Significant work has been carried out to prepare the Salvadorean Red Cross (SRC) development plan which is essential to define the role of the National Society in post-war society. As regards disaster preparedness, the SRC has strengthened its relief unit which will enable the National Society to be better prepared to assist the most vulnerable in times of disaster. In the field of health, the Golfo de Fonseca programme shows a shift from a purely curative approach to a preventive approach which has been adopted by the National Society. During the last six months of the year the Salvadorean Red Cross, with support from the Federation and the PNS', continued its Mitch-related rehabilitation activities.

The context

El Salvador is the smallest of the Central American countries with a population of 5.9 million (1997). From 1980 to 1992, the country suffered civil war which resulted in serious economic, political and social problems. During this period, approximately 20% of the population fled the country which experienced negative economic growth. The situation was aggravated by the devastation caused by Hurricane Mitch in 1998, which had a severe impact on the country’s economy. Rehabilitation and support programmes for those affected by Mitch are being implemented by both governmental and non-governmental institutions, mainly in the central and eastern regions.

El Salvador continues to faces serious problems; 71% of the population lives in extreme poverty and 34% is without access to safe water. In such an environment, violent crime is on the increase. In addition, El Salvador is vulnerable to hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and increasingly, the effects of a 98% destruction of its forest. Recently, there have been outbreaks of cholera and dengue fever.
**Latest events**

The Salvadorean government announced in November the formal acceptance of the dollar as a unit of currency in the national financial system. This would not replace the existing currency (colon), but suggests that the colon and the dollar would function in parallel.

An increase in violence and organised crime led to a revision of the national public security policy, focusing particularly on better training.

The government declared a state of emergency in September, given an outbreak of dengue fever after dozens of children were diagnosed with the disease at the national hospital in the capital. 3,000 cases of dengue were detected and 32 people were reported dead. The death of dozens of Salvadoreans who had consumed methanol came in the wake of the alarm over dengue fever, for which international medical assistance was provided towards the end of the year. The Salvadorean Red Cross actively contributed to halting the spread of dengue fever, both through direct assistance, providing blood and giving ambulance transportation to sick patients and through a preventive campaign involving more than 350 volunteers.

Because of heavy rains, high risk areas were exposed to flooding and the Salvadorean Red Cross evacuated 500 people living in slum areas near the river in San Salvador. The evacuees were placed in temporary shelter and given basic food supplies for two days, until the danger of flooding was over.

**Red Cross/Red Crescent action**

*Salvadorean Red Cross Society ●*

The SRC has the largest number of volunteers in the region which total 2,000. The current SRC leadership recognises the need to strengthen its capacity at all levels and develop nation-wide coverage of its services, particularly in an environment where numerous organisations are competing for limited resources. The SRC therefore decided in early 2000 to draw up a national development plan, which is now in the final stages. The National Society has defined its priorities as rehabilitation and community development complemented by institutional development. The most important elements as regards rehabilitation have been identified as: health, water and sanitation, housing, education, agriculture, disaster preparedness and the environment.

*The Federation and the Participating National Societies ●*

One of the Federation’s key objectives in El Salvador as defined by the Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) is to assist the National Society in the drawing up and implementation of the national development plan.

The Federation continues to implement a regional community based disaster preparedness programme sponsored by CIDA and the Canadian Red Cross. The programme is now entering the last year of funding and a renewed and expanded proposal will be developed based on an evaluation and subsequent revisions to the programme. Key areas this year have been facilitator training, community follow-up, strengthening of branches and the inclusion of themes such as psycho social support and the culture of peace.

In May 2000, following a feasibility study conducted by the British Red Cross, the “Golfo de Fonseca” project was launched.

Whilst the support of the Federation is focused on institutional development, the PNS are supporting the National Society in rehabilitation and community development. The assistance strategies of the Participating National Societies are based upon the country plan for rehabilitation after Mitch. The
emphasis is on community development and disaster preparedness programmes, based on the strengthening of the disaster preparedness capacity of the National Society as well as of local communities.

The Spanish Red Cross is involved in the construction of houses, three health projects and a water project. Support has been provided to the Salvadorean Red Cross to purchase aquatic rescue equipment and Guardavidas branch received some equipment this autumn. The Spanish Red Cross is working closely with the projects office of the Salvadorean Red Cross in the definition of new projects and provided financial support for the campaign against dengue fever. It also works closely with the SRC youth in the project “Solidarity Bridges” (puentes de solidaridad), which consists of delivery of school material for 33 communities in the eastern part of the country.

The American Red Cross has contributed to the purchase of technical equipment for the blood centre and provided financial support for the production of leaflets distributed in the dengue fever campaign. As regards water projects in “Las Burras”, the installation of the water pipes is continuing. The sanitation project in Usulutan has almost been completed and the beneficiaries have received the necessary training concerning organisation and accounting. In San Miguel, the construction of a water tank has been finalised.

The Swiss Red Cross is supporting the community development project in the Burras community, which is integrated with the Spanish Red Cross construction and American Red Cross water and sanitation services projects.

**Disaster preparedness and response ●**

SRC contingency plans were implemented at the time of the recent floods in the western part of the country and in the dengue fever epidemic in the eastern and western parts of the country. A Federation delegate was provided to the Salvadorean Red Cross to assist in the development of a national emergency plan and to strengthen the National Society’s disaster response capacity. This work is on-going and is supported at a national and regional level through the delegations and the disaster preparedness follow-up committee. The committee is responsible for preparation of the disaster preparedness conference due to take place in El Salvador in May 2001.

National intervention team training was held in November 2000. Thirty members of the SRC and other organisations including the fire department, the Salvadorean Army and the National Emergency Committee (COEN) participated in the training.

Training courses for water relief - TREPI - (relief techniques in turbulent waters) were organised at national level in San Salvador. A four days’ intensive course was held on two occasions, with 25 persons attending each course. The objective is to train volunteers in search techniques, security and rescue in flooded areas. This is an integral part of the process of improving the response capacity of the National Society.

**Health ●**

*Dengue Fever*

Due to the increase in classic and haemorrhagic dengue fever, the SRC in co-ordination with the Ministry of Health, developed a prevention campaign which involved the distribution of information materials through volunteers and health personnel in Red Cross branches in the country. Furthermore, the SRC transported affected people to hospital and 80% of the blood needed for the victims was provided by the SRC.

A prevention campaign was organised in the departments of San Salvador, Chalatenango, La Libertad, Sonsonate, La Paz and San Vicente with over 350 active volunteers. The volunteers went from house to house, distributing leaflets and giving health promotion talks.
“Gulf of Fonseca” Project

El Salvador is participating in the Golfo de Fonseca project, together with Nicaragua. The project is an integrated community development programme, with emphasis on community health and disaster preparedness. The Golfo de Fonseca region is characterised by limited resources, poverty, high levels of unemployment and high morbidity/mortality rates. The region is also susceptible to natural disasters. The project started in May 2000 and is currently being implemented in 14 different communities in El Salvador. In each of the identified communities, health promoters and midwives, the Red Cross counterparts in the project, have been identified.

The project aims to train personnel within the communities in health and disaster preparedness and to ensure closer ties between the communities and the local Red Cross branches in order that stronger, less vulnerable communities are better trained to respond in a disaster situation. In addition, communities will be encouraged to develop micro-projects to be implemented in the second and third year of the project.

Follow up meetings between the SRC, the Federation and the British Red Cross were organised. A project co-ordinator from the British Red Cross made a visit to various communities in order to carry out a preliminary study of the health situation in the region.

Two SRC field workers coordinated the staging of 20 workshops within 10 communities. During the workshops, issues such as reproductive health, breast feeding, clean water and a clean environment were raised. The workshops were facilitated by the field workers, SRC staff, MoH personnel and, in the case of the first aid workshop, relief workers from the Red Cross branches. In the “La Union” branch, Golfo de Fonseca funds were used to train 25 volunteers in first aid, as there was a lack of experienced volunteers.

The content of the community workshops was prepared with the MoH at regional level. At community level, the project personnel, the SRC and the village health committees are working to define public health priorities and to select persons to be trained as community health volunteers. Within each community, the MoH has health promoters who participate in the workshop and organise health campaigns based on this training.

By December 2000 all capital items were purchased for the project and the branches were equipped with offices, computers, projectors and motorbikes.

A Salvadorean Red Cross project coordinator was contracted with specific responsibilities to ensure planning and development at branch level. In addition, the national department for volunteers assisted the project staff in two branch meetings to explore branch weaknesses and to develop an appropriate Salvadorean Red Cross support strategy.

In order to increase the number of volunteers within the branches, two first aid training sessions were organised in La Union. Volunteers who enter the Red Cross through this activity are then encouraged to participate in community health and disaster preparedness work through the Golfo de Fonseca project.

Humanitarian values

The increasing violence in the country, attributed to the civil war and its aftermath, is particularly widespread amongst young people who have dropped out of school, are unemployed and have few opportunities to develop their potential. The SRC has started a national dissemination programme, supported by the Federation, focusing on the values and principles of the Red Cross Movement. The SRC is also working closely with the ICRC in the development of the programme, one of the purposes of which is to attract young people as community service volunteers.

Two dissemination workshops, held over 16 hours with 30 participants, were held during the period. The first was organised for relief leaders in the departments and the second for administrative personnel. In the training sessions, the history of the Movement, the fundamental principles, the use of the emblem and the Seville Agreement were among the issues discussed.
Three workshops on strategy 2010 were also organised for the governing board (12 participants), the ladies’ group (58 participants) and youth (20 participants).

In collaboration with the ICRC, the 90 dissemination trainers who were trained in the first half of the year will become responsible for dissemination in local branches. The training of the 90 volunteers represents a major improvement in the dissemination capacity of the National Society.

**Institutional development**

In the first six months of the year 2000, consultative workshops in the branches were organised in order to implement the first phase of the national development plan. From July to December, the second phase of the consultative process was implemented. The second phase was based on the results of the process at branch level. An external study focusing on the institutional image of the National Society was organised. The external study helped to identify weaknesses as well as opportunities. Based on the consultative process at branch level, at national level and the external study, a first draft of the national development plan was prepared in December 2000.

43 branches, 410 volunteers and 28 facilitators participated in the drawing up of the development plan. The process was closely followed by the delegation in El Salvador and technical support was provided by the regional delegation. The final version of the national development plan is expected during the first quarter of 2001 for approval by the National Society leaders.

The country plan for rehabilitation after Mitch which is used as a coordination tool by the Federation and the PNSs, was extensively followed up during the period. The country assistance strategy was finalised in early 2000; the CAS is based on the five-year country plan for rehabilitation with a redefinition of priorities. One of the challenges is to develop the CAS into a longer term strategy which will continue to be valid once the Mitch rehabilitation phase has finished.

**Coordination**

The Federation and the PNS have conducted activities within the framework of the country assistance strategy. There is active coordination between the Salvadorean Red Cross, the Federation and the Participating National Societies and monthly meetings of all partners are held.

There is agreement that emphasis should be placed on reconstruction and disaster preparedness activities. It is planned to develop new projects in these areas.

**External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media**

The Federation was granted a status agreement with the Salvadorean government in September 2000, greatly facilitating future Federation activities.

The SRC maintains close relations with the ministries of public health, of social welfare and of the interior. In addition, the National Society co-operates with various other ministries such as the ministry of finance, education, defence, planning and agriculture.

During the reporting period, there has been constant contact with the National Emergency Committee (COEN), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the German Embassy. There has been frequent contact between the SRC and the UNDP in the planning of activities related to the celebration of the International Year of Volunteering. Contacts have also been established with the PAHO, the WFP, UNICEF and NGOs working in El Salvador.
Contributions

See Annex 1 for details. The appeal coverage stands at 87.8 per cent.

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

Santiago Gil
Head
Americas Department

This and other reports on Federation operations are available on the Federation's website: http://www.ifrc.org
### El Salvador

**APPEAL No. 01.17/2000**

**PLEDGES RECEIVED**

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**Balance carried forward from 1999**

- **NORWEGIAN - RC**: 163'250 NOK 31'073 26.10.00 REHABILITATION
- **SPANISH - RC**: 45'000'000 ESP 436'005 02.07.1999
- **UNITED STATES - PRIVATE**: 500 11.02.2000

**SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH**

567'578 CHF 87.8%

**KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)**

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**ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET**

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**THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS ARE LINKED TO THIS APPEAL:**

- PSV506