

# PROGRAMME UPDATE



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies  
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge  
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja  
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

## ***PANAMA: Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU)***

*20 December 2001*

*This Programme Update is intended for reporting on Annual Appeals.*

*Appeal No. 01.25/2001*

*Appeal Target 1,672,000*

*Special Annual Programme Update Period covered: January - December 2001*

### *“At a Glance”*

*Appeal coverage: 57.6%*

*Related Appeals: 01.26/2001; Central America; 01.32/2001 Caribbean; 01.30/2001 South America*

*Outstanding needs: CHF 709,338*

*Update: This programme update summarises the core activities to date relating to the 2001/2002 appeal for the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU). Through PADRU, the development of a stronger disaster response capacity at pan-regional level has improved support and services during major and multiple disasters in the Americas. Further details relating to PADRU's role in emergency operations in the Americas can be found in the respective operations updates, for example El Salvador, Earthquake; Peru, Earthquake; Belize and hurricane Iris.*

## ***Introduction***

A number of major natural disasters which occurred in Latin America and the Caribbean during 1998 and 1999 promoted an increased awareness of the critical areas of disaster management: disaster response and disaster response preparedness. As a result, the Federation identified as a priority the need to strengthen the response capacity of the Federation network in the Americas and of individual National Societies. Whilst regional delegations have traditionally supported development of National Society capacity in disaster response and disaster response preparedness, frequent disasters have often stretched available resources to the limit. In addition, there was little specialized capacity at the regional level in the technical areas of relief, logistics, water and sanitation and telecommunications. The concept of a pan-american disaster response model was developed in a fully inclusive pilot process during late 1999 and 2000.

The numerous disasters which occurred in the Americas during the year 2001 have enabled thorough implementation and testing of the PADRU concept.

### ***Pan American Disaster Response Unit***

**Objective 1:** To establish, staff and train the Pan American Disaster Response Unit, including a regional logistics cell.

The Pan-American Disaster Response Unit, an integrated component of the Federation's regional structures, was established in early 2001 with the role ***“to improve Red Cross assistance to vulnerable people affected by disasters in the Americas by reinforcing the capacity of National Societies and the Secretariat to provide timely and professional disaster response services during emergencies.”***

PADRU has two main functions:

- To coordinate and ensure highly efficient Red Cross response to disasters in the Americas.
- To reinforce the local and regional capacity of the National Societies to respond to emergencies.

The establishment of the unit was delayed by the sudden onset of two major earthquakes in El Salvador; however the PADRU headquarters including the regional logistics unit (RLU) has been fully operational since April 2001. Facilities include offices, warehousing, fleet storage, maintenance and container storage facilities and the government is considering a request to extend these further to absorb anticipated expansion needs. However, staffing of the unit has not reached the proposed levels mentioned in the appeal for year 2001. The head of PADRU function has been carried out during the year by the head of operations for the Americas within the disaster management and coordination (DMC) division. The acting head of PADRU has been involved from the earliest stages of the project and has ensured close links with the DMC division. In December 2001, a head of PADRU was appointed. The head of the regional logistics unit and the water and sanitation delegate, provided by the British Red Cross, have been operational since the beginning of the year. The disaster management delegate from the Canadian Red Cross ended her mission earlier this year. Two disaster management positions are currently open. Temporary delegate support in logistics and finance came from the Canadian Red Cross and the Federation. Five local staff provide support in finance, logistics and administration. The regional delegation in Guatemala has made support available in IT and administration and the PRCS continues to provide essential volunteers and staff in support of operations, as needed.

### ***Disaster Response***

**Objective 2:** Together with the regional delegations coordinate and when necessary, participate in rapid Federation disaster response at the request of a National Society in the Americas facing a situation beyond its capacity.

The following gives an overview of disaster response initiatives during the year:

**El Salvador earthquakes (January and February 2001):** Two devastating earthquakes struck El Salvador on 13 January and 13 February 2001. Regional response was rapid with Federation delegates posted in El Salvador supporting the Salvadorean Red Cross Society's immediate search and rescue efforts within hours of the impact. Reinforcements arrived in the form of regional intervention team (RIT) members and a regional delegate from Guatemala. The head of the Americas department and the head of operations for the Americas/Pacific, also acting head of PADRU, immediately agreed on the operational management structure. As a result, the first multitasked field assessment and coordination team (FACT) - PADRU - RIT response team was activated. This included the immediate deployment of the head of the regional logistics unit and the water and sanitation delegate to El Salvador. The acting head of PADRU, as well as being head of operations, also took on the role of FACT team leader, and whilst integration was promoted, this also posed challenges. PADRU delegates became more pivotal in the implementation of their specialized areas than anticipated. The benefit was sustained support to the operation and the National Society. In addition, many useful and largely positive lessons on deployment, integration responsibilities and operational methodology were learned by all members of the team and

the Salvadorean Red Cross Society. Integration of, and coordination with, six participating National Societies (PNS) acting bilaterally was particularly successful. While there were imperfections, it was generally agreed by all parties that the operation was successful, following the recommendations from the review of major operations in Americas.

**Peru: Puno flooding & the Arequepa region earthquake (June 2001):** A devastating earthquake rapidly followed by a tsunami hit Peru in mid June 2001. Fortuitously, PADRU had shortly before been tasked to coordinate a small relief operation in Puno with the regional disaster preparedness delegate. The co-ordination between the regional delegation in Buenos Aires and PADRU together with the presence of the PADRU disaster management delegate close to the earthquake site and the regional disaster preparedness delegate in Bolivia, permitted rapid response. Coordination and procurement from PADRU/RLU in Panama mobilizing rapid response funds from the British government (DFID) and ECHO, permitted several flights of essential relief supplies which were flown directly into Arequepa within hours of the impact. The combined resources of the regional delegation, PADRU and RITs, composed of members from National Societies from all three sub-regions, demonstrated further improved reaction and coordination. The operation was, however, not without difficulties. As in El Salvador, challenges were encountered in a number of areas related to the collaboration with the National Society. This situation has highlighted the ongoing need to ensure procurement and relief pre-agreements, together with memoranda of understanding *prior* to a disaster. The need to combine efficiency of external support with the involvement of the National Society, integrating its long term plans, is an area which requires further examination. Nonetheless, the two Peru operations permitted full deployment of all PADRU resources, results were satisfactory and lessons were learned for application in the future.

**The Caribbean Hurricane season 2001:** The 2001 hurricane season was more active than predicted with a total of 15 named storms, many reaching 3 - 4 hurricane strength. Early warning/response standard operating procedures had been agreed upon with the regional delegation for the Caribbean and coordinated, as appropriate, with the regional delegation for Central America. These involved immediate contact between the National Society concerned, the HoRD and the head of PADRU. Communications and forward planning were maintained throughout the alerts. Almost all the hurricanes were threatening and four full alerts resulted in the mobilization/deployment of PADRU and RITs teams, including activation of national intervention team (NIT) members and volunteers and the pre-positioning of vehicles and relief supplies close to potential impact sites: Jamaica, Belize, Guatemala, Cuba. Two hurricanes required full response.

**Hurricane Iris:** The hurricane hit Belize on 8 October causing deaths, injuries and substantial destruction. A combined operation involving resources from both the regional delegations for Central America and the Caribbean, together with PADRU, were able to respond with support teams and supplies on the ground within hours of the impact. The experience with donors gained in Peru was evident with immediate, strong support from ECHO, DFID and other donors, resulting in a fully funded preliminary appeal launched within less than 36 hours of the disaster. The American Red Cross provided an international disaster response unit (IDRU) element and the overall coordination, with the Belize Red Cross Society (BRCS) taking a strong leading role. Relief supplies were coordinated through the regional delegations and PADRU and delivered from El Salvador and Panama rapidly, using transport pre-positioned in Guatemala for such an eventuality. An outstanding feature of this operation was the clear evidence of the lessons learned and applied from the previous year's hurricane Keith during which the BRCS had the continuous support of many Federation and bilateral delegates. For the "Iris" response, the BRCS required only a small team to support its action, with a single delegate remaining as programme coordinator. The initiative taken by the BRCS to ask the Federation to provide disaster preparedness training was clearly effective, with a highly capable response capacity within the National Society and rapid, appropriate support from both the regional delegation for the Caribbean and PADRU.

**Hurricane Michelle:** a month later, this hurricane first developed as a tropical storm off the coast of Nicaragua causing intensive flooding in both Nicaragua and Honduras, and growing to a category 4

hurricane as it crossed the Caribbean Sea, threatening Jamaica and Cuba. A major evacuation was ordered in Havana. The regional delegation for the Caribbean/PADRU response teams immediately deployed a delegate to Cuba just before the hurricane hit. The subsequent reporting on this hurricane gave the Red Cross Society in Cuba and the Federation a high profile. In addition, PADRU/RLU logistics support was immediately activated to deliver relief supplies to Jamaica at the request of the Jamaica Red Cross. The hurricane diverted from Havana and, although there was considerable damage to agriculture and infrastructure, the cost in human lives was minimal. There was a government decision not to request international assistance; however, the experience and success of this deployment bodes well for the future response mechanisms in the Caribbean. The well tested early warning/response standard operating procedures are now in place and will provide the basis for future coordination between all components making up the emergency response mechanisms.

During the year, PADRU was also involved in the evaluation and planning of the response to the slow on set drought disaster prevailing in Central America, and provided technical support to the regional delegation for South America in the context of the Bolivia floods operation.

### ***Disaster Response Preparedness***

***Objective 3:*** To develop and deliver a disaster response training and capacity building function.

**Delegate/RITs development:** Several workshops in relief and technical specializations were held in the Americas with the participation of PADRU representatives. These included a SPHERE workshop held in El Salvador; disaster response workshops which took place in Bolivia and St. Lucia; workshops on health and information in emergencies in Guatemala and Panama, a regional conference in Central America; global Federation disaster preparedness meetings and the recent Hemispheric Disaster Reduction Conference in Costa Rica. Four regional RIT members have now qualified from a FACT course and one member has received ERU training, thereby contributing to the development of regional capacity.

**Logistics Preparedness.** Good progress has been made on upgrading the PADRU base for logistics support and rapid response preparedness.

**Pan Regional Basic Logistics Course:** This course was organized by PADRU in Panama in December. This was the first course of its kind to be held in the Americas: 32 Federation delegates, local staff, Secretariat staff, PNS delegates, National Society and UN agency personnel attended, including many who are not logisticians but interface with logistics, working in such areas as finance, administration and disaster preparedness. Further advanced and specialized logistics courses are planned.

**Vehicle Management:** PADRU encouraged donors in recent appeals to consider earmarking the allocation of donated resources “post-emergency” to a regional function. The British Red Cross, together with the Salvadorean Red Cross Society, allocated two water tankers to PADRU management following the earthquake operation and these valuable vehicles will be maintained and serviced in Panama, available for immediate deployment in the Americas.

**Water & Sanitation:** As a core element of PADRU services in all emergency response deployments, emergency water and sanitation projects have developed into longer term community development programmes. The PADRU water and sanitation delegate maintains ongoing technical liaison with the National Societies and delegations in Belize, El Salvador, Peru and Venezuela, and has developed activities in disaster preparedness related to water and sanitation in Guatemala and Panama. Activities have included the inclusion of training with OXFAM in Peru and Colombia and a strong emphasis on health education.

**Water Sanitation Equipment:** Water and sanitation equipment first deployed as an ERU during the hurricane Mitch in Honduras was maintained and redeployed in Venezuela and is currently stored in Panama for future response.

**Telecommunications:** PADRU is maintaining a database of satellite telephone and other telecommunications equipment deployed in various locations for rapid use. Ericsson has donated the use of a containerized mobile cell 'phone station that will be located at PADRU for mobilization to ensure a free standing and dedicated communications network in the field during future operations.

**Relief Stock:** The RLU has established with the logistics service at the Secretariat, pre-positioned stock in Panama and, in addition, manages supplies on behalf of the German Red Cross/Red Cross Society of Panama emergency inventory. During the year, PADRU at the request of the regional delegation for the Caribbean procured, co-ordinated and transported relief supplies for the replenishment of the Japanese Red Cross Caribbean disaster relief supply container programme, learning useful lessons for future services in the sector.

**Objective 4:** To enhance monitoring, reporting and coordination in disaster situations in the Americas. Less progress in communications planning was achieved than hoped, largely due to the workload of the small number of PADRU delegates for response. However, it is clear from donor and PNS feed back that the overall quality of operations reporting and media and information work has significantly improved. PADRU has played a pivotal role in coordination in response to disasters, particularly where the interface of emergency relief and future rehabilitation, reconstruction and development have been included in the appeal as components to be addressed from the outset of the emergency. Close liaison between the head of operations and the head of regional delegations has ensured this quality control. Efforts were undertaken to ensure support of and feedback to the DMC - disaster management information system (DMIS) - in the development of emergency response templates. In addition, the coordination with the media department on early information regarding developing situations has been particularly strong.

**Objective 5:** To strengthen relationships with internal and external partners.

PADRU has participated or been represented in many international and regional gatherings and fora, allowing fruitful relationships to develop with external agencies. Meetings such as the Hemispheric Conference in Costa Rica are important functions to which the unit needs to devote more time next year. In the meantime during the past year, discussions were initiated and are ongoing regionally with UNICEF, WFP, PAHO, FUNDESUMA and OXFAM and others to conclude agreements for more practical and formal business relationships, particularly in the areas of logistics and relief distributions systems, procurement coordination and management. The relationship with Ericsson has proved particularly valuable, especially during the El Salvador earthquake operation where Ericsson's contribution was considerable. Important progress has been made to include formally the regional National Societies in PADRU management and development through direct participation of the CORI group in the PADRU steering committee.

## **Outstanding Needs**

As noted, sufficient funding was contributed in response to the PADRU appeal to allow establishment of the unit and to reach a significant number of appeal objectives during the year.

The current outstanding needs are CHF 709,338 In addition the delegates are needed in the areas of telecommunications and disaster management.

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*All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.*

*For further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>.*

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Pan American Disaster Response Unit						ANNEX 1
APPEAL No. 01.25/2001		PLEDGES RECEIVED			20.12.2001	
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
<b>CASH</b>						
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				<b>1'672'000</b>		<b>TOTAL COVERAGE 57.6%</b>
CASH CARRIED FORWARD				99'912		
CANADIAN - RC		100'000	CAD	108'250	07.04.01	
CANADIAN - RC				30'000	25.06.2001	PADRU & COSTS RELIEF DELEGATE
IRISH - GOVT		100'000	IEP	193'710	10.07.2001	
JAPANESE - RC		1'800'000	JPY	23'098	18.12.2001	
NORWEGIAN - GOVT/RC		1'500'000	NOK	276'750	13.12.2001	
SWEDISH - GOVT/RC		500'000	SEK	84'250	17.05.2001	
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				815'970	CHF	48.8%
<b>KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)</b>						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
Great Britain	Delegate(s)			106'446		
Canada	Delegate(s)			40'246		
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				146'692	CHF	8.8%