluding meeting held with the senior leadership of the Society.

Contribution to the Preparation and Conduct of the 3rd MENA conference

The RD contributed to the preparation and conduct of the 3rd MENA Conference in Tehran, May 2001. It also prepared background papers and facilitated discussion on the themes - Health and Care in the Community as well as Co-operation /Working Together.

Co-operation with others

Closer working links are maintained with the ICRC and PNSs working in the region. In addition, efforts are being made to strengthen co-operation with the relevant UN agencies and NGOs.

Main Areas of Focus During the Next Half Year

The main areas of focus during the next six months will include:

- Follow up on the reorganisation process to ensure that the MENA field structures and functions are based on more effective work practices.
- Follow up on the effort required to rehabilitate the MENA consortium including potential PNSs from within the Region, to improve funding.
- Follow up on recruiting delegates for Information/Advocacy and DP.

Outstanding needs

To carry out its mission, the RD needs to be strengthened in terms of the following priorities:

- development and implementation of structures and work practices that ensure better utilisation of resources.
- to ensure a more sustainable funding base that can provide continuity of basic structures and services. The Swedish Red Cross has set a good example in allocating non-earmarked funding to allow for a more balanced implementation of Strategy 2010 goals. Efforts need to be stepped up to promote this practice both within and outside the Movement.
- The RD needs to be supported so that its services are based on its pool of human resources.

For further details please contact: Cynthia Petrigh, Phone : 41 22 730 4312; Fax: 41 22 733 03 95; email: petrigh@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>.

Peter Rees-Gildea
Head a.i.
Relationship Management Department

Christer Aqvist
Head a.i.
MENA Department

