

Programme Update

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Asia Pacific

Appeal No. MAA50001

29/08/2008

This report covers the period 01/01/08 to 30/06/08.

In a world of global challenges, continued poverty, inequity, and increasing vulnerability to disasters and disease, the International Federation with its global network, works to accomplish its Global Agenda, partnering with local community and civil society to prevent and alleviate human suffering from disasters, diseases and public health emergencies.



Effective communications strategy and implementation will better tell the human story. This ability to put a human face on humanitarian service is what will differentiate the International Federation from other actors in this increasingly competitive field.

In brief

Summary:

This programme update focuses on the work of the team in the new Asia Pacific zone office to provide leadership and guidance to International Federation efforts to increase the impact of Asia Pacific national societies' humanitarian activities. Societies throughout the region, often with the support of partner national societies and other organisations, have continued to respond to multiple disasters, as well as to scale up their efforts to carry out programmes in line with the commitments in the International Federation's Global Agenda.

Notable achievements in the first six months of the year have included:

- Rapid and large-scale response to the natural disasters that struck Myanmar and China, as well as a smaller-scale one in the Philippines;
- Preparation and launching of multi-country global HIV alliances in East and Southeast Asia (and Pacific in August 2008);
- Continuing effective response to the chronic emergencies in Afghanistan, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Timor Leste;
- Implementation of extensive disaster recovery operations in Pakistan and Bangladesh, and the ongoing tsunami programmes in Indonesia, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Thailand;
- Operational alliance for community development programme in Nepal, and the intensified

capacity building fund grant for the Red Cross Society of China (temporarily on hold due to the earthquake operation);

- Relevance of IDRL promotion in the Myanmar operation, and new IDRL projects being launched in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam;
- Organisation by the Zone Office of a meeting in February of all regional technical programme delegates (disaster management, health and care, organisational development, and planning monitoring evaluation and reporting, from the four Asia Pacific regions), to promote working as a zone, cross-regional working, and integrated programme approaches;
- Finalising of zone office structure and building of consolidated Federation secretariat team across Asia Pacific.

The first half of 2008 saw the establishment of several new units within the Asia Pacific zone office in Kuala Lumpur, including: communications and knowledge sharing; International Disaster Response Laws, Rules and Principles (IDRL); human resources; security; and resource mobilization and planning monitoring evaluation and reporting. A zone disaster management coordinator has also been appointed. With the addition of these functions, the zone office is able to provide more comprehensive support and services to the regional and country offices, and national societies in the zone.

Financial situation: The total 2008 budget is CHF 1,355,144 (USD 1.3 million or EUR 829,000), of which 44 per cent covered. Expenditure overall was 30 per cent. It should be noted that most of the staffing and running costs of the zone office are covered by core secretariat funding.

[Click here to go directly to the attached financial report.](#)

[See also Asia Pacific 0809 Appeal, and the regional and country programme updates covering the period January-June 2008.](#)

Number of people we help: The Asia Pacific zone office provides support to the 37 national societies, four Federation secretariat regional offices and 14 country offices in the Asia Pacific region, to help strengthen their capacity to deliver more extensive and effective humanitarian services to vulnerable groups.

Our partners: Within the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, there is close cooperation with many partner national societies and with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) supporting national societies throughout the Asia Pacific region. In addition, there are partnerships with many external organisations at all levels (community, national and regional levels), community-based, national and international organizations, UN, and other developmental agencies.

The zone office would like to specially thank the following partner national societies which have contributed this year in cash or kind to the Asia Pacific zone appeal: Australian Red Cross, Finnish Red Cross, Japanese Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross and Swedish Red Cross.

Context

The first six months of this year has witnessed a variety of events that severely affected the lives and well-being of countless millions of people across the entire Asia Pacific region. On the political and economic front, there has been a significant worsening of the inter-linked conflicts in Afghanistan and Pakistan. This period has seen a doubling of attacks compared to the previous year inside Afghanistan, and a new trend of increased targeting of civilians and humanitarian organisations. Meanwhile acute political instability reigns in Pakistan matched by mounting political violence. Elsewhere in the region there has been an escalation of internal conflict in countries such as Sri Lanka and Philippines, and the situation in North Korea oscillates between giving cause for optimism only to be followed by fresh setbacks on the hoped for progress in the nuclear issue.

Many countries of the region have been severely affected by the global food and energy crises and the general economic downturn. This been especially pronounced in parts of South and Southeast Asia, as well as the Pacific, and everywhere the poorest sections of the population have borne the brunt of these crises and seen a dramatic fall in their living standards. These events have in turn contributed to mounting political instability in countries such as Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia and Papua New Guinea.

The region was struck by two major disasters during this period, both within a period of less than two weeks – cyclone Nargis in Myanmar and the earthquake in the Sichuan province of China. Both caused widespread death and destruction and were the subject of extensive media coverage. There was a massive response from the international community for both disasters, and the respective national societies and the International Federation were in the forefront of providing emergency relief and early recovery response.

Progress towards outcomes

Disaster Management

Programme purpose: Promote and facilitate national society disaster management programme skills training, and reinforce regional, national and local mechanisms for adequate and timely disaster response in the Asia Pacific region.

Outcome(s)/Expected result(s)

| Programme Component | Outcomes |
|-------------------------|---|
| Disaster risk reduction | Disaster risk reduction (DRR) is incorporated as an integral part of national disaster management (DM) strategies by national societies in Asia Pacific region |
| Disaster response | Timely and effective response to disasters in the region |
| Logistics | Timely and effective logisitics services for disaster response in region |
| Disaster coordination | Effective cooperation and coordination of DM activities between the International Federation, national societies, other humanitarian agencies and national authorities in Asia Pacific region |

Achievements

During the reporting period, a zone disaster management (DM) coordinator was appointed and initial steps were taken to strengthen an Asia Pacific-wide approach for the provision of ongoing support to national societies in enhancing their existing capacity and implementation of DM programmes at national and community levels.

While there has been progress against the majority of planned activities, there were some delays as the zone DM coordinator had to provide vital support to the cyclone Nargis emergency operation in Myanmar for two and a half months. A revised plan of action for the 2008 period has been developed to ensure the objectives of the 2008 programme will be achieved.

The zone DM programme has facilitated the active involvement of and inputs from national societies into various global Federation processes which are taking place in 2008. This includes the Global Disaster Management Services Improvement project, which is undertaking a review of Federation DM structures. Inputs through consultation meetings in South and Southeast Asia have informed the global process.

The national societies in Asia Pacific region have also have been involved in the development of a 'framework for community resilience' which will assist national societies in focusing their DRR planning and programme implementation. This framework is an essential component of the

Federation's DRR Global Alliance. The national societies will continue to participate and contribute towards the DRR Global Alliance through planned meetings in the second half of 2008.

In DRR, the zone DM programme successfully facilitated the inclusion of three national societies in a global application to the World Bank DRR Global Facility. Through this fund, the Red Cross Red Crescent societies in Pakistan, Cambodia and the Philippines are preparing three-year proposals to continue the implementation of grassroots projects that support DRR.

An important role of the zone DM programme is to enhance the coordination and exchange between DM resources across Asia Pacific, by drawing together national societies as well as Federation resources (Asia Pacific disaster management unit, regional logistics unit, regional/country offices) and optimizing the use of available human resources. Initial steps to establish an Asia Pacific-wide DM team or zone approach to support national societies have been taken. A meeting in February developed parameters and mechanisms in which the collective resources of all Federation DM resources can be drawn upon when appropriate. This 'best-positioned' approach will be developed further through ongoing consultation with Federation and selected national society representatives during the remainder of 2008. It is expected that this approach of utilizing the 'best-positioned' resources (i.e. technical competence/experience) will greatly enhance the services provided to national societies and the beneficiaries they support.

Within the Kuala Lumpur zone office, the collaboration between the zone DM coordinator, the Asia Pacific disaster management unit and regional logistics unit has led to joint implementation of activities during emergency response operations and planning for preparedness activities. Later in the year, a joint analysis of capacity and vulnerabilities across the Asia Pacific zone will be undertaken.

In the coming period, the zone DM programme will facilitate the further engagement of national societies in the global process around DRR and the DM services improvement project. The programme will also work with national societies to enhance their profile and cooperation with their respective governments through the 3rd Asia Ministerial Conference on DRR to be held in Malaysia in December. This engagement will also be supported by the regular exchange and sharing of information with other humanitarian agencies and national authorities in Asia Pacific, such as UN ISDR and ASEAN. In addition, the zone DM programme will work with the regional offices to support the ongoing establishment of a DM operational alliance in Cambodia, a regional disaster response plan for Southeast Asia, the DM review in South Asia, the establishment of a Regional Disaster Response Team (RDRT) in the Pacific, and work with the zone OD team to continue the important work in the areas of volunteering and OD in emergencies and ensure that these are included in all disaster preparedness, response and recovery training and programmes.

Health and Care

Programme purpose: Promote and facilitate national society health and care (H&C) programme skills training and the development of sustainable national society health programmes to respond to national public health priorities in the Asia Pacific region.

Outcome(s)/Expected result(s)

| Programme Component | Outcomes |
|------------------------------|--|
| Public health in emergencies | 1. Timely and effective response and support to public health emergencies in Asia Pacific |
| | 2. Increased institutional capacity of national societies to prepare for and respond to public health emergencies |
| HIV/AIDS | 1. Asia Pacific national societies have scaled up the quality and reach of their HIV/AIDS programming in line with Federation policy |
| | 2. Strong and active alliances are functioning in all 4 Asia Pacific sub-zones |

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| | as part of the Federation's global HIV alliance |
| CBFA/ community health | 1. Asia Pacific national societies have well trained CBFA volunteers and programmes adapted to the most pressing health needs in local communities in their countries |
| | 2. Asia Pacific national societies health activities are valued and recognised by the health authorities as contributing to national health strategy |

Achievements

In Asia Pacific Zone, the four regional health coordinators are taking the lead in the regions to follow up on the various components of the health and care programme. For details please see the Programme Updates for South Asia, Southeast Asia, East Asia and Pacific.

At zone level, in February a meeting of the four regional health coordinators was held in Kuala Lumpur, and agreement was made on working modalities as to how to work together as a zone health team.

The zone office now has an avian and human influenza coordinator. Work is already underway to support Nepal Red Cross with their human pandemic preparedness programme, and the coordinator is working to identify other national societies who would like to implement programme.

Organisational Development

Programme purpose: More coherent approach to organisational development (OD) and capacity building across the Red Cross Red Crescent (RCRC) Movement in the Asia Pacific zone to deliver effective programmes and services to meet the Global Agenda Goals.

Outcome(s)/Expected result(s)

| Programme Component | Outcomes |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Organisational development (OD) | Strategic OD and capacity building support to selected country/regional representations and national societies to enhance their capacity to deliver effective programmes and services |
| Capacity building | A more coherent approach to capacity building across the RCRC Movement in the Asia Pacific region |
| Volunteer development | An integrated approach to volunteering development in national societies |

Achievements

i) Harmonised Red Cross Red Crescent Movement approaches for national society development

Requests for targeted support to develop more harmonised Movement approaches to national society development resulted in country visits to Sri Lanka (Movement support for transition from recovery to development programming), Afghanistan (formulation of a Movement support plan to accompany the national society's strategic and operational plans), Myanmar (strengthening Movement support for legal base revision), Bangladesh (identifying Movement strategy to accelerate legal base revision and OD support), India (accompanying the national society's strategic plan revision process and potential Movement support to legal base revision), Australia (to assist with framing an approach to sustainable programming for consultation with all Movement partners later in 2008), and Indonesia (to accompany planning for the national society's strategic plan revision process with harmonised Movement support). The work in these areas has been used to promote more coherent approaches to, and agreements on, capacity development.

ii) Increased use of Movement policies, guidelines and tools

There has been a measurable increase in use of Movement policies, guidelines and tools on capacity development by all Movement components, both in emergency and development work. The pilot harmonised approach to OD across the Movement in Afghanistan in particular will be an inspiration and has already been positively accepted in four other country environments.

iii) Sustainable programmes

The work with Australian Red Cross to identify indicators for capacity development to achieve sustainable programmes is one example of several where such indicators have been integrated into wider core programme work. Both large scale emergency programmes (Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar and China Sichuan Earthquake) involved OD and capacity building strategies and indicators from the very beginning and have created good practice for future operations to follow.

iv) Knowledge sharing

The Asia Pacific OD and Volunteering CD Roms and Capacity Building Fact Sheets continue to be very actively used by all Movement personnel to support improved approaches through knowledge sharing of best practices. Forty-one new Fact Sheets have been suggested for the next update, together with an additional 25 policies, tools and guidelines for the CD Rom.

A proposal has been drafted with an external video company to develop six DVDs to further capture excellence in OD and capacity building that has been witnessed at community, volunteer and branch levels using video footage and live interviews with stakeholders from six to eight national societies across the zone.

v) Volunteer development

There have been several initiatives to integrate volunteering development into core programmes. They include a regional volunteering development workshop for Pacific national societies as a



Indonesia Red Cross volunteer shows schoolchildren how to manage nose bleeding, a common problem among children in tropical countries. Indonesian Red Cross/ Melda Hura

sensitization and action planning meeting for volunteer or programme managers. The workshop objectives included the development of a network of managers (and possible future 'practitioners') to establish and implement sound volunteer management systems, and to provide support and assistance across societies on this issue within the region. Specific country focussed assistance has been given to the national societies in India, Bangladesh and Vietnam on volunteer database development, and to Vietnam on volunteering policy development. Work has also progressed with national societies in India, Indonesia and Vietnam on capturing best practices in some aspects of volunteering for dissemination to other national societies.

vi) Zonal team approach

Clear working modalities have been agreed by convening the wider Asia Pacific zonal OD team including the three regional OD teams and ensuring the team sets common goals, plans and shares resources to enable the societies of the zone to access the "best-positioned support". Examples of good practices agreed for the future include the drafting of an Asia Pacific OD Strategy to be shared with key national societies, partner national societies, Federation and ICRC stakeholders to ensure we achieve a harmonised approach to OD support as a Movement, a time budget to encourage shared use of OD/finance development/HR colleagues from one part of the zone in other parts away

from their usual operational region, and sharing integrated approaches and resources with ICRC on supporting strategic OD work on issues such as integrity and legal base revision processes.

vii) Integrated programming approach

Improved integrated capacity development plans in all core programmes were well supported in Sri Lanka, Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea (DPRK), Bangladesh and Afghanistan. Orientation on capacity building and OD strategies in emergencies was also shared with key national societies, partner national societies and Federation stakeholders supporting the Myanmar cyclone and China earthquake relief operations. The Myanmar cyclone operation in particular had examples of clear capacity building budget lines to accompany this new strategy and is being used as learning material elsewhere. Efforts are being made to come to an agreement on a joint DM and gender focal point meeting in late 2008 at which gender mainstreaming into all DM (and later health and principles and values) programmes will be planned. The meeting is being planned as the launch of a national society gender network of practitioners across the Asia Pacific zone to sustain these approaches into the future.

Collaborative work with other Asia Pacific zone units in Kuala Lumpur has also grown significantly. The 2009-10 zone plan, and the remainder of 2008 will see more integrated work with the zone DM, DMU, health, IDRL, Resource Mobilisation and PMER, HR, communications and knowledge sharing and security programmes/units, as well with the Federation secretariat's global Principles and Values Department.

viii) Intensified capacity building

Three new national societies submitted Intensified Capacity Building (ICB) Fund proposals for the second global round, of which one has been shortlisted for the final proposal stage. Lessons learned from the successful Red Cross Society of China ICB planning process have been shared not only with ICB applicants but more widely amongst the membership to enhance awareness of the importance of strong local level planning processes focussed on improved participation of vulnerable communities in programme planning, design and monitoring approaches that build branch capacities and local sustainability.

Constraints or Challenges

The remaining operational objectives of the Asia Pacific OD and volunteering programme for 2008 will be addressed in the second half of the year. These include: the work to develop agreed protocols and systems to enhance the national society peer practitioner support and mentoring visits; the holding of a "counterpart relations" training for the first set of national society peer practitioners to assist them to feel confident when adopting cross-cultural coaching styles; and the work to identify external institutions to provide high quality outsourced senior executive coaching and mentoring to a first group of five secretary generals in early 2009.

The reduction in staffing of the zone volunteering development part of the OD Unit from two to one person will mean the need to scale up efforts to provide more peer support mechanisms between national societies on this issue. The second half of 2008 is expected to see progress in this area.

Looking ahead

The remainder of 2008 will focus on preparations for two large Movement learning meetings – the first on Gender and DM, and the second on "Approaches to sustainable programming". Further work will be undertaken on strengthening knowledge sharing mechanisms.

Humanitarian Values

Programme purpose: Humanitarian values is promoted in the region

Outcome(s)/Expected result(s)

| Programme Component | Outcomes |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Promoting humanitarian values | An integrated approach to promote humanitarian values in the region |

Achievements

So far the Asia Pacific approach has been to integrate humanitarian values into all programmes throughout the Asia Pacific region.

Asia Pacific Disaster Management Unit

Since January 2008, the Asia Pacific Disaster Management Unit (APDMU) has: maintained a 24/7 disaster monitoring system; provided coordination support to the Myanmar Cyclone Nargis, China Sichuan earthquake and Philippines typhoon relief operations; deployed staff to the Cyclone Nargis and Sichuan earthquake relief operations; established a Zone Task Force for coordination for response operations; and worked in close collaboration with the zone office and the deputy director of disaster management in Geneva. DMU disaster response delegates supported response preparedness activities on contingency planning by sending delegates to workshops and planning sessions with national societies in two regions, provided direct facilitation support for Regional Disaster Response Teams (RDRT) trainings, and promoted the standardization of RDRT and expansion in the Pacific. The DMU health in emergencies delegate was deployed as Emergency Response Unit Coordinator for the Sichuan earthquake response in China, provided review for operations updates, appeals, DREF requests, information bulletins, and also supported the development of a Public Health in Emergency training course.

Although the DMU is still not fully staffed, it has been able to fulfill its role in coordination. There are five delegate positions currently open in the DMU, including two for disaster response and three technical positions. Some of these positions will be filled by September. The unit is looking forward to having its full complement of staff and sufficient technical expertise and monetary resources to allow it to provide more comprehensive coordination in large scale disasters. The unit will work closely with the new zonal disaster management coordinator whose responsibilities include disaster programming in such areas as disaster risk reduction and shared responsibility for disaster response planning.

[For further information, click here for the Global Disaster Management Programme Update.](#)

Regional Logistics Unit

The first half of 2008 has been another challenging and exciting period for the Kuala Lumpur Regional Logistics Unit (KL RLU). The early part of the year was focused on increasing the capacity available in terms of pre-positioned stocks and well-trained human resources to provide logistics support to on-going and new operations, as well as country and regional offices. This capacity was then fully utilised and tested with the Myanmar (Cyclone Nargis) and then China (Sichuan Earthquake) operations which occurred towards the end of the reporting period. The KL RLU was able to respond promptly and efficiently to both these emergencies utilising not only its own experience and capacities but also the strong support of other Federation RLUs and the Logistics & Resource Mobilisation Department in Geneva.

The two large operations in Myanmar and China within a short period however constrained the KL RLU's ability to move forward with capacity building projects, including logistics training, which were planned and initiated in the first half of 2008. The focus for the remainder of 2008 will be to maintain the strong operational logistics support to current operations in Asia Pacific, replenish and build on current pre-positioned stocks in KL and move forward with logistics projects, assessments and trainings started earlier in the year.

[For further information, click here for the Global Logistics Programme Update.](#)

International Disaster Response Law, Rules and Principles

During the reporting period, the International Disaster Response Laws, Rules and Principles (IDRL) Programme upgraded its communication tools and strengthened its partnerships, both within and outside the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, to raise awareness of legal issues in disaster management and promote the use of the IDRL Guidelines. In Asia-Pacific, the IDRL Asia Pacific Coordinator relocated to the Kuala Lumpur zone office. The programme provided support to a number of national societies in the region that have begun discussions with their respective governments on how best to implement the IDRL Guidelines, and also engaged inter-governmental and regional organizations to encourage their use. Three technical support projects were initiated in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam, with support from the World Health Organisation and funded by the Asian Development Bank.

Some activities planned for early 2008 were delayed as key pledges were only confirmed in May and June. However, concerted efforts are now in progress to make up for lost time and the IDRL Programme has received almost full funding for 2008/2009. Thanks to the generous pledges from the Australian Government and Australian Red Cross, an IDRL Asia Pacific officer has been recruited to support the IDRL Asia Pacific unit in Kuala Lumpur and recruitment is currently underway for an IDRL Pacific delegate to scale up IDRL activities in the Pacific region.

[For further information, click here for the Global IDRL Programme Update.](#)

Finance Unit

Goal: To sustain the goodwill that is already in place and at the same time continue to provide, professional and technical support to the Federation regional and country offices in Asia Pacific region to improve the standard of financial management in the region.

Progress/Achievements

The Zone Finance Unit (ZFU) provides the following types of support and services to regional and country offices in the field:

- a) Regular technical support to field finance staff to ensure timeliness and accuracy of monthly returns and compliance with financial procedures.
- b) Financial management information and support is provided to technical managers periodically and on ad-hoc basis when deemed necessary.
- c) Continuous efforts to raise the level of financial awareness in the Asia Pacific region.
- d) Direct financial management support to operations without and Federation secretariat in-country presence.

In the Asia Pacific region, there are in total 74 finance staff in the regional/country offices, 11 delegates and 64 national staff to whom the ZFU provides technical support.

The activities carried out during the reporting period include:

- a) Fourteen 5-day programme managers training for staff of regional/country offices, and national societies. The total number of participants consists of 24 delegates, 36 national staff and 30 National Society staff.
- b) Provide introduction and briefing to Swedish RC internal auditor during visit in May.
- c) Timely Monthly Financial Analysis report was circulated to ensure managers are kept informed of the financial issues and risks so that immediate action can be taken to improve the financial situation and eliminate the risks or financial exposure.
- d) ZFU have maintained and to a certain extent improved the finance infrastructure by training, location skilful human resource and filling the gap when needs arise.

The work of the ZFU has helped to improve overall financial management within the Federation secretariat and National Societies in the region. More specifically, the achievements and impact of ZFU's work include:



Finance training for programme managers, Timor Leste, May

- The trainings carried out improved the overall financial accounting, management and reporting of federation and national society funds.
- The overall understanding on financial management and progress monitoring of activities has improved, providing evidence that the Federation has been effective in developing the financial knowledge and skills of all relevant personnel.
- Much improved financial control, for a region with annual turnover of annual appeal of CHF60 million and emergency appeal of CHF500 million (excluding Tsunami).

- Expenditures have been in line with planned budgets and activities with approved expenditure ceilings. There are no exposures on the funding plan.
- Timely financial reporting to donors and continuous monitoring on pledge-based financial statements.
- Smooth monthly cash transfer of funds to regional/country offices which enabled them and the National Societies to implement programme activities on time.

Constraints or Challenges

There were no major constraints during the reporting period. However, a constant challenge has been the maintenance of adequate human resources in the field due to regular and high staff turnover. Another issue is that, often it is not the most qualified and experienced who are appointed to fill vacant positions in the field. Such positions are sometimes filled by appointees from partner national societies who are willing to bear the cost of these appointees. For expediency, regional/country offices without the necessary resources accept these appointments. This causes disruptions to the work as these appointees need quite a lot of training before they can perform the required tasks.

Security

The post of Asia Pacific zone security coordinator only began on 15 March 2008 and has largely been in the set-up phase during this reporting period.

Programme purpose: To increase Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability by improving security management skills and thereby allowing for greater access into hazardous environments

Outcome(s)/Expected result(s)

It is expected that through the work of the unit, the overall management of safety and security in all operations will dramatically improve, thus enabling greater access to potential beneficiaries in hazardous environments.

To this end the following priorities has been identified for the unit:

Priority 1: Unplanned "reactive" activities:

- a) Response to critical Incidents

- b) Support to new disaster relief operations, FACT, ERU, RDRT missions etc.
- c) Backup for absent security delegates (if the situation warrants a security delegate's presence at the time)

Priority 2: Assisting heads of country offices to achieve minimum security requirements (MSR) within their delegations (primary function of this position) through:

- a) Field security assessments
- b) Advice on producing and maintaining their delegation Security Rules & Regulations
- c) Provision of training (field and KL-based)
- d) Provision of technical advice as requested

Priority 3: Monitoring and analyzing of the situation, provision of security training and improving disaster response capacity:

- a) Development of an information network across the zone
- b) Monitoring of political/security environments within the zone
- c) Revision and refinement of security training packages
- d) Country-specific security briefings and debriefings

Achievements

- The first few months of operation of this unit have broadly defined the priorities and direction that need to be followed in the future.
- An assessment mission to Pakistan following the attacks on Luna Caprese Restaurant (in which a Red Cross Red Crescent consultant was seriously injured) and on the office of an INGO in the town where the Red Cross Red Crescent earthquake operation is based, advised that, despite some concerns, the operation could still continue within an acceptable threshold of risk.
- Deployment in support of the Cyclone Nargis operation provided Red Cross Red Crescent personnel with over-watch for the politically sensitive developments surrounding the international response and provided them with a safety framework and security guide for use on the ground.
- Provision of technical advice to heads of country offices assisting with the management of issues as they arose and minimising any risks that they posed.
- Briefing and support to two new security delegates.

Constraints or Challenges

- The greatest challenge faced is one of limited manpower and resources. The Asia Pacific Zone Security Unit is staffed by only one security professional, with support from the Federation Security Unit in Geneva. As such, it is limited in the services it can offer, as well as the frequency with which it can offer those services. This is being addressed through prioritising the type of services that can be offered and the circumstances which will take precedence over the completion of other tasks and roles.
- The Federation teaches that security is not an add-on, but is an integral part of all planning and operations, and a continuous process. However, the challenge is to get managers to fully accept this and approach security management professionally. This is being addressed through routine contacts and trainings.
- Within the Pacific and Indian Oceans in particular, militaries are becoming more active in disaster response and are eager to work with the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement. Although there is an existing guidance document regarding relations between components of the Movement and military bodies (Resolution 7), there is a general disinclination among some senior managers to enter into dialogue with these forces. In cooperation with the IDRL Programme, there are plans to address this by raising awareness on how best to communicate with these militaries.
- The post is still being developed and so no changes are currently needed to minimise these challenges.

Building the capacity of not just the Federation secretariat offices, but also national societies, to effectively manage their security in the field, and how to form mutually acceptable relations with militaries engaged in disaster relief, will dramatically reduce the risks they face and enable them to

reach further into hostile territory, and hence reach more of those in need, with a reduced possibility of critical incidents that might delay or close down an operation.

Information Systems

The unit has been functioning with just the network administrator since the unit manager left the organisation at the end April 2008. However, although the human resource capacity has decreased, the unit has been able to maintain its high level and quality of support and services to the entire zone.

Achievements

The notable achievements for the period reviewed are as follows:

- Completed the implementation of an integrated information systems structure in the zone office which is part of a wider more efficient information system linking all zone offices and Geneva. The new system helps to save costs on communications through the newly implemented Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) technology. As a result of using VOIP technology, all phone calls between connected International Federation offices are free of charge. The system is also more secure to safeguard all information residing in and exchanged between zone offices and Geneva.
- Bangladesh: Reviewed and recommended changes to the IT systems in the Dhaka and Barisal offices. Created and fine tuned procedures and processes for compliance with Federation standards.
- Nepal: Compliance verification on the implementation of consistent hardware, software, and processes to ensure improved systems availability and faster resolution of issues. Identified and reviewed recurring IT issues.
- India: Reviewed IT and telecommunication systems. Streamlined systems configurations and produced proper documentation for record keeping and changes tracking.
- Myanmar: Maintained standard IT equipment and ensured communication links / information have been available during the disaster operations.

Constraints or Challenges

They include the following:

- Funding is a major challenge for some national societies, leaving their IT and telecom infrastructure in a poor state or they have none at all.
- Some national societies are using old, sub-standard equipment which are not in good condition and inefficient for the work they are doing.
- Some country offices have no IT staff or competent service providers to service the needs of the office.
- Some country offices have no proper IT infrastructure. Some country offices do not even have a proper network environment with servers and data backup facilities. This poses a challenge because without proper infrastructure in place, accidental deletion of data can happen resulting in permanent loss of information. Staff are also not able to collaborate efficiently and share resources like files and printers when they are not connected to the same network.
- Priority needs to be given to proper IT infrastructure to minimize the above-mentioned threats in addition to strengthening the capacity of all Federation and national societies offices in the zone to function efficiently and in a harmonized way.

Looking ahead

The unit is organizing regional IT and Telecom training for staff involved in IT service delivery units to improve their capability to support their respective countries and regions. Efforts will be made to meet the requests from country and regional offices like China, DPRK, Cambodia, Bangkok, Indonesia, Fiji, Bangladesh for further support in various issues ranging from infrastructure review and improvements to service analysis and standardization audits.

Communication and Knowledge Sharing

Programme purpose: To enhance Red Cross and Red Crescent programme impact and effectiveness through expanded national society domestic visibility and increased global International Federation brand identity.

Outcome(s)/Expected result(s)

1. National society capacity in communications and advocacy is enhanced.
2. Knowledge sharing within the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement in Asia Pacific zone is enhanced.

Achievements

While knowledge sharing activity was pursued during the full course of 2008, the communications manager post was not filled until July. This delayed implementation of some elements of the plan and significantly impacted budget expenditures year-to-date.

Progress achieved included the following:

- In knowledge sharing, key stakeholders were trained this year as trainers who then share their knowledge in their national societies and country or regional offices. Ten trainers were certified and two of them have now carried out trainings in their own environments.

Constraints or Challenges

- The greatest challenge has been the fact that, until July 2008, there was no communications unit at the zone office. Regional offices supported communications and knowledge sharing to the best of their ability within their respective regions, but alignment across the Asia Pacific and with plans of the Federation's communications unit in Geneva, has been limited.
- An additional challenge is the continuing need to balance emergency response and the desire to invest time and resources in capacity building in national societies, and regional and country offices.
- The pending redesign of FedNet has made it virtually impossible for the zone to design and implement end-user focused internet-based tools in the interim. The "wait and see" posture mandated by the Geneva secretariat poses challenges to being responsive to key stakeholders' needs in the short term.

Resource Mobilization and Planning Monitoring Evaluation & Reporting Unit

Progress/Achievements

- As of February 2008, the new Resource Mobilisation and Planning Monitoring Evaluation and Reporting Unit was established at the zone office, replacing the former regional reporting unit. The unit now has eight staff members – the coordinator, a resource mobilisation delegate who is staff on loan from Japanese Red Cross, a senior PMER officer, and four planning and reporting officers, covering the four regions of Asia Pacific.
- In resource mobilisation, this has been a set-up phase, the unit taking over tasks which were previously undertaken by the Asia Pacific Regional Dept. at the Federation Secretariat in Geneva.
- An important role of the unit has continued to be coordination, processing and final validation of all appeals, plans and reports in Asia Pacific – the 2006-7 final reports, pledge-based reports, and programme updates for the period January-June 08.
- Important support was provided for the Myanmar Cyclone and China Sichuan Earthquake disasters – for the emergency appeals and operations updates, as well as liaison with partner national societies for resource mobilisation. Frequent quality operation updates undoubtedly contributed to successful resource mobilisation.

- The unit has also led the 2009-10 planning process for the zone, with an Asia Pacific Zone Planning Meeting being held 7-9 July. The unit was part of a Geneva PMER Dept task force set up to develop the new guidelines and templates for the new 2009-10 two year rolling plan cycle.



Programme managers from Pakistan Red Crescent Society and Federation country office building a “Problem Tree” as part of Project Planning Process (PPP) Training, Islamabad, May 2008

- The unit has provided direct support to regional offices and emergency relief operations. One planning and reporting officer has been seconded for two months to the Federation Myanmar country office to provide support in reporting for Cyclone Nargis operations, and another was attached to the East Asia regional office to provide support in reporting for the Sichuan earthquake operations, as well as for the 2009-10 planning process. The Southeast Asia regional planning and reporting officer visited the Southeast Asia regional office in Bangkok, and the Vietnam country office to assist with the 2009-10 planning process. The Pacific regional officer spent time in the regional office in Suva to help compile the 2009-10 plan as well as reports.
- A number of initiatives were undertaken to build the capacity of PMER focal points and programme managers in the country offices and national societies. These included PPP and M&E training workshops in Pakistan and India, followed by mentoring for individual programmes. One-day internal PPP and M&E trainings were also carried out for the zone unit.
- The unit has been actively supporting the Geneva PMER Department in the development of a new Federation PMER training package. It has reviewed and provided feedback on proposals and training modules, and is now actively providing advice/comments in the current discussions between the Geneva PMER Department and the ICRC on the development of joint PMER training materials. It is also part of the new task force to take forward the proposal for the establishment of a Federation-wide M&E system.
- A representative of the unit also participated in the monitoring and evaluation meeting of the Australian Red Cross in Melbourne in June and advised on the development of an M&E framework within the National Society.

Constraints or Challenges

- In times of disasters there is an important need for adequate reporting support to country and regional offices. This was the case in the Myanmar and China disasters, when staff were seconded to Myanmar and China, but this left the unit with limited capacity to manage its ongoing work. Part-time help for the unit was engaged as a temporary solution. However, for the future it is important that a mechanism for surge capacity is put into place.
- While the PMER development efforts have had some impact, the quality of reports from a number of countries have remained at an unsatisfactory level, thus requiring much editing work by the unit before they are posted on the website or sent to donors. Support from senior management at the country and regional offices is needed to ensure reports are of a better quality.

Human Resources Unit

The human resource (HR) units in the Federation zone offices will replace the Geneva Field Personnel department and gradually take over functions which deal with the recruitment of delegates, development and other HR-related issues.

The HR unit at the Asia-Pacific zone office in Kuala Lumpur was set up in April 2008. The unit expects the transition of HR responsibilities from Geneva to the zone will be completed by October 2008. Following that, all HR matters concerning delegates in the Asia Pacific Zone will be handled by the unit. It will also take responsibility for all HR issues related to national staff in the zone office, including staff development. The unit will also provide technical advice to regional and country offices on HR issues, and support national societies in the zone on request.

Since the unit was set up, it has been occupied with issues related to the transition of responsibilities from Geneva, as well as the recruitment and development of all delegates in the emergency operations in China (Sichuan earthquake) and Myanmar (Cyclone Nargis).

Administration Unit

Developments/Achievements

The zone Administration unit has expanded in line with the expansion of the Kuala Lumpur office to become the International Federation's Asia Pacific zone office. It currently consists of 9 staff who provide administrative support and assistance to the management, as well as the programme and service units within the zone office. This support and assistance is increasingly being extended to regional and country offices.

The main tasks of the Administration unit are to: ensure that the zone office is adequately maintained; office utilities and automation are functioning properly; ensure stocks and stationeries are available in adequate amounts and on a timely basis; arrange travel and accommodation arrangements for zone office and other Federation secretariat staff; arrange and organize bookings and preparations for events, meetings, trainings or workshops; prepare the zone office welcome pack; advise on visa applications and submissions; organize procurement for the Zone office; and keep an inventory of all fixed assets, record their movements and ensure that the items are insured. It also organizes the distribution and circulation of documents, mailing and courier services, and assists in the production of training materials.

The Administration unit also organizes the housing for delegates, drafts and negotiates rental contracts, monitors renewal of lease agreements, arranges for maintenance work for the apartments and conducts furniture inventories. It liaises and maintains good relations with the Protocol Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, immigration office and embassies concerning visas and the accreditation of delegates.

Since January, with the growth of the zone office, there has been a tremendous increase in the number of requests for support and assistance from regional and country offices, and also partner national societies in the region, in terms of travel bookings, hotel accommodation, visa arrangements and information on events.

Constraints or Challenges

The Administration unit strives to provide consistent service delivery in an efficient and timely manner, but there are many challenges. A major one is getting service providers, suppliers and even government bodies, to respond promptly to orders, requests or queries from the unit. The unit has to persevere and diligently follow up on matters.

Working in partnership

There has been a long tradition of generally good cooperation between the Federation secretariat, the ICRC and partner national societies working in Asia Pacific, and the zone office has placed a high priority in strengthening these relations. Similarly, throughout the region Federation offices regularly seek to build and sustain partnerships with international and regional organisations, particularly when these can be of practical benefit to national societies of the region.

There are currently 110 formal integration or service agreements between Federation zonal, regional and country offices with partner national societies (including tsunami countries). However over and beyond such formal service agreements, there is emerging a pattern of more effective and results-oriented cooperation between Movement partners. Examples over the past six months include:

- progress being made in setting up HIV global alliances with 15 national societies and their partners, the operational alliance in Nepal, and cooperation agreement strategy (CAS) processes underway or being re-launched in 10 countries;
- a new joint ICRC/Federation initiative to promote a harmonised approach to supporting the capacity development of Afghanistan Red Crescent;
- the developing of a programmatic approach with partners to the Cambodian Red Cross disaster management programme;
- the willingness of several partner national societies to engage with the zone and regional offices in a more strategic dialogue on international programming, and to provide staff on loan to these offices;
- Global Fund funding for the Pacific HIV programme;
- collaboration with the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) secretariat in the Myanmar relief operation;
- the Federation secretariat convening and leading the shelter cluster in the Myanmar cyclone operation.

Looking ahead

While reasonably good progress is being made in establishing the zone office as an entity that is valued by Asia Pacific societies and partners working with them, more work is needed to build on the aspirations of the Federation of the Future and the Framework for Action. High on the agenda will be encouraging societies to consider the commitments entered into at the 2007 International Conference and other statutory meetings and what support they will require to follow up on these.

On the operational front, it is very likely that the coming months will see new flood and cyclone disasters throughout the entire Asia Pacific region linked to annual patterns of floods and cyclones. Therefore efforts will be made to ensure that there is a high degree of preparedness both within the countries themselves and within the disaster management unit at the zone office in order to ensure an effective Red Cross Red Crescent response.

Building up the recovery programmes in Myanmar and China will be another priority. Particular efforts will be made to ensure that there is a responsive coordination mechanism to bring in partner national societies to play an active and meaningful role in these efforts.

Finally at the zone office level, efforts will be made in strengthening communications and dialogue with external partners, as well as ensuring that there is high quality management follow up on existing programme plans and reporting commitments.

How we work

The International Federation's activities are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

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