

# CENTRAL ASIA

## REGIONAL PROGRAMMES

CHF 24,580,000

2,600,000 beneficiaries

**Programme No. 01.42/98**

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Six years of severe economic dislocation have ravaged the economies of the five countries of Central Asia - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Despite signs of some overall improvement in terms of GDP per capita, the situation of the most vulnerable continues to go from bad to worse.

A Federation-sponsored Kazakhstan Vulnerability Survey in 1997 documented this process. Half the respondents consumed less than the minimum food requirements, as defined by the official Kazakhstan Institute of Nutrition. Some 46 per cent did not have winter shoes, 62 per cent had problems heating their homes and 67 per cent said their families would not be able to afford to pay for their funerals. The survey confirmed in very real terms Kazakhstan's drop on the UNDP's global Human Development Indicator, from 54th place in 1993 to 93rd in 1997. The toughness and resilience of the people of Central Asia have helped them cope so far, but with each passing year their resources are depleted further.

Although precise data are more difficult to come by in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, statistics and anecdotal evidence suggest their situation is no less dire than in Kazakhstan. In Turkmenistan, real consumer purchasing power fell 30 per cent in the first half of 1996 compared with 1995. In Uzbekistan, the all-important cotton harvest remains depressed.

In Kyrgyzstan, despite a remarkable economic comeback, the World Bank estimates that half the Kyrgyz population lives in poverty, including 23 per cent in extreme poverty. And in Tajikistan, where a negotiated settlement between the main civil war antagonists gives rise to hopes for a peaceful future, a large part of the population continues to rely on international food aid. One hopeful sign, however, is the marked improvement in agricultural production in Gorno Badakshan, in eastern Tajikistan, which promises to eliminate soon the chronic food insecurity of virtually the entire population of the region.

### *Objectives in 1998*

The work of 33 Federation Delegates and 100 local staff in Central Asia has the twin objective of providing relief to the most vulnerable and assisting the five National Societies so that they can gradually take over this crucial role. When the Regional Delegation (RD) was established in 1993,

much of its work was oriented towards direct relief. Four years later, there is still much relief activity but it is complemented by a drive to build the capacities of the National Societies. This is in line with Federation Development Policy, the Code of Conduct and the Copenhagen Declaration.

The RD remains committed to providing much-needed relief to Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan in the Central Asian highlands. However, in light of the dramatic conclusions of the Kazakhstan Vulnerability Survey, there will be a renewed emphasis on providing assistance to the most vulnerable - children, especially in institutions, the isolated elderly and multi-children families - in the lowland countries of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Much of this assistance will be concentrated on the Aral Sea area which, in addition to economic dislocation, is the scene of ecological devastation.

For 1998, the Federation is appealing for funds aimed at building the capacities of the National Societies in some key areas, including Disaster Preparedness, Unstable Populations, Information and Advocacy, Youth Activities, Fund-Raising and Volunteer Management. These programmes are vital, not only because they will eventually benefit thousands of people but because they will help the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of Central Asia carry out their humanitarian mandate in a sustainable manner.

## *Programmes in 1998*

### Relief

#### Kazakhstan - Family Food Parcels

In 1997, a Federation/Japanese Red Cross-financed vulnerability survey across Kazakhstan revealed enormous hardships faced by a large sector of the population. The groups identified by the survey as most in need will be given family food parcels. This programme, spanning a crescent of poverty from western areas north of the Caspian, through the Aral Sea region and southern Kazakhstan to the borders of China in the east, will also assist 21,000 lonely elderly and handicapped people. The programme will be operated directly by the Red Crescent and Red Cross Society of Kazakhstan with the assistance of the Federation. (A Federation appeal launched mid November 1997 sought funding for the 1997-98 winter months; financing is needed to continue the programme to the end of the year.)

#### Turkmenistan - Family Food Parcels

There is serious concern over the increasing food insecurity affecting vulnerable people in Turkmenistan, after a series of failed harvests and environmental degradation. A food parcel programme will provide 15,000 multi-children families (approximately 120,000 persons) in Turkmenistan with a monthly family food parcel during the difficult winter months. The food parcel is designed to be a nutrition-rich supplement to existing food consumption. All items will be purchased and packed locally, involving local small enterprises.

#### Kyrgyzstan - Food to Multi-children Families

Continuing an existing programme, dry food will be delivered to 70,000 members of multi-children families, who are among the most vulnerable members of a society in transition. The project will target rural mountainous regions, which is statistically where poverty is most widespread.

#### Kyrgyzstan - Food to Elderly and Invalids

Continuing an existing programme, dry food will be delivered to vulnerable elderly and invalid beneficiaries. The 1998 programme will be identical to the previous programme, providing 1,038 metric tons to 25,000 elderly and handicapped individuals. The supplement (equal to 466 calories per day) is meant to cover outstanding needs for a period of 12 months.

#### Tajikistan (West) - Food to Elderly

The Federation will continue its food deliveries to vulnerable elderly beneficiaries with no economic support except a state pension. Many have seen their relatives leave Tajikistan and are left alone and without family support in extremely difficult circumstances. The programme aims to improve the living conditions of vulnerable elderly people in Dushanbe and other urban areas as well as some mountainous areas in West Tajikistan. A few areas excluded in 1997, due to the security situation, will be included in the 1998 programme, expanding it from 25,000 beneficiaries in 1997 to 30,000 beneficiaries in 1998.

#### Tajikistan - Food to Institutions

Psychiatric institutions such as leprosy and mental hospitals are desperately in need of food for patients. Following emergency distributions in 1996 and 1997, the Federation will begin regular food deliveries to these institutions in addition to its regular distributions to hospitals and internats. Altogether, the project will serve approximately 3,700 beneficiaries.

#### Tajikistan - Heating and Refurbishment in GBAO

For three years the Federation has provided desperately needed coal to hospitals and schools in the Pamir mountains. This programme will continue in 1998 but will emphasise refurbishing these institutions so that they need less coal for heating. Coal requirements will drop from 3,000 MT in 1997/1998 to 2,500 MT for 1998/1999. This is due to three factors: installation of electric boilers in some institutions to replace coal burning heaters, better targeting of institutions and local manufacture of coal briquettes from the coal dust. In all, the programme will benefit 54,000 people in 330 institutions.

#### Kyrgyzstan - Food and Hygiene Supplies to Orphanages

Food and hygiene supplies will be distributed to 6,000 children in orphanages and similar institutions, that have been largely forgotten in the tumultuous transition period after the fall of the Soviet Union.

#### Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan - Food Assistance to Pregnant Women in Aral Sea Region

Infant mortality is high and rising in the Aral Sea Region, due to a combination of ecological, nutritional and other problems that plague the area. The Federation proposes to help reduce the alarming death rate by providing women with nutritious food during the last six months of pregnancy and the first three months after birth. The programme will assist and provide supplementary food to 6,000 pregnant women in the Aral Sea area.

#### Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan - Food Assistance to Children in Aral Sea Region

The programme will provide supplementary nutritious food to 10,000 children in various types of institutions - orphanages, institutions for handicapped children and isolated schools and kindergartens - in communities situated close to the Aral Sea and Amu Darya river basin. All food products will be cooked and consumed in the institutions. The programme will be directly operated by the three National Societies of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan.

#### Tajikistan - Public Canteens

The Public Canteens Programme, a relief programme with a social impact, started in mid 1995. It is managed by the Tajikistan Red Crescent Society (TRCS) with assistance from the Federation. In 1997 the number of canteens increased from 5 to 15. In 1998 the numbers will expand again, from 15 to a total of 25. The programme aims to improve the living conditions of some of the most vulnerable elderly people and street children in urban areas of West Tajikistan, by providing one hot meal per day, six days a week, on a rotation basis. On average, each

beneficiary is provided meals for six months out of the year. By the end of 1998 a total of approximately 9,000 beneficiaries will have received supplementary feeding.

#### Kazakhstan - Public Canteens

As a response to the desperate economic situation revealed by the Kazakhstan Vulnerability Survey, a total of 15 soup kitchens will be operated in seven regions for 3,600 vulnerable people - the isolated elderly, handicapped and multi-children families - throughout winter 1998/1999. The National Society has already opened three such canteens, partly financed through successful local fund-raising efforts. Venues for all the public canteens will be provided free of charge by local authorities.

### Health

#### Regional - Community Based First Aid

The reappearance of illnesses that were held in check during the Soviet period necessitates a new community-based approach to the prevention and treatment of diseases. A CBFA programme has already started up in Tajikistan and will be extended elsewhere in the region in 1998. This programme also contains elements of Disaster Preparedness, Unstable Populations and Typhoid Prevention programmes.

#### Kazakhstan - Refurbishment of Institutions

Red Crescent and Red Cross Society of Kazakhstan hospitals and institutions, which have deteriorated badly during the past six years of transition, will be re-equipped. They will be provided with medical equipment, drugs, bedding and hospital clothes.

#### Tajikistan - Medical Distribution to Rural (SUB) and District (CRH) Hospitals

Continuing an ECHO programme, basic medicines are distributed to 110 rural and some district level hospitals in Tajikistan. The hospitals receiving drugs from the programme will be visited once a month by the monitoring teams. During these visits prescription methods, storage and registration of drugs will be checked. Whether patients receive drugs free of charge will also be checked. The number of beneficiaries will be 24,000.

#### Tajikistan - Medicines to Ambulatory Health Posts (FAPs) and Dispensaries (SVAs)

Approximately 600 ambulatory health posts and 300 dispensaries in Khatlon Oblast and the Rayons of Republican Subordination received a medical kit and medical and hygienic supplies in October 1997. These kits will be revised in February 1998 and in May 1998 the next distribution will take place. It is anticipated that these medicines will reach at least 1.5 million vulnerable patients.

#### Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan - Reform of Medical-Social Services in the Aral Sea Region

A reform of the Visiting Nurses programme took place in Uzbekistan in 1996. The programme will be expanded to include Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. The Federation will furnish medical social centres with basic equipment and stocks. The programme involves "Training of Trainers" workshops, provision of nursing kits, printing of resource materials as well as advice on finding local sources of funds in order to continue to provide services to the lonely elderly and handicapped.

#### Tajikistan - Reform of Medical Social Service

Assistance — mainly home and social care — will be provided to 600 identified elderly and infirm people by 42 visiting nurses. The programme will cover four rayons in Dushanbe, the capital, and four main cities of Tajikistan. Training will be given to the Visiting Nurses in home and social care, as well as first aid. The programme co-ordination capacity of HQ will be strengthened. Fund-raising programmes will be established by the TRCS in order to support the salary costs of the visiting nurses - which is not borne by this programme.

#### Tajikistan - Typhoid Prevention

In an attempt to reduce the incidence of typhoid, the Federation supplied chlorine to the Dushanbe Water Authority in May 1997 and later to six towns outside the capital, launched an extensive Public Health Campaign and did limited plumbing repairs for households and public taps. Since it is unlikely that the Water Authorities will be able to chlorinate the water from their own resources, the Federation will continue to provide chlorine in 1998, covering a minimum of 790,000 people in Dushanbe and six other towns, as a part of the CBFA programme. In 1997, in Dushanbe alone, 24,000 people contracted typhoid in 1997.

#### Social Welfare

##### Tajikistan - Street Children

Tajikistan's political conflict and economic collapse have led to the appearance of street children in Dushanbe. In response to this growing problem a permanent rehabilitation centre for children ages 5 to 17 will be established in the capital, to create a safe haven for youth at risk and provide services for their protection and development. The staff of the centre will consist of a psychiatrist, a doctor, a lawyer versed in human rights, cooks to prepare one meal a day, teachers of extracurricular subjects such as sewing, dancing, sports, and tutors for children experiencing difficulty in school. The centre will be a daytime facility but may help to offer night shelter on an emergency basis only until other solutions can be found.

#### Disaster Preparedness

##### Regional - Policy Support

Operational and procedural relationships between different National Society structures and between the National Societies and respective government agencies will be identified and established. This is designed to ensure effective implementation of the whole Disaster Preparedness programme as well as advancing the concepts and basic principles contained in the Federation's development strategy in Central Asia.

##### Regional - Staff Training

The 58 Disaster Preparedness seminars and workshops (including five seminars at the regional level) conducted throughout Central Asia in 1997 started a process that needs to continue in 1998. The 1998 plan will therefore be a continuation of the on-going programmes, expanding to at risk oblasts and rayons not covered in 1997. Community Based First Aid (CBFA) being a major component of Disaster Preparedness, the training to be given in 1998 will incorporate this element.

##### Regional - Public Education

Major public education activities were carried out in 1997, including the distribution to the public of over half a million copies of various printed materials. These activities will continue in 1998, with the active participation of the national Ministries for Emergencies, who are increasingly interested in promoting public education. There will be increasing emphasis on the use of broadcast quality video, as studies show that television is the most popular information medium in the countries of Central Asia.

### Regional - Rapid Assessment and Response Teams

Rapid Assessment and Response Teams (RAT) are being established at the headquarters level of the five National Societies. This programme aims to extend the introduction of such teams to a total of 14 oblasts identified by the Societies.

### Regional - Stocks and Transport

In 1998 a modest list of relief items for a total of 5,000 target beneficiaries (in a region of 50 million people) will be procured — ensuring a response only to localised disasters.

### Regional - Communications and Disaster Information

The early notification system put in place in 1996 is working well. The 1998 plan will build on and consolidate this strength and improve the communications skills of those who are and will be using the radio equipment. The programme does not foresee additional communications devices. Rather, it will emphasise monitoring, training and maintenance.

### Regional - Regional Conference and Co-ordination

A Regional Disaster Preparedness Conference is planned for October 1998. The topic will be Urban Earthquakes. The date of the conference will coincide with the 50th anniversary of the great Ashgabad earthquake, which occurred on 6 October, 1948.

### Regional - Monitoring and Evaluation

Programme monitoring is a process that is built into the Disaster Preparedness programme. In addition, however, an external evaluation team will carry out an independent programme review in order to measure performance against objectives.

### Regional - Unstable Populations/Early Warning, Rapid Response, Care and Maintenance

By putting in place emergency stocks and establishing a rapid response unit, the Federation seeks to assist its National Societies in Central Asia in responding quickly to population movements. An Early Warning system will ensure effective communication from the local level to warn of impending or actual movements of population. Intensive training will be given, especially in areas of unstable populations, in order to build on local capacity to cope with the initial emergency as well as the resulting care and maintenance needs.

### ***Regional - Population Movements/Advocacy***

This project provides funding for the National Societies to raise public awareness of issues regarding population movements and to advocate on behalf of populations in movement. It will provide selected branches with computer equipment and supplies and fund the production of advocacy material (refugee newsletters, posters, flyers, video spots, radio spots, etc.).

### Dissemination of Red Cross/Red Crescent Principles

#### Regional - Information Officers

This programme, designed to enable the National Societies to develop their image, began in 1997. An important element of the programme was a three-year phase-out. Salary support would be paid in full during the first year, but in the second year, the National Society would contribute half the salary support, and all of it in the third year. A programme budget would similarly be reduced in the second and third years, with no support foreseen at the end of the programme after the three years.

### Regional - Visibility

The five Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Central Asia will be assisted in producing signs, logos and emblems because, although the National Societies spend most of their resources on aid to the most vulnerable, some branches do not have the necessary identification labels to denote their presence.

### Regional - Advocacy for Red Cross/Red Crescent Principles

Co-ordinated by the Federation, an advocacy campaign for the ideals of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement will be designed and carried out by the National Societies. The campaign will reflect the results of a public opinion survey on public attitudes to the Movement and to some of the issues it promotes.

### Capacity Building

#### Regional - Revolving Funds Project

National Society staff will be trained to run small businesses and then given an opportunity to apply for small loans in order to start up new enterprises.

#### Regional - Volunteer Management

An assessment will be made of the current situation and future needs of the five National Societies of Central Asia, in terms of volunteer capacity. A Volunteer Management System will be introduced and training conducted in order to enable the National Societies to make optimum use of volunteers in their work.

#### Regional - Youth Activities

Today's youth — tomorrow's leaders for Central Asia — have few programmes devoted to developing their leadership abilities and teaching them to understand values and principles such as those of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. This programme will develop and implement a youth programme in one National Society that will serve as a model and source of expertise for all five National Societies in Central Asia and share techniques with the other National Societies.

#### Regional - National Society Vehicle Support Programme

The vehicle fleet of the National Societies of Central Asia consists of a large variety of vehicles - ranging from Soviet-era vans to newer western transport. National Societies will be helped to maintain and manage them properly.

#### Kyrgyzstan - Income Generation

The success of the "sheep and goats" programmes in Tajikistan has encouraged the Red Crescent Society of Kyrgyzstan to ask for start-up capital to fund similar programmes for its branches. A one time cash grant will fund small income generation projects for each of the nation's seven regions. The programmes have been developed by the regional chairpeople through consultation with experts in the various fields, and will be managed by the regional Red Crescent chapters. Profits will be channelled directly back into the regional chapters to support programmes in those areas.

#### Regional - Resource Development Advisers

In 1997, the Swedish Red Cross agreed to initiate the next stage of Institutional Development by assigning the first Resource Development Adviser (RDA) to support the staff of the Red Crescent Society of Uzbekistan in maximising its fund-raising campaigns. In 1998, the

Federation plans to continue this critical initiative with the four other Societies of Central Asia by assigning an RDA to them (for the Tajikistan component, see below). Participating National Societies and other donors that sponsor an RDA will be asked to provide all necessary support for a minimum 12 month assignment.

#### Tajikistan - Income Generation

A programme to establish income generation activities — through animal husbandry and agricultural programmes — started in 1997 in West Tajikistan. It will continue, along with other innovative income generation ideas. The income generation programmes will be complemented by fund raising and cost recovery programmes, within a comprehensive Resource Development Programme which will also seek to strengthen the capacity of the Tajikistan Red Crescent Society in overall resource management

#### Tajikistan (GBO) - Shoe-making

A programme begun in 1997 will continue, with an emphasis on teaching students to make their own shoes. This relief-to-development programme is designed to reduce the need for outside humanitarian aid. Tools will be donated to the schools to enable shoemaking lessons to continue. This six month project will serve a total of 11,000 beneficiaries with 6,000 pairs of new shoes produced, 3,000 pairs of old shoes repaired and 2,000 pairs of local factory made shoes distributed.

#### Tajikistan - Institutional Development

The presence of a Development Delegate in the Tajikistan Delegation will continue, with an emphasis on the full participation of the National Society in relief programmes. During 1997, development at headquarters level was prioritised, but in 1998 the branches will be strengthened with training in volunteer management and fund-raising. A small grants fund will be set up. Image-building materials will be produced locally. A local consultant will give hands-on training in effective communication and administration.

#### Training

##### Uzbekistan - Equipment for Training Centre

The Red Crescent Society of Uzbekistan has completed a multi-storey training centre, using its own funds and innovative rental agreements. It now needs to equip it, in order to be able to begin using it and generating income from it. The first requirement is to fully equip six classrooms and an auditorium.

##### Kyrgyzstan - Youth Centre

After the youth programmes of the former Soviet Union collapsed, children in Kyrgyzstan have had few opportunities for organised activities. The Red Crescent Society of Kyrgyzstan plans to meet this need - and create a present and future volunteer base at the same time - by establishing a Youth Centre. The KRCS will establish seven Youth Centres, one in each Oblast, to serve as training centres for the young people in topics such as Aids Prevention, First Aid, and Health Education. In addition, the Centres will co-ordinate certain social service activities of the youth such as work in orphanages, assisting the elderly and collecting used clothing.

#### Delegation Management

Towards the end of 1998, the Federation will commission an external consultant to conduct a monitoring and evaluation exercise on all aspects of the Delegation's work.