

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

SOUTHEAST ASIA REGIONAL PROGRAMMES

17 June 2005

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 181 countries.

For more information: www.ifrc.org

In Brief

Appeal No. 05AA057; Programme Update no. 1, Period covered: 01 January to 31 March, 2005; Appeal coverage: 49.1%; Outstanding needs: CHF 1,983,763 (USD 1,592,489 or EUR 1,284,821).

[Click here to go directly to the attached Contributions List \(also available on the website\).](#)

Appeal target: CHF 3,899,022 (USD 3,247,832 or EUR 2,549,213)

Related Emergency or Annual Appeals:

Tsunami Emergency & Recovery Plan of Action 2005-2010 (28/04), Cambodia Appeal 2005 (05AA052), Timor-Leste Appeal 2005 (05AA053), Myanmar Appeal 2005 (05AA055), Vietnam Appeal 2005 (05AA056)

Programme summary:

The response to the aftermath of the 26 December earthquake and tsunami in the region has made a tremendous impact on implementing the regional programmes in the first quarter. The Federation's regional delegation centred all its efforts on supporting the national societies and the delegations affected by the disaster in emergency response, assessment, communications, reporting and longer-term planning. Many of the planned activities were cancelled or postponed. The tsunami operation nonetheless serves as a good catalyst to reinforce regional cooperation and coordination, evidently reflected in health, disaster management and organizational development activities implemented in the first quarter of 2005.

With slightly over 50 per cent appeal coverage, the plan and operational budget of several programmes were scaled down and some relevant activities have been relocated to the tsunami operation.

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This Programme Update reflects activities to be implemented over a one-year period. This forms part of, and is based on, longer-term, multi-year planning. All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

Operational developments

The Southeast Asian countries enjoyed varying degrees of economic growth in the first quarter of 2005. Peace and stability also prevail in the region. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), an inter-governmental body composed of ten of the eleven nations in the region – the admission of Timor-Leste is in the process – is clearly heading towards strengthening and sustaining cooperation in the region in the economic, security and socio-cultural spheres. It has accumulated increasing credibility to position itself as a hub of multilateral cooperation not only in the region, but also in the wider East Asia and the Pacific.

Despite socio-economic successes and improved stability, the challenges confronting the region remain daunting. These range from socio-economic disparities within and between countries in Southeast Asia, intense competition from newly emerging economies, the scourge of trans-national crime and terrorism, the public health danger from communicable diseases such as avian influenza and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), cross-border and internal economic migration, political tensions and religious interference, struggle for transparent and accountable governance, and vulnerabilities to natural disasters like earthquakes, floods and the devastating tsunami.

However, the political systems are showing slow but certain signs of change even for the totalitarian regimes. There are government-to-government dialogues on cross-border issues and open challenges from the media in many countries to make governments accountable and to align to be members of the international community. Investment conditions are also increasingly attractive, creating wealth and new job opportunities.

In most countries, the governments strive to be seen as responsive in a humanitarian context and capable of addressing the needs of their people without external support. A number of countries, however, have sought or welcomed international assistance, as in the tsunami crisis and smaller disasters like the Philippines typhoon. Despite the fact that millions live below the poverty line in the region, there seems to be no desperation. Governments respond reasonably fast to epidemics (such as avian flu and SARS) and make substantial budgetary allocations as disasters strike (as with the droughts and floods in Thailand and Vietnam). The development of an integrated regional response system has been initiated and a region-wide civil-military disaster response team has also been called for. The ASEAN Committee for Disaster Management (ACDM) wishes to link up with the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and incorporate the principles of International Disaster Response Law (IDRL) into the region's disaster response systems.

The governments maintain good relations with their respective national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies in the region. In some countries, the roles of the national societies are clearly defined with the national societies often being members of the national disaster management committee or in health and care partnerships. Others are struggling to function in accordance with the Fundamental Principles.

In Laos, it has been decided to integrate the Cooperation Agreement Strategy (CAS) office into the national society's structure. The implementation of the CAS agreement will continue to be monitored by its committee. A new leadership has been elected in the Myanmar Red Cross and is willing to learn and work closely with the Federation and the ICRC. The Cambodian Red Cross celebrated its 50th anniversary in February. The king officiated at the ceremony and helped raise USD two million in less than an hour for the society. The event was well organized and covered by the media. In Vietnam, the Federation's office will be run by national staff after the end of mission of the current Federation's representative.

The new leadership of the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC) has brought about structural and management changes which have enhanced the national society's overall service delivery and capacities to respond to disasters. Despite being a well known political figure, the chairman plays both roles appropriately. In Malaysia, the national society's secretary-general resigned and the post has been filled. In Thailand, the recovery phase of the tsunami operation has confronted the national society with a number of challenges and forced the society to expand its operation capacity from traditional service areas such as blood, hospital services and immediate post-disaster emergency relief. This has called for change in the cumbersome decision-making process and branch management, as well as for a different partnering approach for the Federation. The Timor-Leste Red Cross (Cruz Vermelha de Timor-Leste/CVTL) appears to be a promising national society in formation. Its governing board remedied immediately the financial problem and integrity issues. The Federation continues to support the national society both in its recognition and in the development of its 'businesses' of serving the vulnerable.

Health and care

Background

Over the past decades, Southeast Asia has seen substantial progress in disease prevention and control, with a region-wide decline in communicable diseases. However, there are still large disparities from one country to another and endemic diseases, such as malaria and gastrointestinal infections, are still widespread. The last few years have seen emerging diseases pose increasing threats in the region. The HIV/AIDS epidemic is a clear and present danger with the Asia Pacific region now accounting for one in every five new HIV infections worldwide. The outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in 2003 and the cases of human infection with avian influenza in 2004 are examples of how the emergence of new infectious diseases can suddenly endanger the world. As a consequence of these developments, public health in emergencies (PHiE) preparedness and response continues to be a focus area, and the development of guidelines for national societies is a high priority.

At the same time, the activities in the first quarter of 2005 were dictated by the disasters at the end of 2004, specifically the typhoon that affected northern Philippines in November 2004, and of course the tsunami that hit the region on 26 December 2004. Many scheduled activities, including the work of the PHiE working group, had to be cancelled as the regional delegation, and most national societies, concentrated all efforts on supporting the tsunami operation. The regional delegation played a key role in regional coordination, bringing together a large number of UN agencies and other organizations for regular coordination meetings in Bangkok, and provided extensive support to Thai Red Cross for initial assessment and development of recovery and rehabilitation plans. Several staff members from the regional delegation were deployed to assist country-level tsunami operations, and among these, the regional water and sanitation delegate spent all of January in Sri Lanka, supporting the operation there.

Overall goal

There is a sustainable improvement in the general health of vulnerable communities in the region.

Programme objective

The region's national societies deliver quality health and care programmes that address the needs of the most vulnerable communities.

Progress/Achievements

Expected result 1: There is increased capacity in the region's national societies for effective design, planning, implementation and management of quality health and care programmes.

The regional health strategic plan, developed in a regional health team workshop in October 2004, was finalized during the first quarter of 2005 in consultation with participants from national societies as well as partner national societies. The plan has been made available electronically, while the printed version will be issued during the second quarter of 2005. Based on the core action areas identified in the strategic plan, the regional health unit has developed an implementation plan for 2005, which will form the basis for a mid-year revision of the annual appeal. The main activity to be included is a mapping of national societies' health programmes, capacities and resources, scheduled for the second half of 2005.

Expected result 2: There is an increased capacity in the region's national societies to deliver effective HIV/AIDS programmes that reduce the vulnerability to HIV/AIDS in the region.

Continuing the process initiated in 2004, the 4th Asian Regional Taskforce on HIV/AIDS (ART) management meeting took place in March 2005. During the meeting, the management team reviewed the 2005 action plan against the ART strategic plan, and assessed achievements from the first quarter of 2005. The planned joint ART-AIDS Programme supported by the Australian Red Cross (ARCAIDS)-Norwegian Red Cross project on developing a Red Cross and Red Crescent workplace policy for HIV/AIDS is under way, and the management team reviewed the first draft in a joint session with ARCAIDS. Terms of references for a likewise joint project on HIV/AIDS discrimination in health care settings were also discussed, and two countries, Mongolia and Cambodia, were identified as pilot sites. Finally, plans were made in preparation for the 17th ART meeting, scheduled for

July 2005, and for ART participation in the 7th International Conference on HIV/AIDS in Asia Pacific (ICAAP) in Kobe, Japan, in June 2005.

Preparation for ART participation in the 7th ICAAP in Kobe started as early as January 2005, and included ongoing contact and coordination with the Japanese Red Cross, ARCAIDS, the regional delegation in Beijing and the health department in Geneva. Plans have been made for a joint Red Cross and Red Crescent exhibition booth and for a Red Cross and Red Crescent satellite meeting. The Asia Pacific Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (APN+) has been an active partner in this process.

Throughout the reporting period, the regional health unit and the ART secretariat continued their efforts at liaising and coordinating with external agencies, and participated in two coordination meetings:

- The UNAIDS regional technical support team meeting, February 2005, Bangkok. At this meeting, 30 representatives from UN agencies, different donors, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), including the Federation/ART network, and ARCAIDS met and discussed mainstreaming HIV/AIDS into the tsunami response, the 7th ICAAP, and other issues of common interest and concern.
- The UN task force on mobility and HIV vulnerability reduction meeting, February 2005, Bangkok. The Federation/ART participated as INGO representatives in this meeting bringing together approximately 60 representatives from UN agencies, different donors, INGOs, NGOs, governmental organizations and the ASEAN secretariat. Through working groups and plenary sessions, the meeting proposed a new mandate and structure of the UN regional task force (UNRTF), and developed the terms of reference for the manager/coordinator and secretariat. The next meeting, scheduled for June 2005, will aim at formulating a regional strategic plan and developing an annual work plan.
- In March, the Federation/ART attended the second Asian Development Bank situation analysis and steering committee meeting in Vientiane, Laos. The meeting discussed the draft proposal for the greater Mekong sub-region communicable diseases control project, which aims at reducing the burden of disease arising from endemic and epidemic communicable diseases in Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Vietnam.

Expected result 3: *There is an increased capacity in the region's national societies to deliver integrated water sanitation/CBFA projects, utilizing the PHAST approach.*

As mentioned in other sections of this report, the regional water and sanitation (watsan) delegate was heavily involved in the tsunami emergency relief operation, and all scheduled activities, mainly country-level technical supervision and support visits, had to be cancelled. However, implementation of water and sanitation activities in Laos, Cambodia, Timor Leste, the Philippines and Myanmar continued. Visits have now been rescheduled for the later periods of 2005.

The watsan activities in Cambodia have been expanded to the western Koh Kong province supported by the Austrian Red Cross. The project includes the construction of 168 rainwater catchment systems and the distribution of ceramic household filters. In Laos, the construction of water systems and trainings in the northern provinces were completed and the activities are focusing on the southern provinces where village water committees have been selected and trained. The watsan project in Timor-Leste continues to expand, through organizational changes and further integration with CBFA programmes.

The regional watsan delegate participated in the global watsan meeting in Dubai in February.

Expected result 4: *There is an increased capacity in the region's national societies to respond to public health emergencies and to attend to health needs in disaster situations.*

The activities in the first quarter of 2005 were dictated by the disasters at the end of 2004. Throughout the reporting period, the regional health unit continued assisting the PNRC in its relief and rehabilitation operation following the November typhoons in the northern Philippines. In health, PNRC is undertaking rehabilitation of rural health stations, provision of medical supplies, health and hygiene education, and water testing in affected areas. Details of progress are available in the Philippine typhoons [operation updates](#).

Following the tsunami disaster on 26 December 2004, the regional health unit became heavily involved in coordinating the relief operation. The watsan delegate was based in Sri Lanka throughout January, to assist in

coordinating the emergency response in water and sanitation, while in Thailand, the regional health unit took part in the recovery assessment mission that visited the provinces in the south. At the regional level, the unit was actively involved in coordination and information sharing with UN bodies, INGOs and local NGOs. The unit worked closely with Thai Red Cross at developing recovery and rehabilitation plans for the affected provinces, and developed a regional recovery and rehabilitation programme in close collaboration with the other units. The regional programme provides for the recruitment of additional staff, including a regional PHiE delegate, a psycho-social support delegate, and a watsan programme officer. Details of the tsunami operation are available in the [operation updates](#).

Due to these disasters, the health-in-emergency working group, tasked with producing guidelines on preparedness and response to health emergencies and disasters, cancelled their meetings and suspended their work till the arrival of a PHiE delegate in the third quarter of 2005.

In the Philippines, PNRC prepared for its measles surveillance programme in coordination with the government department of health and WHO. Staff members from the selected provinces were trained on managing measles surveillance programmes, and in some provinces, they have followed this with training community health volunteers in measles surveillance. Community survey and social preparation will be the next step in ensuring a good turnout and coverage for measles vaccination. The chapters work closely with the local government to educate communities on measles and identify children for vaccination. For prevention and response to other diseases, PNRC chapters continued health education activities, with local funds and those provided by the regional health unit.

The unit continued to monitor the disease outbreak situation in the region and support the national societies, as necessary. Following the dengue outbreak in Timor-Leste, CVTL initiated dengue prevention and control activities. Responding to the resurgence of avian flu, the Viet Nam Red Cross prepared for health education and dissemination activities. In both cases, the unit assisted the Federation offices and the national societies with technical inputs and funding support. The New Zealand Red Cross has funded the two initiatives.

Expected result 5: *There is an increased recognition of the region's national societies as being lead agencies in the provision of first aid training.*

The regional health unit represented the delegation at a workshop for developing an integrated curriculum for a training-of-trainers (ToT) course in combined community-based disaster management (CBDM) and community-based first aid (CBFA) in Myanmar. This initiative of the Myanmar Red Cross is in line with its strategic plan and is supported by the Federation's country delegation. At the end of the workshop, volunteer trainers drew up an outline of a revised curriculum that holistically integrates different aspects of disaster management and health.

Expected result 6: *There is an increased capacity in the region's national societies to effectively manage and implement blood donor recruitment and retention programmes.*

A meeting organized by the Global Advisory Panel (Blood, GAP) took place in Singapore, hosted by the Singapore Red Cross from 31 March to 1 April. The aim of the meeting was to obtain feedback from the 14 national societies in Asia Pacific that had completed the new self-assessment tool. The tool had been designed by GAP as a means of assisting those national societies with the development of their blood programmes. There was unanimous support from the national societies that the self-assessment tool had provided an excellent opportunity to reflect on the effectiveness of its governance in relation to blood service delivery, to identify problem areas, and to discuss further within the national societies and the ministry of health, and that it provides an excellent opportunity for international benchmarking.

Specific recommendations agreed for all tsunami-affected countries, including Africa, were to link GAP and WHO together for planning workshops to ensure blood programme development in these countries takes into consideration best practice models. The first such workshop is scheduled for Indonesia for June 2005.

Expected result 7: There is improved coordination of health and care activities within the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and with relevant external agencies.

Issues pertaining to coordination have been included under each of the six outputs outlined above, and this expected result will not be reported against separately in future updates.

Outputs

During a time so heavily influenced by a large-scale, multi-sector, and multi-agency emergency response, it is difficult to assess the direct outputs of the efforts of the regional health unit. There is no doubt, however, that the regional health unit has contributed to the movement response and coordination, at a regional level, in Thailand, in Indonesia, and in Sri Lanka. The unit has taken active part in the initial emergency response through participation in assessment and coordination teams and has contributed to the development of the Movement framework for recovery and rehabilitation.

Constraints

As mentioned in the first section, the activities in the first quarter of 2005 were dictated by the disasters at the end of 2004, and many scheduled activities were cancelled as the regional delegation and national societies concentrated all efforts on supporting the tsunami operation. Most notably, the regional working group on health-in-emergencies temporarily suspended its activities, as all members became heavily involved with disaster response activities. The working group expects to resume operation by mid-2005. Due to heavy involvement of the watsan delegate in the tsunami operation, all visits to non-affected countries were cancelled, and this may have caused some delay to implementation of watsan activities. However, it is expected that the regional health unit will be able to resume normal activities and catch up on outstanding support by the third quarter of 2005.

Disaster management

Background

Regional support to the disaster management programme work in the national societies continued throughout the reporting period. Due to the earthquake and tsunami of the 26 December 2004, a series of planned activities were postponed from January to March. These included a course aimed at the leadership of the national societies on disaster risk management and two training events for response teams.

Further progress has been made with the reshaping of the Federation's regional disaster risk management unit (RDMU) as one new staff, an emergency response and preparedness officer, joined in the unit and settles well into her role.

The regional disaster management programme has received reasonable funding. The Federation welcomes further donor support to ensure full implementation of the planned activities.

Overall goal

National societies are well prepared, able to respond to disasters in a timely, efficient and coordinated manner, clearly linked to the Federation's response system and are improving the ability of communities at risk to cope with disasters.

Programme objective

The disaster preparedness and response capacity at national and regional level is substantially improved and the linkages to the Federation's global response system assured through a comprehensive, integrated regional disaster management approach.

Progress/achievements

Expected result 1: Developing disaster management

In the aftermath of the earthquake and tsunami of the 26 December that affected four countries in the Southeast Asia region - Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Myanmar - the RDMU provided a wide range of support to national societies in the affected countries (details following). This included regular contact with members of the

delegations/national society disaster management managers to provide support/advice/troubleshooting. The unit also acted as the focal point for information gathering and collation from the national societies, delegations, field assessment and coordination teams (FACT) teams, and others for several months after the disaster. During the first month or so, the unit also participated in numerous media interviews, dealt with volunteers and fielded queries from the general public/organizations.

In mid-January the unit organized a recovery assessment team – comprising members of the Thai, Philippines and Hong Kong Red Cross societies with members of the RDMU, information and health and care unit of the regional delegation – to visit the disaster-affected provinces in southern Thailand. The team produced an assessment report that formed the basis of the country and regional strategic framework documents (to be translated later into the revised plan of action of the tsunami emergency appeal) and formed the basis for programme proposals to be developed with the Thai Red Cross in the next quarter.

Expected result 2: Strengthening disaster response and response preparedness capacity

The unit provided ongoing support to the operation implemented by PNRC in Southern Leyte. The challenges such as bad weather and difficult access to the disaster site were hampering the progress. However, significant progress had been made during these few months. PNRC completed the construction of 140 houses – the most critical component of the operation – in March, within the agreed timeframe. The disaster risk management officer from the unit, stationed in the Philippines, provided direct support to the society in its operations and facilitated PNRC in compiling regular operations updates to the donors.

The RDMU supported the Malaysian Red Crescent in preparations for its deployment to the Philippines after the country was affected in November/December by multiple storms/typhoons. This team, comprising volunteers trained in regional disaster response team (RDRT), was part of a bilateral assistance to the Philippines. RDMU staff, the Malaysian Red Crescent, partner national societies and PNRC worked jointly to undertake assessment and planning for disaster response and recovery operations.

In response to the disaster, the unit compiled an emergency appeal together with the national society in early December 2004 and launched this simultaneously with the UN agencies. The unit also helped to ensure that a small delegation (comprising a head of delegation, a reporting delegate, a logistics coordinator and a finance delegate) were quickly recruited and that suitable office accommodation was provided in the PNRC national headquarters.

In response to the earthquake and tsunami, the unit immediately deployed a senior emergency and preparedness officer to Indonesia.

A food security assessment was conducted in Timor-Leste for the food crisis in the district of Hatobuilico. A disaster risk management officer from the RDMU and the CVTL disaster management coordinator conducted an assessment of the situation. An estimated 4,000 individuals (800 farmers) were found to be severely affected. Four volunteers and one chapter administrator were provided with assessment training and a relief operation was undertaken based upon the assessment results. An experienced disaster management officer, on loan from the PNRC, was sent to assist CVTL in the relief operation for one month.

Expected result 3: Sharing information and knowledge

In January, an induction course was conducted by the regional organization development unit for new local staff who had recently joined the regional delegation. The RDMU programme officer provided a briefing during the meeting on the work of the unit and the regional disaster management committee.

Expected result 4: Developing, maintaining and sustaining disaster management corporation

In the first week after the tsunami, the unit initiated weekly inter-agency meetings in Bangkok for UN and INGOs with a regional remit (covering Southeast and South Asia). These meetings were well attended and last for several months before winding down to less frequently meetings on thematic issues. UNOCHA were regular attendees and verbal agreement made on such meetings in terms of location and revolving facilitation.

The head of RDMU attended the World Conference Disaster Reduction in Kobe, Japan in January, taking part in a high-level panel and co-facilitating in various sessions.

During late January and early February the unit head was part of the recovery assessment team (RAT) deployed by the Federation to Indonesia for three weeks and had specific responsibilities with regards to disaster management.

The unit head also later attended a meeting in Jakarta in February that brought together all the major stakeholders: the Indonesian Red Cross (Palang Merah Indonesia/PMI), a large number of partner national societies, the Federation (both country and regional delegates/staff) and the ICRC. The meeting outlined the Movement coordination framework and discussed the way in which the various components of the Movement would work together. The unit head helped in developing the first draft of the terms of reference for the technical working groups (established for each sector).

In early March, the RDMU head attended the Red Cross and Red Crescent tsunami response forum in Hong Kong. This meeting brought together senior-level partner national societies, Federation and ICRC staff with national society leaders from all countries affected by the tsunami. The three-day meeting aimed to discuss the way the various components of the Movement would work and provided a forum for detailed discourse, raising of concerns and work with media to promote the work of the Movement. Presentations were made by national societies from each of the affected countries.

The Federation has been hosting a monthly partner national society coordination meeting since February. The participants include representatives from the Federation, American Red Cross, British Red Cross, Finish Red Cross, French Red Cross, Hong Kong Red Cross, Swedish Red Cross, and as well as the Thai Red Cross chapters from the six affected provinces. The objective of the meetings is to bring all Movement actors together to discuss project proposals and share information and to ensure that there will be no duplication of work. Two meetings have so far taken place and have been considered productive and useful. The next meeting will be held in Phuket in May.

The ninth RDMC meeting will take place in April in Bangkok. The six-day event is expected to be attended by disaster managers from 11 national societies in the regions, regional delegation staff, partner national societies (who are active in supporting disaster management regionally) and Geneva Secretariat staff. Each national society will provide an update of progress in their disaster management programmes. Areas of major concern to the region such as population movement, international disaster response laws, rule and principles, health and emergencies, psycho-social support, programme integration and climate change/disaster management will be the main subjects of discussion. A day during the meeting will be set aside to capture lessons learned from experiences in countries affected by the tsunami, flood and typhoon (the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar and Thailand).

Outputs

The main outputs of regional disaster management programme during the period were regular (daily initially) reports on the situation in the four tsunami-affected countries; extensive media coverage of the response operations throughout the region with all main news networks (BBC, CNN, Reuters, etc.); information sharing – both within the Movement, e.g. the partner national societies involved with the response and recovery operations in Thailand and the inter-agency meetings established in the aftermath of the tsunami.

Constraints

The tsunami response operations inevitably took their toll upon other planned activities in the first quarter of the year. In particular, the disaster management seminar for national society leadership from the region was postponed to later in the year. A series of training events for RDRT-trained staff and volunteers, scheduled for March, was postponed to July/August. It is expected that the proposed reinforcement of the disaster management structure to support the tsunami recovery programmes, particularly in Thailand, will be in time to ensure that the regional disaster management unit is better able to meet its commitments to support national societies in the latter part of 2005.

Humanitarian values

Background

Southeast Asia is a region whose national societies – like the economies of their countries – have varying degrees of capacity and concept of information. National societies have widening perceptions and different capacities regarding visibility. A few believe that efforts to increase visibility equate to their blowing their own trumpets and therefore are somewhat reluctant to place priority on certain programmes. While others realize the importance of raising visibility to help improve their profile, they are not well-positioned to do so owing to their limited human and financial resources. The task of the regional information unit has been to advocate among national societies which give less attention to visibility so that they review their position on the issue, and to help others in their efforts to make themselves more visible.

Many communications departments are not given a high status within their national societies and therefore have difficulty setting their own goals and carrying out visibility activities. Some are required to perform many functions including organizing volunteers, printing certificates, tracing and landmine awareness in addition to their main tasks of information, advocacy, communication and media relations. A lack of qualified staff – and little resource to match salaries – further hampers the work of many communications/publications departments.

Nevertheless, national societies often have a good profile in their own countries, generating credibility and visibility for their work. When necessary, the regional information unit has added value in enhancing the quality of information material and helping with the distribution to regional and international audiences. In the first quarter of 2005, the Federation posted 37 news stories from the Southeast Asia region on its website and 30 of them were tsunami-related ones. Among these news stories, eight were filed by the regional information unit and five submitted by national societies during the reporting period. The unit also played a role in coordinating and distributing information on matters of regional (or global) interest such as World Water Day (22 March) and World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day (8 May).

The information unit has been able to provide support to certain national societies in their public information campaigns. In making use of the power of mass media to help raise visibility, the regional information unit has been able to establish good media relations in Bangkok and also to facilitate the national societies in strengthening relations with their national media.

The Red Cross and Red Crescent was most widely covered in both print and electronic media in the early stages of the tsunami disaster of 26 December 2004 which claimed hundreds of thousands of lives.

Almost all the financial resources and human efforts on the promotion of fundamental principles and humanitarian values were taken up by tsunami-related activities during the first three-month period of the year 2005.

Overall goal

The awareness and application of humanitarian values is enhanced across the region.

Programme objective

National societies in Southeast Asia are motivated and able to generate a high degree of visibility, credibility, cooperation and support for Red Cross/Red Crescent activities.

Progress/Achievements

Expected Result 1 (Visibility): The Red Cross and Red Crescent is the primary source for humanitarian issues.

The quarter began with emergency relief efforts for countries hit by the tsunami late last year. Each provided an opportunity to highlight the work of the national societies in responding to the needs of the most vulnerable in their countries listed on the Federation's website.

During the first three months of 2005, the unit's information delegate visited areas in the south of Thailand five times and travelled to Indonesia once to write stories or to accompany Federation representatives from the Geneva Secretariat and partner national societies who were on fact-finding missions. The information officer, who is a

staff-on-loan, accompanied the Federation's photographer-in-chief who was working on a tsunami book project. He also travelled to Cambodia whose national Red Cross society marked its 50th anniversary.

The information unit facilitated visits by the media to cover the Movement's activities and to interview Federation delegates on the Movement's responses to the tsunami. The information delegate gave a series of interviews on the issue.

Drawing on material produced by national societies and by the unit, the information unit edited and distributed an edition of the Southeast Asia Link.

Expected result 2 (Integration): Programmes in all four core areas reflect a communications component.

The staff members of the information unit attended inter-agency meetings on post-tsunami operations and put forward suggestions on information and public relations aspects in the relief activities. They also conducted presentations at the workshops/meetings organized by other units in the regional delegation and helped edit and produce their publications.

Expected result 3 (Skill development): A stronger bond is developed between the regional information team and national societies.

Most of the efforts were spent on post-tsunami related information activities and skill development was given less priority during the reporting period. The information unit will work with organizational development unit to plan, in the next quarter, a regional communication workshop to help ensure skill development of communication managers and staff of national societies in the region.

The contract of the staff-on-loan from the Myanmar Red Cross was extended initially for three months to help with the increasing workload of the information unit.

Output

During the reporting period, Southeast Asia maintained a high profile on the Federation's website. An increased number of web stories are expected to further raise the profile of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in Southeast Asia in the coming year. Some stories were used by national societies and relief and humanitarian works websites. Further, the heightened visibility should also help national societies influence behaviour in communities and maintain or enhance their current level of funding.

Constraints

It was difficult at times to convince national society leadership and Federation colleagues of the importance of information. Less priority is given to visibility by certain national societies. In several national societies, apart from having limited funds, there is a shortage of skilled information staff. These constraints are unlikely to be resolved in the near future but the regional information unit will continue to support communications departments to build their capacity.

Organizational development

Background

The regional organizational development unit has been providing support to selected national societies in their organizational development and capacity building initiatives, such as in planning, finance development, communication, fundraising and resource development, human resource development, regional cooperation and networking.

The unit has been heavily engaged during the first quarter working with other regional units and the affected national societies to assess, coordinate and consolidate tsunami emergency relief and recovery programmes. In particular, the regional organizational development unit joined the assessment team to southern Thailand and participated in a number of coordination meetings with the Thai Red Cross, partner national societies and UN agencies in putting forward the project proposals. In addition, the unit contributed to the 2005-2010 tsunami

recovery programmes of the Southeast Asia region and Malaysia, and provided technical support to the Myanmar plan. In the aftermath of the tsunami disaster, the unit also coordinated with the Asia Pacific organizational development coordinator based in Kuala Lumpur in providing tools, documents and technical advice to the affected national societies as requested to help tackle emerging issues.

Given a lower financial availability than budgeted in the appeal, the regional organizational development programme has been scaled down and some activities have been incorporated in the Southeast Asia tsunami recovery programmes. This will help better integrate regional organizational development activities with other regional programmes through the national societies.

Overall goal

There is a significant improvement in the lives of vulnerable people through the humanitarian services and intervention of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in the region.

Programme objective

Southeast Asia national societies are organizationally strong and have the capacity to deliver relevant and effective services to the most vulnerable people.

Progress/Achievements

Expected result 1: National societies in the region achieve significant improvements in capacity building and organizational development through regional cooperation, coordination and a strong network of organizational development practitioners.

The 6th regional organizational development forum was planned for 26-28 April in Hanoi, co-hosted by the Viet Nam Red Cross and the Federation's country delegation. The event will pull together focal points from all the national societies and delegations from the region to discuss wider organizational development /capacity building issues, opportunities and lessons learned from the tsunami operation. Areas to be reviewed include human resource management, volunteer mobilization and management, gender diversity considerations, local resource mobilization, financial management and reporting systems, external networking, information management, communications and the impact on managing change.

Expected result 2: Planning, reporting, communications and fundraising skills and capacity building are enhanced in selected national societies in the region.

The Lao Red Cross is in the process of developing a strategic plan for 2006 – 2010. A consultant has been hired to support the process headed by a steering committee (consisting of the president, secretary-general and key staff) and various task forces. The society's past achievements, contributing factors, challenges and lessons learned were critically examined. Taking into consideration the country's socio-economic context and humanitarian indicators, as well as the national society's mandate, needs were identified and potential areas for Lao Red Cross involvement in the future will be studied. Based on these findings, a participatory planning workshop will be organized in May to set the strategic direction. Another consultant was engaged to review the CAS office in Laos. The national society senior managers, the CAS committee and representatives of the Federation, ICRC and partner national societies were involved. The report and recommendations will be discussed in the second quarter CAS committee meeting for implementation.

In the next quarter, the regional organizational development unit will work closely with CVTL and the delegation on the strategic and development plan, and CAS process of the national society.

The planned workshop on organizational development, disaster management and health integration is no longer necessary as integration approach has been adopted to implement various programmes in the tsunami relief and recovery operation. The regional fundraising and resource mobilization workshop planned in the appeal will now be funded by the tsunami recovery appeal.

Expected result 3: The capacity of Southeast Asia national societies in human resource development grows.

The regional organizational development unit organized a three-day induction course for the national staff of the Federation and ICRC delegations in Bangkok. This was the first induction course on the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement for most of the national staff. Meanwhile, the unit has also initiated to send two senior programme officers (health and branch development) from the Lao Red Cross and two Federation programme officers to attend the basic training course (BTC) for potential delegates organized by the Australian Red Cross. The unit also supported the assignment of a staff-on-loan from the Nepal Red Cross on a two-month mission (April and May) to Timor-Leste to help the national society in setting up appropriate accounting systems and training finance and non-finance staff on accounting procedure.

Expected result 4: The organizational capacity of Red Cross and Red Crescent societies with no permanent Federation Secretariat coordination presence – Brunei, Malaysia, Laos, the Philippines, Thailand and Singapore – is strengthened.

The Malaysian Red Crescent has established an organizational development unit comprising of an officer and an assistant working closely with the task force, shared by the vice chairman who is also an organizational development focal point. The national organizational development forum, which bears a similar structure to the regional forum, took place to share information with the branches to identify issues and resources. The society's early childhood development project, part of the regional organizational development programme and funded by the Federation's Capacity Building Fund (CBF), is only making slow progress due to deployment of staff and volunteers to tsunami-affected areas in the country and abroad. As the Malaysian Red Crescent is heavily engaged in a huge tsunami recovery programme, the planned resource development project in this appeal will be dropped.

ToT courses for volunteers were conducted at the PNRC national headquarters and branches. It is expected that at the end of the project, the national society will be able to retain existing volunteers and recruit 40 per cent more skilled volunteers. The regional organizational development unit assisted the PNRC volunteer department in needs assessment and drew up a two-year plan. Sustainability issues were also considered. The planned branch development project for this year with PNRC will be dropped. Instead, a comparatively larger project will be launched next year.

The organizational development unit also worked with the Thai Red Cross youth bureau in developing a regional youth gathering proposal. This project aims to support the youth volunteers in developing their programme management skills to ensure their community projects can be self-sustained. The volunteer management and development project, originally planned in the appeal, will be relocated to the Thailand tsunami recovery programme to ease financial constraints and to achieve better integration.

Expected result 5: Selected Southeast Asia national societies improve financial regulations, skills in financial planning, budgeting and reporting.

With all planned activities conducted in Vietnam in the first quarter, the finance development project ended on 31 March. All remaining finance workshops for non-finance staff and customized *MS Excel* software training for accountants in 64 provinces were finalized. VNRC's deputy head of finance conducted evaluations in selected provinces. Computer equipment was purchased and delivered to selected provinces. Internet connections were also established in selected provinces.

In Timor-Leste, the CVTL accountant was suspended and the management took measures to ensure that all the accounting records for November 2004 to January 2005 were sorted out. The head of administration was appointed as a temporary accountant until a new senior accountant was employed. A junior accountant was also recruited. The regional finance development delegate made a technical support visit to CVTL in the first quarter as planned. A second trip was planned in April to introduce the staff-on-loan from the Nepal Red Cross and to design a coding structure for the *MYOB* accounting software.

The delegate also made a technical support trip, as planned, to the Myanmar Red Cross to design coding structure for a new accounting software, *Peach Tree*. Another trip is planned for April to facilitate a finance procedure workshop.

Outputs

The topics for the planned regional organizational development forum were driven by the national society and correlated with the recent devastated disaster of 26 December 2004. A thinking process has started among the national societies, with regards to how they can be more effective and what capacities need to be built to be better prepared, cope and effectively respond to disaster and needs of vulnerable populations. The tsunami experience and operation has brought opportunities to strengthen cooperation and coordination among the regional units in the delegation, partner national societies and international agencies. It also accelerated integrated planning and implementation approach and initiated an effective working relation between the headquarters and branches as in the Thai Red Cross. On the other hand, the commitment and willingness of the Lao Red Cross leadership and management to develop their long-term plan is expected to result in more partnership in future. The CAS review is preparing the foundation for setting up a long-term strategic direction.

The national staff in the regional delegation has expressed interest in further training such as in first aid and the project planning process (PPP). This is a positive indicator for their performance development. BTC training has built up confidence of staff in their work and provided them with opportunities for international exposure with the Federation and partner national societies. The Nepal Red Cross staff-on-loan to CVTL is a good example of cross-regional exchange of skills and knowledge. Organizational development and capacity building initiatives has been gradually taking shape in the Malaysian Red Crescent. The massive donations collected for the tsunami operation have triggered the society to reflect the efficiency, effectiveness and accountability of existing systems, and highlighted the need for improvement.

Through the regional finance development project, the selected national societies in the Southeast Asia region, financial and non-finance staff at headquarters and provincial levels have a clear understanding of financial regulations, have increased skills in financial planning, budgeting and reporting and are thereby able to provide quality and timely information and reports to management for planning, monitoring and decision-making purposes, and to government and donors. Financial departments have the necessary competent human resources, tools and equipment to perform effectively.

Constraints

Some of the planned activities of the Malaysian Red Crescent could not be conducted due to heavy engagement of key staff in Indonesia's tsunami response. The progress the CBF project has also been slowed down. The decentralization process from Geneva to the regional delegation was put to test during the coordination of the tsunami disaster. There are concerns that the national societies may bypass the regional delegation in future should the Secretariat in Geneva continue to manage directly its country delegations. It is believed that with the long established and effective working relation between the delegations and the national societies, the regional delegation should be empowered to carry out its mandate in the region. The tsunami programmes will continue to demand significant attention from the regional organizational development unit in the second quarter. Consequently, the annual organizational development programme may not progress as planned and support to non-tsunami affected national societies may be limited. Continuous lack of funding may lead to further revision of the annual programme. At the same time, the tsunami operation provides a huge opportunity to distribute resources to other national society projects based on the priority and needs; all the national societies in the region could benefit from the tsunami programmes.

With regards to financial development, the main challenges include:

- Lack of understanding or willingness of Viet Nam Red Cross management to take actions to solve human resource problems in the headquarters finance department, and their limited capacity to meet partner national societies demands and requirements; and
- Strong competition with UN and other organizations in recruiting qualified staff in Timor-Leste.

Implementation and management

Coordination, cooperation and strategic partnerships

The Federation's regional delegation and the country delegations work very closely with ICRC and partner national societies in the region. The only differing opinion with the ICRC was on the recognition of Timor-Leste. There is concern over the sustainability of the national society should the Federation leave the country after the

recognition. It is yet believed that the national society could use the existing opportunities to build on long-term partnership and gain credibility in the eyes of the public and the government. To this end, it is important that the national society strengthens its human resource capacity. Discussions are ongoing between the Federation's regional delegation and the ICRC's regional delegation in Suva to resolve the issue.

The Federation's regional delegation and country delegations regularly participate UN regional and country coordination meetings. In Myanmar and Bangkok, the Federation has initiated and led inter-agency meetings on the tsunami responses. These meetings have been very helpful in sharing updates to avoid overlapping and also optimize the use of resources.

Discussions are ongoing between the Geneva Secretariat and the regional delegation on the replacement issue of the Federation's representative in Vietnam after his end of mission. The Federation office will continue operating through the end of 2005 to ensure continuity of ongoing projects and maintain coordination with different stakeholders.

Effective representation and advocacy

The Federation's delegations have been active especially with the international media, particularly in relation to the tsunami operation. The head of regional delegation paid several courtesy calls to embassies and attended meetings organized by government ministries, UN organizations and the Asian Development Bank. This has not only helped profile the mandate, programmes, guiding principles and added value of the Movement but also enhanced mutual understanding of roles and explored common areas for collaboration. A few national societies in the region are still struggling to carry out their humanitarian activities in an independent, neutral and impartial manner from government interferences.

International disaster response

In support of the country delegation and the national society relief efforts during the tsunami crisis, the regional programme coordinator and the senior emergency response officer were immediately deployed to Indonesia. The programme coordinator took the function as the head of operations in Indonesia for three months. In addition, the regional delegation mobilized staff to undertake a series of assessments in Thailand and Malaysia to evaluate the immediate and recovery needs of the tsunami-affected populations. The delegation also responded to the food security crisis in Timor Leste through securing the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) and deploying RDRT members in March. In response to another major earthquake in Nias of Indonesia on 28 March, the regional delegation also mobilized RDRT members from the region to help assess and coordinate relief activities.

There is, however, a need to seek better clarification on the role of the regional delegation in major disaster response in the region. A meeting is planned in April with the senior disaster managers of the national societies to discuss the issue.

Governance support

The regional delegation assisted the visit of the Federation's president to Bangkok in January. The president met with the Thai Red Cross leadership to discuss mid- and long-term assistance programmes for the tsunami-affected communities.

Delegation management

The extensions of the head of delegation in Timor-Leste and organizational development delegates in Timor-Leste and Cambodia are still in the process due to delayed funding commitment. The delegation has sought guidance from the Asia Pacific regional finance unit in Kuala Lumpur on the viability of establishing a "Federation regional redundancy fund" which corresponds to the labour laws of the different countries in the region to cover the Federation's nationally-hired staff.

Pending the Geneva Secretariat's approval of the operation budget, the delegation will start the process of recruiting the planned project staff to manage the tsunami recovery programmes in Thailand and Malaysia. Local and regional recruitment will be emphasized.

A good team spirit has been established in the delegation. The delegation organized its first dissemination session with team-building components for the entire national staff in January. This resulted in increased commitment to their roles and encouraged working together as a team in the delegation.

The regional management meeting was held in February for the heads of delegations in the region. There was general consensus and understanding on how the delegations relate with one another and expectations from each level and unit. The preparation of the regional partnership meeting in September was also discussed.

The allocation to the core budgets of the regional delegation has not been announced but it is expected that the delegation will receive the full amount submitted for approval. Some fundraising activities have started with telephone contacts with several partner national society desk officers. Programme coordination, information and disaster management are areas of financial concern but it is believed that these can be fully covered by the coordination budget carried forward.

The regional delegation has been planning to relocate its office to accommodate an expected increase in the number of staff, especially for the tsunami recovery operation. This is pending approval from the Secretariat in Geneva.

[Contributions list below; click here to return to the title page and contact information.](#)

South East Asia Regional

ANNEX 1

APPEAL No. 05AA057

PLEDGES RECEIVED

14/06/2005

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
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CASH

REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				3,899,022	TOTAL COVERAGE 49.1%	
OPENING BALANCE				670,029		
BRITISH - RC		10,000	GBP	21,810	22.03.05	DISASTER MANAGEMENT
BRITISH - GOVT/DIFD GRANT				416,500	01.01.05	ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, HEALTH, DISASTER PREPAREDNESS, FED. COORDINATION
NORWEGIAN - GOVT/RC		130,000	NOK	24,570	09.05.05	HIV/AIDS
SWEDISH - GOVT		1,450,000	SEK	247,950	14.02.05	ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
SWEDISH - GOVT		400,000	SEK	68,400	14.04.05	DISASTER MANAGEMENT, POPULATION MOVEMENT PROG. OFFICER
SWEDISH - RC		400,000	SEK	68,400	21.04.05	IN COUNTRY COSTS DELEGATE, DISASTER MANAGEMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				1,517,659	CHF	38.9%

KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
AUSTRALIA	DELEGATE(S)			18,200		
DENMARK	DELEGATE(S)			42,400		
FINLAND	DELEGATE(S)			NA		
GERMANY	DELEGATE(S)			45,600		
SWEDEN	DELEGATE(S)			146,000		
NETHERLANDS	DELEGATE(S)			145,400		
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				397,600	CHF	10.2%

ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				0	CHF	