

# 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

## NICARAGUA

4 March 2002

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

*Appeal No. 01.29/2001*

*Appeal Target CHF 2,022,010 (USD 1.18 million/ EUR 1.37 million)*

*Programme Update No. 2 Period covered: 1 May - 31 December 2001*

*Last Programme Update issued: 15 June 2001*

### “At a Glance”

*Appeal coverage: 47.1%*

*Related Appeals: 01.26/2001; Central America 01.19/2002 Central America*

*Outstanding needs: CHF 1,070,348 (USD 628,000/EUR 724,000)*

*Update: During the reporting period, national elections took place and elections were also held within the Nicaraguan Red Cross (NRC), resulting in major changes in the composition of governing boards. The election process at both national and Red Cross levels slowed implementation of programmes, given a climate of uncertainty. The NRC/Federation provided relief assistance to victims of flooding on the Atlantic coast in November/December, while an operation to assist those affected by drought and food insecurity in the department of Tipitapa took place in December. The Golfo de Fonseca integrated pilot project gained momentum and activities in disaster preparedness, health and branch strengthening were carried out. A review of the Cocibolca project was held in December 2001 and an evaluation of the Golfo de Fonseca project is planned for this year.*

### **Operational Developments:**

In Nicaragua, national elections were held on 4 November 2001. There was a high turnout at the polls and a new President was elected. Despite the prevailing climate of uncertainty, the closure of two large banks, and the almost equal division of support for both major parties, the elections took place in an atmosphere of calm.

In the Nicaraguan Red Cross, the election process was ongoing between September 2001 and January 2002; elections were first held at local branch level, then at departmental level; the winners of the departmental elections forming the national board. Finally, elections for members of the executive board took place, culminating in the re-election of the current President on 13 January 2002.

The implementation of programmes within the Nicaraguan Red Cross was affected by the holding of elections, both at national level and within the National Society. The elections brought major changes in the composition of the governing boards within the branches, some of which are entirely made up of new members. This represents a challenge in respect of induction of those who are new to the Movement.

Drought conditions continued to affect the north of the country, the loss of crops due to water shortages leading to lack of food. The government assisted affected communities with the help of various international organizations. Nevertheless, drought conditions continue to impact these regions. Flooding occurred on the Atlantic Coast in late October/early November as a result of the passage of hurricane Michelle. The RAAN region, affected by high levels of poverty and made even more accessible through damage to bridges and its ferry, was the worst hit by the flooding.

### ***Disaster Response***

As a result of the drought, the Federation launched an appeal in September 2001, seeking support for an integrated programme for the countries affected by drought and food insecurity in the region: El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. The programme focuses on humanitarian assistance through the provision of food, together with agricultural support to farmers with the aim of securing an improved second harvest, benefiting from contact with the communities in order to provide health education.

In Nicaragua, the Spanish Red Cross provided funding for food support provided to 750 families in the area of Tipitapa. This region suffers from a serious problem of water shortages, affecting crop production. Two distributions took place during December and January 2002, carried out by volunteers from the Nicaraguan Red Cross. The American Red Cross also made funding available to support 120 families with provision of seeds and chickens, together with assistance to create family gardens for self-sufficiency and also to promote income-generation. In addition, community health education was provided. Beneficiary families were selected by an agronomist working with the Nicaraguan Red Cross. The German Red Cross also plans to provide food support to 550 families in Tipitapa and distributions are to take place in February and March 2002.

In parallel, floods occurred on the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua in late October/early November. The Federation, together with 16 Nicaraguan Red Cross volunteers, undertook a relief operation between 10 November and 2 December 2001 in the area of Rosita, assisting beneficiaries along the Bambanas and Kukalaya rivers. Given the difficult terrain, volunteers were obliged to spend up to three days on the river in order to reach the most remote households. The operation was funded by the Danish Embassy, the Spanish Red Cross, the Netherlands Red Cross and Médicos sin Fronteras. A total of 1,517 beneficiary families (8,287 people) were reached in 40 communities. Each family received two parcels containing: a hygiene kit, two blankets, clothing, cooking oil, 10 pounds of rice and 10 pounds of maize. The distribution of maize seeds also took place, but could not be completed for various logistical reasons. The balance was handed over to the authorities' local emergency committee for onward distribution. The local health authorities benefited from a donation of a pump to carry out cleaning of wells, 20,000 doses of oral rehydration salts, 200 kg of bleach powder and 12 first aid kits. In addition, Red Cross volunteers assisted the World Food Programme by carrying out the distribution of some 10 - 12 metric tonnes (MT) of food.

The American Red Cross, with funding from OFDA, carried out a relief operation in the municipality of Waspán, assisting with the distribution of food supplied by the WFP, together with relief goods provided by the American Red Cross. 20 communities living on the banks of Río Coco were reached, and a total of 15,000 beneficiaries were assisted. This operation took place between 20 December and 19 January 2002. In a second phase of the operation, which will conclude in March 2002, seeds and tools are being provided to 3,400 families in 37 communities. Rehabilitation of wells and latrines is taking place and mosquito nets are being distributed to families with children under 5 with the aim of preventing dengue fever. Distributions are carried out by volunteers trained by the American Red Cross and based at the NRC volunteer post in Waspán.

### ***Disaster Preparedness***

**Objective 1:** To assist the NRC in the strengthening of its response capacity.

Little was achieved in this area during the reporting period, given a lack of funding in certain areas, with the exception of the availability of resources for training initiatives and the development of series 3000 (disaster preparedness material to be designed specifically for Nicaragua) which was not carried out, given a lack of capacity. Certain training activities were carried out; however, there is a need for an overall strategy and the setting up of an integrated training programme.

Nevertheless, the disaster response initiatives carried out following the drought and floods in the country assisted in strengthening the capacity of the National Society. The enthusiasm and potential of volunteers working in Waspán and Rosita are noteworthy.

**Objective 2.** To reduce community vulnerability and enhance the relationship between the communities and the NRC.

The project funded by OFDA/USAID focused on community based disaster preparedness was completed in May 2001. Some 400 workshops in 100 communities took place, focusing on preparation for disaster; management of temporary shelter; healthy homes and a community emergency plan. In addition, 100 micro projects were implemented. The Cocibolca project, also concentrating on community education, continues. Four workshops, three of which centre on disaster preparedness and one of which deals with HIV/AIDS, have been dispensed within 40 communities covered by four branches: Boaco, Camoapa, Juigalpa and Santo Tomás. The disaster preparedness (DP) education covers disaster preparedness in the community, the setting up of temporary shelters, healthy homes and first aid. The three DP modules have now been disseminated and the final module is yet to be given. The project will close at the end of February 2002 and will be redesigned in order to optimize the use of the remaining balance of funds. The Cocibolca project has resulted in close links with the communities concerned, knowledge as regards risks and hazards and health and hygiene practices. (For further information, see the organizational development section).

The Golfo de Fonseca project, under implementation in 25 communities in five municipalities of the department of Chinandega, contains a significant disaster preparedness component. One of the selection criteria for the communities involved in the project was the degree of vulnerability to hazards. Emergency committees have been formed in each community and the following has been accomplished: risk mapping was carried out, evacuation plans drawn up and information provided on how to set up temporary shelters. A total of 8 simulations of disaster situations have taken place, with the participation of external organizations. (For further information see the section under health and care).

In January 2001, the American Red Cross commenced a three year "Central American Mitigation Initiative (CAMI)" project in four departments - Masaya, Granada, Rivas and Chinandega - disseminating disaster preparedness information in schools, through an agreement with the Ministry of Education. The Netherlands Red Cross is also working in community disaster preparedness in two branches in the north of the country - Ocotal and Somoto - and devised a successful theatre show, illustrating disaster preparedness themes to children. The theatre performances had a positive impact and reinforced messages which the children's parents had received during community workshops, and also strengthened the links between schools and the community.

**Objective 3:** To strengthen the internal and external relationships and improve the coordination with the Movement and external actors.

During the reporting period, coordination with participating National Societies (PNS) working in Nicaragua was improved through meetings and discussions as to the setting of common policies and approaches. Relationships were secured with PAHO, Save the Children and ADRA. Participants from the Nicaraguan Red Cross took part in the disaster preparedness conference held in May 2001 in El Salvador and in the Presidents' and Technical Seminars meeting, which took place in September 2001.

## ***Health and Care***

**Objective 1:** to strengthen the Nicaraguan Red Cross health department

Little was achieved in this respect during the reporting period, given the prior need to establish a national health plan. The department, made up of one person during the year 2001, works on the basis of projects presented by the Federation/PNS, rather than in accordance with a defined strategy.

**Objective 2:** to promote and support other Red Cross health initiatives in line with Strategy 2010.

The health component of the Cocibolca project ensures links with disaster preparedness and organizational development. Four branches: Boaco, Camoapa, (department of Boaco); Juigalpa and Santo Tomás (department of Chontales) and ten communities per branch, are participating in the project. The fourth module of the community education initiatives is centered on HIV/AIDS, while part of the disaster preparedness modules also include first aid.

The main focus of the Golfo de Fonseca pilot project is on health. In the department of Chinandega, 25 communities in 5 municipalities were selected for participation in the project in accordance with the following criteria: vulnerability to disasters, economic vulnerability and poor access to health services. Following a baseline study carried out in March and April 2001, a coordinator in each branch was trained in AIEPI methodology (“atención integrada en enfermedades prevalentes en la infancia”), focusing on prevalent childhood illnesses. Health and disaster preparedness brigades were formed in the communities made up of between 15 to 20 community volunteers. A number of health campaigns were implemented in coordination with the Ministry of Health: community clean-ups (focusing on breeding ground for disease-carrying insects); treatment of stagnant water; chlorification of wells; fumigation (prevention of dengue fever); household fumigation (prevention of Chagas disease) and vaccination of dogs against rabies. In November 2001, first aid courses began with both theoretical and practical sessions. Analysis of potential micro projects began in December 2001 and will be implemented in 2002.

At the end of the year, the Italian Red Cross worked on a proposal to implement an HIV/AIDS project in the department of Jalapa, in the north of Nicaragua on the border with Honduras. This initiative aims to work with two coordinators and 50 volunteers from the branch in order to carry out peer to peer education in six secondary schools. The project will target both youth and their parents and will begin implementation in January 2002.

The Canadian Red Cross initiated a three-year primary health programme in May 2001, involving the Ministry of Health and the Nicaraguan Red Cross. Three departments: Estelí, Tipitapa and La Trinidad are involved. In Estelí and Tipitapa, a total of 15 periurban areas are involved in the programme, whereas in La Trinidad, 12 rural communities are participating. These communities are particularly hazard-prone and in the case of the periurban communities, are the result of migration from the country to the city. The programme is based on the “SICAPS” system, involving the collection of detailed base-line data on a household basis. To date, a total of 150 volunteers from the Ministry of Health and the Nicaraguan Red Cross have been trained to carry out the survey. The overall objective of the programme is to promote preventive health measures through community education, and also to provide basic medicines in short supply to the Ministry of Health.

In November 2000, the American Red Cross initiated a regional programme focused on child and maternal health, involving the dissemination of 16 fundamental health practices. This is carried out through the Ministry of Health and the Nicaraguan Red Cross in order to integrate a health education component in the work of the municipal health posts in three departments: Ocotal, Río San Carlos and Rivas. The American Red Cross also carried out activities in water and sanitation during the year, including the sinking of seven bore holes and the installation of pumps within seven branches in cooperation with the French Red Cross.

In late 2000, the American Red Cross made a substantial investment in the enlargement and rehabilitation of the NRC’s blood bank. Construction work has been completed and the inauguration of the renovated building took place in December 2001.

## ***Institutional and Resource Development***

The priorities identified in the area of organizational development by the Nicaraguan Red Cross in 1999 are as follows: revision of the National Society's Statutes, increased attention to volunteerism, strengthening of financial control and fund-raising. The work carried out during the post-Mitch rehabilitation phase meant that these priorities were frozen for some time. However, now that the rehabilitation phase has come to a close, the focus is once again on these main areas.

**Objective 1:** To assist in the strengthening of the management and administrative capacity of the Nicaraguan Red Cross.

A new accounting system is currently under implementation in the Nicaraguan Red Cross, at headquarters level and in 9 departmental and 2 local branches (these include the branches covered by the Cocibolca project). In parallel, training is also being carried out at branch level. At the end of December, an external audit began and this continues to take place.

**Objective 2:** To assist the Nicaraguan Red Cross in strengthening its governance and management bodies.

During the reporting period, work towards revision of the NRC's Statutes was ongoing. However, the holding of elections in the NRC delayed the process. In 2002, the technical support of the Joint Commission will be requested.

**Objective 3:** To assist in the development of a new national development plan.

In June 2001, workshops took place to evaluate the previous national development plan together with representatives from the branches. An external consultant facilitated the workshop and a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis was carried out. Further meetings including the branches and the PNS are envisaged and it is hoped that the revised plan will be prepared by June 2002.

**Objective 4:** To promote the financial sustainability of the NRC through strengthening its financial capacity at the national level.

Several small fund-raising schemes were initiated during the reporting period; however, these have not proved successful. An external consultant was engaged to assist in the design of projects; however, the consultant was of the view that a strategic plan needed first to be drawn up before fund-raising initiatives were designed.

**Objective 5:** To assist in human resource development with a special focus on youth.

Little progress was made in the development of human resources. A workshop was held in early 2001 by the Federation, the Spanish Red Cross and the Canadian Red Cross, during which the need for a different category of volunteer was recorded, together with the awareness that recognition and motivation were essential to boost volunteer participation in the NRC. In order for a new group of "social" volunteers to take full part in the National Society, there is a need for the new volunteer category to be defined in the Statutes; this will be taken into consideration during their revision. Various training initiatives were held in disaster preparedness, relief and governance and management on an ad-hoc basis; however, there is a need to set up a training programme based on an overall strategy.

**Objective 6:** To assist in the strengthening of the public image of the Nicaraguan Red Cross.

An internal magazine, funded by the ICRC, is published every two months. However, it remains vital to strengthen the image of the NRC outside the Movement.

**Objective 7:** As a pilot project, contribute to the strengthening of four branches.

The four branches involved in the Cocibolca project were targeted for organizational development initiatives. Unfortunately, few activities were carried out, with the exception of some renovation work on the branch buildings. The workshops planned to be staged on governance and management were not held, given that

elections were taking place. Nevertheless, a number of micro projects were implemented, resulting in the construction of wells and latrines which continue to be well maintained through the formation of committees. Several successful income-generating initiatives were also implemented, including the use of renovated conference rooms for hire, the setting up of small cafeteria and the sale of drinks. Work carried out at the Santo Tomás branch was particularly successful. An evaluation of the project took place in January 2002, with the conclusion that, at the end of February, the Cocibolca project would be closed and the project redesigned in order to optimize use of the balance of funding.

The Golfo de Fonseca project also aims to strengthen the branches involved. Rehabilitation of the roof, the electrical and sanitation systems and the building of an auditorium took place in the Chinandega branch. Cooperation was strengthened with the Spanish Red Cross, also working in the region of Chinandega, and regular meetings between the project team and the branch are improving links. A volunteer questionnaire surveying capacities and skills, also requesting information on volunteerism and ideas related to working with the branch, was issued and results are to be analysed. In 2002, the project will increase its focus on the strengthening of branch capacities.

The American Red Cross provided funding for renovation of the Bluefields branch and plans to renovate the branches of Jinotepe and Wiwili in 2002.

The Spanish Red Cross worked on the design of a programme entitled “Leadership for Development” which includes components of health, income-generation and literacy. Work has begun with the communities in order to collect baseline information and to create a sense of belonging since the target communities were formed as a result of migration given various hazards. Implementation will begin in March 2002 in five communities in Chinandega. The income-generation component of the programme seeks to assist those who are in a position to set up a small business by providing training in business techniques and acting as an intermediary in negotiations for small loans, and to assist beneficiaries who are in need of employment by providing literacy classes in cooperation with the Ministry of Education.

### ***Coordination and Management***

**Objective 1:** To establish and apply criteria for efficient (cost-benefit) and effective (objectives-results) use of resources made available through the Federation for the implementation of programmes, in line with the priorities of Strategy 2010 and applying Federation procedures and guidelines.

The major difficulty encountered during the reporting period was the lack of funding for core costs, whilst funding for project activities was available. This complicated the smooth running of the delegation.

**Objective 2:** To promote the coordination between the Nicaraguan Red Cross, the Participating National Societies, the ICRC and the Secretariat, as well as with external partners, in line with the NRC rehabilitation and development plans and the Federation country assistance strategy.

Relations with the PNS continued to improve and regular coordination meetings between the PNS, the ICRC and the Federation are held. The Federation and the PNS share resources, office space and information. Moreover, relations with external organizations are positive, particularly with the WFP with which coordination was ensured during the drought and floods operations. The Danish Embassy also contributed funding to the floods operation on the Atlantic Coast. Relations with other organizations, particularly PAHO, are complicated by a lack of capacity on the part of Nicaraguan Red Cross; however, there is much potential.

### ***Outstanding needs***

Outstanding needs during the period were for funding core costs. This problem continues into 2002, significantly complicating the efficient management of the delegation. As a result, numbers of support staff will be reduced and there will be a need to increase the use of regional resources in support of the delegation and the Nicaraguan Red Cross.

*For further details please contact: Olaug Bergseth, Phone : 41 22 730 45 35; Fax: 41 22 733 03 95; email: bergseth@ifrc.org*

*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>.*

John Horekens  
Head  
Relationship Management Department

Santiago Gil  
Head  
Americas Department

<b>Nicaragua</b>						ANNEX 1
<b>APPEAL No. 01.29/2001</b>		<b>PLEDGES RECEIVED</b>				28.02.2002
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
<b>CASH</b>						
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				<b>2'022'010</b>		<b>TOTAL COVERAGE 47.1%</b>
CASH CARRIED FORWARD				804'154		
BRITISH - ANONYMOUS				127'465	09.03.2001	
PRIVATES				167	26.09.2001	
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				931'786	CHF	46.1%
<b>KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)</b>						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
Finland	Delegate(s)			14'784		
Japan	Delegate(s)			5'092		
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				19'876	CHF	1.0%