Federation Secretariat support strategy to Serbia and Montenegro

2006-2009

I. Introduction
This document provides a breakdown of what will be prioritized by the Federation Secretariat within its work in Serbia and Montenegro in 2006-2009. It informs partners about the Secretariat’s priorities; it gives guidance to the Secretariat staff and forms the basis for more detailed annual planning.

The document draws on the Strategy 2010, the Strategy of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the outcomes of the 6th European Regional Conference held in Berlin, decision taken by the Federation Governing Board, and decisions taken by sub-regional groupings such as Kiev Conference. It also incorporates directions described in the Change strategy for the Federation Secretariat and the Europe Implementation Plan of the change strategy.

The outlined structure and strategic direction of the Federation delegation in Serbia and Montenegro does not apply in case of emergencies because this may require a different temporary set-up to effectively support the national society.

II. Humanitarian context
The state union of Serbia and Montenegro is made up of two member states, the state of Montenegro and the state of Serbia that includes the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina and the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija which is currently under an international administration in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolution 1244. Serbia and Montenegro is located in south-central Europe, bordered on the north by Hungary, on the west by Croatia and Bosnia, on the east by Romania and Bulgaria and on the south by Macedonia and Albania.

**Serbia and Montenegro at a glance:**

**Area:** Serbia and Montenegro covers a territory of 102,173 sq. km. Serbia covers an area of 88,361 sq. km. whereas the area of Montenegro is 13,812 sq. km.

**Capital:** Beograd
Population: 8,148,576 inhabitants (without Kosovo and Metohija). The number of inhabitants of Serbia (without Kosovo and Metohija) is 7,498,001. Montenegro has a population of 650,575 inhabitants.

National make-up: Serbs account for 82.8 percent of the population of Serbia (without Kosovo and Metohija) and Montenegrins for 61.9 percent of the inhabitants of Montenegro. In addition to Serbs and Montenegrins that are the most numerous in their respective member states, the following national minorities live in Serbia and Montenegro: Hungarians; Romanians; Roma; Slovaks; Bulgarians; Albanians; etc. National minorities are guaranteed rights under the highest international standards.


GDP real growth: 6.5% (2004) (without Kosovo)

Life expectancy at birth: 73.2 years (UN)

Infant mortality rate: 16 per 1,000 live births (UN)

Adult literacy rate: 98 per cent (2000, UNICEF)

Unemployment rate: 30-35% (note: unemployment is approximately 50% in Kosovo)

Inflation rate: 12-13% (2004, estimated)

The break-up of the former Yugoslavia in 1991 was followed by war in the newly independent neighbouring states (1991-1995) and a conflict in Serbia’s southern province of Kosovo (1999). Serbia and Montenegro has been badly affected by the social and economic impact of the wars, with high levels of unemployment (current statistics range from 32% to 34.5%). The country remains in a state of economic, political and social transition. Although the economic malaise has steadied, modest growth has to date had little impact on the most vulnerable. Indeed, the situation facing those at the bottom of the social ladder is worsening as factories and other state-owned enterprises continue to restructure or close. Poverty is endemic with some 10% of the population of 10.5 million living on less than USD 4 per day. Moreover, a high proportion of the population lives just above the poverty line.

Serbia and Montenegro signed a new Constitutional Charter in January 2003, formally ending the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The new State Union allows for both republics to hold a referendum on independence in early 2006, though a date in 2005 is being discussed. In the meantime, much authority is delegated from the federal to the republican governments. As most observers predicted, the State Union is experiencing problems as Belgrade and Podgorica, the capitals of the two republics, struggle to harmonise economic policies. The State Union is viewed with scepticism by many citizens. After three failed attempts, Serbia elected a president in 2004, but frequent changes in government alliances and the assassination in 2003 of Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic have led to a climate of political uncertainty. As a result, political, economic and social reforms have slowed. For instance, the restructuring of the health system is still under discussion and school system reform has been stopped, the changes rolled back.

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1 Survey of Living Standards of the Population (May 2002)
Both states are implementing separate Poverty Reduction Strategies, supported by a host of EU agencies. Started in 2004 in Montenegro and in 2005 in Serbia, both activities are still in early stages with plans of action being developed and line ministries considering future strategies. The governments of Serbia and Montenegro are working to develop durable solutions for Europe’s largest population of refugees and internally displaced people (IDP) - 140,000 refugees, according to the early 2005 census results, as well as approximately 226,000 IDPs according to the UN. The return of refugees to Bosnia–Herzegovina is finished (70,000 returns, 68% of refugees) and the return to Croatia is slow (50,000 returns, which is only 38% and with approximately 1000 people per year in the last two years). About 12,000 IDPs have returned to Kosovo since 1999, however the outbreak of violence in March 2004 has caused new fears and slowed the process of return down. The closing down of collective centres for refugees and IDPs has additionally made their situation worse, especially in conjunction with the significant decrease of international humanitarian assistance.

HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis (TB) are not recognised as a major health problem with incidence of both being below 100 cases per year. However, research shows that only about 20% of young people between ages 20-24 have adequate knowledge of HIV/AIDS, and young people account for 40% of HIV incidence. While incidence of TB is stabilised at 30 cases per 100,000 population overall, the fact that TB is still present after a period when it was thought to be eradicated is a reason for concern.

Socially and health-wise speaking, elderly population is the most vulnerable. The proportions of people aged 60+ years are 22.46% and 22.00% respectively for Serbia and Montenegro. For the slightly older age group of 65+ years, the proportion overall has increased from 9.8% to 18.1% between 1980 and 2002. Those aged 65+ years are poorer than those aged less than 65 years with people with agricultural pensions and those without pensions faring the worst. Single person and two-person households and those where the head of the household is a pensioner are in exceptionally bad situation. Pensioners (age 65+ years) experience poverty of less than US$ 2.5 per day at a rate of 10.9%, slightly above the average. However, overall poverty of US$ 2.5 per day in the 65+ population is 14.8%.

**Prone ness to disasters**
The highest disaster risks in Serbia & Montenegro are from industrial accidents as a result of under-investment, earthquakes in the south, flooding and landslides in mountainous regions, and forest fires, particularly in Montenegro. There is also a risk of civil unrest connected to the uncertain status of Kosovo. The country’s emergency services and Red Cross have significant disaster response experience; from the conflict and civil unrest in the 1990s, the NATO bombing campaign of 1999, and the forest fires of 2003.

**III. Serbia and Montenegro Red Cross profile and priorities**

**3.1. Serbia and Montenegro Red Cross Society profile: at a glance**

| Founded: | 1875 |
| Members: | 1,000,000 (2003) |
| Volunteers: | 280,000 (2003) |
| Staff: | 690 (2003) |
| Structure: | One national organisation, two republic organisations, two provincial organisations and 181 branch offices (excluding Kosovo) |

The architecture of the state union is reflected within the National Society as the headquarters of the Serbia and Montenegro Red Cross Society (SMRCS, the former Yugoslav Red Cross) assumes a more coordinative role, while the republican bodies of the Red Cross of Serbia and Red Cross of Montenegro deliver services and programmes. In June 2005, the national society has adopted the new statutes that represent the changes
in its structure and functioning. Statues of republic organisations are to follow. A memorandum of understanding and a series of project agreements have been signed with the International Federation and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) which signifies a positive development in formalising partnerships and support and adds clarity to commitments, roles and responsibilities.

Humanitarian aid, which was very significant after the Kosovo crisis in 1999, is reducing and bulk food aid came to an end early in 2004. The national society has a long history of successful non-relief projects and service delivery, such as food distribution over the past ten years. However, it is now facing decisions about its activities post-relief, and how to fund these. The national society’s relationship as an auxiliary to government is also being redefined as part of the process of political and economic transition. A revised Red Cross Law is a key part of this process, together with related laws on lottery funding, first aid training for drivers and regulations on responsibility for the recruitment of blood donors. Much effort has been invested by the Federation delegation in Belgrade and the national society in drafting and advocating with government for these laws, which define both the role and responsibilities of the national society as well as its funding.

The Red Cross situation in Kosovo is still unresolved, with Red Cross of Kosova and Red Cross of Kosovo and Metohija working largely independently. The headquarters of Serbia and Montenegro Red Cross and Red Cross of Kosovo are looking for ways to overcome the political obstacles and reach a modus for coordinated work, all in the interest of the most vulnerable population.

3.2. Serbia and Montenegro Red Cross Society priorities

The mission of the SMRCS, according to the new statutes is as follows: to prevent and alleviate human suffering, to encourage volunteering and readiness of the members of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in protecting life and health, to help maintain human dignity and provide support especially during armed conflicts and other emergencies, to support improvements in social care, develop solidarity with everyone in need of protection and assistance and to improve partner relationships with other organisations.

Strategic goals of the national society were defined in the Development Strategy of the Yugoslav Red Cross 2002-2005 and these are still valid:

1. Modernisation of the national society
2. Promotion of the national society programmes
3. Improvement of the national society resources
4. Building partnership relations within the Movement of the Red Cross and with non-governmental organisations
5. Promotion of public relations, including marketing, image, fundraising.

Furthermore, observing the Federation Strategy 2010, the national society has identified following key areas as priorities in working with vulnerable population:

1. Promotion of humanitarian values and principles of the Red Cross in the largest scope of target groups
2. Broad information on international human rights referring specific target groups (military forces, police and others)
3. Disaster response preparedness
4. Disaster response actions
5. Health care for the people in the community
6. Tracing service.
Within these areas, there are specific objectives as the following:

**Disaster management:**
- The country’s most vulnerable refugees, IDPs and socially vulnerable people maintain their dignity, their minimum living standards and are well nourished.
- The effects of local and national disasters are mitigated by a rapid, well-resourced and coordinated response mechanism.
- The national society continues to provide cost effective relief assistance (food and non-food) to beneficiaries in need, while strengthening its capacity to be prepared for, and respond to emergency situations.

**Health and care:**
- The quality of life of particularly vulnerable populations is increased.
- The general public awareness of at-risk behaviours is raised and as a result, the behaviour is changed.
- The national society is recognised as a credible, influential actor within the sphere of health and care, delivering sustainable services for vulnerable people, representing and advocating for them and promoting healthy life styles.

**Humanitarian values:**
- Strengthening understanding of the Movement’s Fundamental Principles, International Humanitarian Law and humanitarian values within Red Cross staff and volunteers and the public.
- Reducing stigma and discrimination of HIV/AIDS and TB infected people, ethnic minorities, socially marginalised and people living with disabilities.

**Organisational development:**
- Development of human resources including (1) training of staff and volunteers; (2) developing the unified training system for staff and volunteers; (3) developing policies and viable strategies to recruit and retain members and volunteers.
- Programme focus.
- Clear legal base.
- Stabile and diverse funding and fundraising.
- Improved public image.

**IV. Partnerships**

**4.1. Non-Movement partners**

The Serbia and Montenegro Red Cross Society and its constituent parts cooperate with various ministries and institutions in the country. There are different counterparts for different programmes, but Ministries of Labour, Health and Social Affairs, in both republics are all involved, as well as other institutions like Blood Transfusion Institute, Commissariat for Refugees etc. Government of Serbia and Conference of Towns have been supporting the Red Cross of Serbia Soup Kitchens Programme in 2004/2005. Soon to be adopted Red Cross Laws in both republics will serve as basis for deepening the dialogue with local and republic authorities to ensure coordination and support for Red Cross community work.

Furthermore, along with long-time relationships with UN agencies, there is ongoing partnership with The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and initial contacts that have been made with European Agency for reconstruction. Work with refugee and IDP population, disaster management and work with socially marginalised groups (Roma, people with disabilities) are currently areas of interest for these partners.
4.2. Movement partners

The number of other national societies having resident representatives in the country has decreased with the end of conflicts in the region. However, the bonds made throughout the nineties are still strong. Spanish Red Cross still has an office in Serbia and Montenegro with following national societies all involved in bilateral support: Netherlands Red Cross, German Red Cross, Danish Red Cross…

The ICRC delegation was opened in 1992 and still supports the national society in dissemination of the International Humanitarian Law and the Movement’s Fundamental Principles, work with IDPs as well as strengthening the tracing service of the Red Cross.

V. Federation Secretariat – Serbia and Montenegro Red Cross Society partnership

A delegation of the International Federation has been present in Serbia and Montenegro since 1992, primarily supporting the delivery of food and non-food assistance to refugees and the socially vulnerable. ICRC has been extensively involved in similar assistance to internally displaced persons (IDPs) from Kosovo. As the needs have changed, the Federation delegation’s focus is now more developmental: it supports the Red Cross in its delivery of disaster management, social welfare and health services, and in its work to build the National Society’s organizational capacity.

2004 marked the end of a three year process (after the Wiles Report (2001), a critical analysis of Federation programming) of transition from relief programming towards the development of national society services in health, care and disaster preparedness, underpinned by a programme of organisational development. When the current phase of Federation programming for Yugoslavia was designed in mid-2001, it was assumed that the legislative framework, the political and the economic situation would be such that SMRCS could operate without much external support by the end of 2004. This has not proven to be the case, and the end of food aid funding in early 2004 put the national society largely in a difficult financial situation. The programmes developed over the last four years still need external support. More importantly, the presence of the Federation and its access to international funding help direct and facilitate the organisational development of the National Society as well as linking this development with the international framework of support to the country. It is clear that a further phase of Federation support and, specifically, of advocacy, is now needed if a sustainable future is to be assured for such core services to the vulnerable as social welfare, home care and disaster preparedness. Ensuring such a sustainable future through advocacy and helping the national society to position itself with government and other partners will be a key feature of the Federation delegation’s strategy in 2006.

VI. Federation Secretariat structure

The context in Serbia and Montenegro needs specific attention by the Federation. Therefore, in the coming three years, the Federation Secretariat will maintain a country delegation in Beograd with an internationally recruited delegate and maximum 10 local staff with programme, finance, administration and logistics functions. Additional programmatic support will be provided from the regional delegation in Budapest. The country delegation in Serbia and Montenegro is reporting to the regional delegation in Budapest, i.e., the line management of the Federation representative in Belgrade will be to the head of regional delegation. The specific structure and functions of the regional delegation have been determined in a separate process.

VII. Assumptions

- Funding is available for the Secretariat’s work.
- The Serbia and Montenegro Red Cross Society remains committed to change.
- Political stability is maintained in the country & region.
- Large-scale emergency does not divert focus.