

# 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

## MYANMAR

27 December 2002

*The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in 178 countries. For more information: [www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org)*

*Appeal No. 01.35/2002*

*Appeal Target CHF 893,448 (USD 548,000/EUR 610,000)*

*Programme Update No. 2;*

*Period covered: 01 April - 30 September 2002;*

*Last Programme Update: No 1, 1 May 2002*

### IN BRIEF

*Appeal coverage: Covered*

*The reporting period saw consolidation in the work of the Myanmar delegation as it assisted the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) in the process of becoming a well-functioning national society. This despite some far-reaching changes in personnel in the delegation and the national society. With management and programme matters in place, the Federation partnership with MRCS has entered a new stage. A broad range of capacity building measures will now be necessary to build towards a clear and coherent strategic vision, with shifting focus from headquarters to the national society as a whole. The financial outlook for the Federation delegation remains uncertain - including one unbudgeted strategic, long term, commitment - and, due to some tight earmarking, a significant coordination and management deficit going into 2003 is a distinct possibility.*

### **Operational Developments w**

Some significant political developments in recent months, including a lengthy 'closed-door' dialogue between the government and the National League for Democracy, potentially have great implications for increased international humanitarian support to Myanmar. At this stage it is still impossible to predict how or when political change may take place, but it is gradually becoming clearer that both sides are committed to proceed carefully with national reconciliation. The United Nations' Special Envoy and Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Myanmar continue to facilitate the process of political transition in the country.

Signs of greater interest and a warming attitude towards Myanmar among the international donor community, governmental and non-governmental organisations, are evident. Though the United States voted to extend trade sanctions by another 12 months, USAID indicated it is likely to inject funds for HIV programmes in the near future, in recognition of the severity of the problem. The International Labour Organisation has mentioned setting-up an office in Myanmar. Meanwhile, the UN has conducted a comprehensive review of humanitarian

issues in Myanmar and identified 16 priority areas for action under four clusters (health, education, most vulnerable and advocacy). It has plans to launch an extensive international appeal to respond to these identified humanitarian needs with local and international NGOs as implementing partners.

The deteriorating economy continues to impact on the most vulnerable throughout the country. Prices of basic commodities such as rice and cooking oil continue to increase. Inflation is estimated at 30% per annum and high levels of unemployment are also thought to exist. The Myanmar kyat has depreciated significantly against the US dollar over the last two years in the unofficial market, largely because of poor consumer confidence and possibly an expansionary monetary supply. Closure of the Thai-Myanmar border since June, due to re-ignited border clashes between the two countries, is also thought to be affecting the supply of basic commodities and fueling inflation.

### **Disaster Response/Preparedness w**

The reporting period corresponded to the monsoon season in Myanmar. The MRCS, with Federation support, responded to flash floods in southern Shan state in May and serious floods in Sagaing division, Kayin state, Mon state and Mandalay division in August and September. In September, the regional disaster response coordinator from Bangkok assisted the national society for ten days.

### ***Activities & Achievements***

- Long spells of heavy rain in May caused serious flash floods in Kalaw, southern Shan state. Early warning by MRCS, the local fire services department and military meant vulnerable communities were prepared for the approaching floods. Food bags from local authorities and rice, donated by monasteries, were distributed by MRCS volunteers to 210 affected families, evacuated to two camp sites. Red Cross volunteers also helped staff the district medical officer's clinic. Ten bales of secondhand clothes and relief supplies were dispatched by the national society to Kalaw.
- In August and September, MRCS and the Federation delegation responded promptly to floods caused by heavy monsoon rains. They provided emergency relief distribution and conducted a damage and needs assessment in the most affected areas, with help from local Red Cross staff and volunteers. In addition to relief supplies distributed to Yangon division (Thongwa), Kayin state (Hpa-an and Myawaddy), and Mon state (Mawlamyine and Kyatmayaw), food and non-food relief items including blankets, soap, rice, salt, oil, beans, and canned sardines were procured in Monywa, with funds from the Federation disaster preparedness programme. Two thousand sets were distributed to 20 shelters in Monywa town and Alon village, and the most affected groups in Salingyi and Chaung-Oo received a further 100 sets. Furthermore, 43 family kits (soap, beans, canned sardines, shrimp paste, instant noodles, cooking pots and frying pans) were provided to victims of flash floods in Singu, Mandalay division.
- Local Red Cross groups - at state, division and township level - responded to disasters around the country in spite of difficulties communicating with headquarters. In Monywa, the local Red Cross dispatched three first aiders to assist at each of the 20 temporary shelters, and 22 truckloads of volunteers helped clean up debris. Volunteers also transported sick people from temporary shelters to the hospital in Chaung-Oo town by boat. In Hpa-an, MRCS first aiders were deployed to assist health centres.

### ***Constraints***

Readiness by MRCS headquarters to assist Red Cross branches in responding to disasters was highly appreciated by local Red Cross leaders and authorities, but not yet fully recognised by all stakeholders. The need for further networking and dissemination exists. Establishment of reliable information gathering and reporting mechanisms between headquarters and branches will be key to further enhance the national society's disaster management capacity.

### **Disaster Preparedness**

The appointment of the former director general of the Relief and Resettlement Department (under the Ministry of Social Affairs) to the Executive Committee in charge of disaster management, and a new experienced programme coordinator heading the division sees a strong team in the disaster preparedness/disaster response (DP/DR) division.

A new organisational development/disaster preparedness delegate joined the delegation in June. The delegate will assist the national society build its disaster preparedness capacity, to respond to disasters in an effective and efficient manner and reduce the impact of disasters on people and communities most at risk, through prevention and mitigation.

***Objective 1 Improve disaster management capacity, in particular at headquarters level.***

***Activities & Achievements***

MRCS and the Federation delegation, in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), organised three workshops in Yangon to provide national society staff basic technical knowledge and gather input for formulation of a disaster management policy. The first workshop in April was attended by 20 senior staff from MRCS headquarters. Workshops in June and July, brought together MRCS staff and government personnel from eight states and divisions in lower Myanmar, and nine states and divisions in upper Myanmar, respectively. During this period, MRCS staff attended a Sphere workshop in Vietnam and a disaster preparedness workshop in Yangon (organised by the World Food Programme). A session on Sphere was subsequently run by disaster preparedness staff during the disaster management policy workshop in June.

***Constraints***

Participation by MRCS in two regional disaster management events in Bangkok during June was cancelled due to temporary closure of borders between Myanmar and Thailand.

***Objective 2 Strengthen the disaster response system of MRCS***

***Activities & Achievements***

The structure and function of the disaster assessment and response teams (DART) was discussed during the disaster management policy workshops, providing valuable input to the development of the team's standard operating procedures. The official launch of DART at MRCS headquarters is planned for early October. The distribution of Federation-supplied relief goods to replenish selected MRCS warehouses started in August.

***Constraints***

The lack of effective coordination among stakeholders and clear communication and reporting lines at all levels of MRCS structure, were identified as major constraints by workshop participants.

***Objective 3 Strengthen MRCS capacity to manage and implement a community based DP programme.***

***Activities & Achievements***

In May, the DP/DR division conducted a participatory learning activities (PLA) exercise at Thit Poke Kon and Degon villages in Tha Baung township, Ayeyarwady division. The PLA team, comprising three staff from headquarters and Red Cross volunteers from Tha Baung township branch, facilitated activities including physical mapping of villages, development of a daily/seasonal calendar, and compiled a brief history of the villages. Information from the PLA was presented at village meetings and village disaster preparedness working groups formed for follow-up activities. Follow-up visits were made to Tha Baung (July and September), Kywe Tha Gon village and La Har Pa village in Hinthada (July/August), to enhance mutual understanding between MRCS and villagers about their needs, priorities, constraints and possible areas for future collaboration. During these visits, MRCS assisted four villages to formulate a plan for community based disaster preparedness (CBDP) activities. The national society also identified potential candidates for two field officer positions in each township, responsible for coordination of MRCS activities. Two national society staff visited the Philippine National Red Cross in June to study its CBDP programme, and to incorporate lessons learnt into the MRCS community based disaster preparedness programme.

***Constraints***

While the level of interest is high among stakeholders, both MRCS staff as well as villagers are not yet clear where the CBDP process is leading them. In the initial stages of programme development, the most feasible approach would be to focus on Ayeyarwady division and to progress slowly from there. Timing for an expansion of the programme to other states/divisions has to be carefully examined.

### **Humanitarian Values w**

MRCS recruited one head, two programme officers and one administrative and accounting assistant for the new communications division at headquarters. The division's main functions will be to promote humanitarian principles and values, improve internal communications and develop contact with external stakeholders including the international and domestic media.

### **Health and Care w**

#### **Capacity Building in Health**

*Objective 1 Develop appropriate human resources in health management.*

#### **Activities & Achievements**

A new head of MRCS's health division was appointed, who is currently assessing the strengths and weaknesses of existing health programmes and developing a six-month work plan. Recruitment of a health coordinator is currently underway, to provide technical support to MRCS and enabling the head of division to concentrate on management issues. Three fully-funded international health scholarships were secured by the health delegate for three MRCS staff.

#### **Constraints**

Separation of governance and management in the health division has commenced but will require constant support from the health delegate to succeed.

*Objective 2 Establish standard operating procedures to efficiently utilise existing health resources.*

#### **Activities & Achievements**

With a division head just recently in place, no activities have commenced under this objective.

*Objective 3 Establish co-ordination and networking systems within MRCS and with other stakeholders.*

#### **Activities & Achievements**

The health delegate has intensified efforts to meet informally with MRCS's bilateral health partners.

#### **Constraints**

The head of division is currently reviewing options to enhance internal coordination systems within MRCS. Formal meetings with bilateral donors will commence once the head has settled into his new role.

### **Health Promotion Project (Hygiene and HIV/AIDS Prevention)**

*Objective 1 Increase MRCS capacity to develop, implement and review health promotion programmes with vulnerable groups.*

#### **Activities & Achievements**

The health delegate and MRCS staff visited Kengtung twice during the reporting period, to meet with stakeholders and develop work plans for health promotion in the area. The draft text of an HIV/AIDS comic strip (that includes fundamental principles, basic facts on HIV/AIDS and examples of Red Cross volunteers assisting people living with HIV/AIDS) is being revised.

#### **Constraints**

Staff capacity, though improving, is still limited. Recruitment of new staff is adversely affected by low salaries offered by the national society.

**Objective 2** *Develop educational and promotional materials to effect behavioural change.*

**Activities & Achievements**

Development of new materials was discussed in a planning forum, but activities have yet to begin.

Postcards (based on a winning design from the 2001 regional HIV/AIDS anti-stigma competition), aimed at raising awareness and reducing the stigma of people living with HIV/AIDS, were printed and continue to be disseminated to the general public throughout the country.

**Objective 3** *Develop a coordination and networking mechanism within the MRCS and with other stakeholders.*

**Activities & Achievements**

Almost 600 people, including Red Cross volunteers from across the country, local journalists, diplomats, INGOs, and local NGOs, attended this year's World Red Cross Day, officially launched by the health minister. During the event MRCS distributed a package comprising: a booklet in Myanmar entitled '100 Questions and Answers about HIV', a message about Red Cross 'Passing on the Truth about HIV/AIDS', a MRCS/Federation postcard, one condom and a T-shirt.

**Constraints**

MRCS management and processes are insufficient to support systematic approaches to networking.

**First Aid Programme**

**Objective 1** *MRCS develops and disseminates updated first aid materials reflecting current and emerging health needs and disaster response.*

**Activities & Achievements**

Development of a draft first aid policy for MRCS continues, covering the role of the Red Cross in respect to community first aid, volunteering and training. Once the policy is completed a workshop will be conducted for MRCS staff and the Executive Committees. MRCS translated the Federation guide to 'First Aid and HIV/AIDS' in Myanmar, to be field tested shortly.

The basic first aid manual is currently being revised. Discussions to incorporate subjects from the Asian first aid certificate into the manual will continue in the next quarter. MRCS now provides condoms to participants during Red Cross volunteer and private first aid training courses. An assistant head of division responsible for first aid was recently appointed and participated in a field trip to Kengtung with the view to build general health capacity in Red Cross volunteers.

**Constraints**

Difficulties in attracting competent staff to MRCS has delayed progress in this area. Staff capabilities in the first aid division are also limited, to basic first aid training rather than overall first aid programmes in a community based setting. The recent appointment of the head of division means the programme is now in transition.

**Objective 2** *MRCS enhances its capacity to manage and implement effective first aid programmes.*

**Activities & Achievements**

In May, MRCS staff attended a regional first aid competition in the Philippines. Based on lessons learnt, skills were transferred to participants attending the Myanmar youth camp first aid competition. A first aid instructors course was held in Kachin state in May.

In February, a community based first aid course was held in Bago. Several first aid courses were also conducted for the private sector. First aid stickers are being produced by MRCS. The first aid training centre was equipped with additional reference materials, posters and four mannequins.

### **Constraints**

MRCS has knowledge of first aid training but little experience or knowledge in other first aid programmes.

**Objective 3** *MRCS has effective systems for quality assurance, reporting and logistics in its first aid programme.*

### **Activities & Achievements**

A cross-divisional first aid policy working group was formed and meets about once a month. The arrival of the new head of division resulted in further exploration of first aid issues with local staff. It is anticipated that a workshop with senior and middle level staff will take place in the next few months. Two programme staff attended a reporting course during this period.

### **Organisational Development w**

In June, a new organisational development/disaster preparedness (OD/DP) delegate joined the Myanmar delegation. Together with ICRC's cooperation delegate and the Federation head of delegation, the OD delegate will seek to assist MRCS develop its organisational capacity and strengthen competence at branch and headquarters level. The reporting period witnessed significant interest of OD issues among MRCS leadership, and the organisational change process towards a well-functioning national society is expected to accelerate.

As MRCS continues to recruit new staff, with salary support from the Federation, ICRC and other partners, the national society leadership has become aware of the issue of financial sustainability. Establishment of the communications division has seen discussion on how to integrate a fundraising function into communications work.

**Objective 1** *The development of a revised set of statutes for the Society which will allow the creation of a clear and documented policy on the structures and specific responsibilities of the governing and management bodies. This should include the linkage between headquarters, states/divisions and township branches.*

### **Activities & Achievements**

Review of MRCS statutes has been put on hold after one of the most active and dedicated Executive Committee members, who was a core member of the organisational development task force and statutes review team, left the national society in April.

### **Constraints**

Activities were hampered due to low prioritisation by the MRCS new leadership and the absence of a consistent counterpart in the delegation. A preliminary draft of new national society statutes, developed by the former statutes review team and based on Federation guidelines and Cambodian Red Cross statutes, requires further discussion with national society leadership.

**Objective 2** *The development of a cooperation agreement strategy (CAS) by the end of 2002.*

### **Activities & Achievements**

The MRCS disaster management policy is now under development. The policy will lead to development of a three-year disaster management strategic plan which, together with other programme plans, will form the national society's strategic development plan. There will be greater emphasis in this area during 2003.

### **Constraints**

MRCS does not have a strategic development plan, the foundation for a Cooperation Agreement Strategy (CAS). Together with the regional delegation and ICRC counterparts, the delegation plans to begin discussion on the strategic plan by the end of 2002, and to develop it in tandem with the CAS.

**Objective 3** *The implementation of a human resources development plan guided by regional HR strategy, to ensure that MRCS develops its existing staff and recruit new staff for MRCS programmes and support services.*

#### **Activities & Achievements**

During the reporting period MRCS appointed heads of the disaster management, health and communications divisions as well as three additional staff in health and communications. Recruitment of middle management staff is underway, to reinforce the separation between management and governance. The British Council in Myanmar has agreed to provide tailor-made English language classes to MRCS staff with particular emphasis on health and disaster terminology. Five headquarters staff started regular English courses at the council, in September.

#### **Constraints**

Difficulty in finding sufficiently qualified talent (at current MRCS salary levels) coupled with caution within national society leadership in introducing organisational changes, led to delays in implementation. MRCS and the delegation continue to discuss the new organisational structure and reporting lines.

**Objective 4** *The development of a fund-raising plan and activities at headquarters to improve the MRCS's financial base and public image.*

#### **Activities & Achievements**

None during the reporting period.

#### **Constraints**

Transparency of MRCS financial management systems is a prerequisite to resource development activities. Currently, the finance division at headquarters is staffed by three accounting assistants with the honorary treasurer as division head. The Myanmar delegation has agreed to assist MRCS set up the division properly.

**Objective 5** *The formulation of a new MRCS branch development strategy and plan.*

#### **Activities & Achievements**

Terms of reference for a comprehensive branch survey were developed. The first phase of the survey, slated for October, will collect responses from over 400 MRCS branches to a questionnaire developed along the lines of the characteristics of a well-functioning national society. A branch development officer has been recruited from Nepal Red Cross, through the regional delegation Bangkok, to start in mid-October.

#### **Constraints**

Lack of staff at the national society devoted to branch development work and the continued communications gap between MRCS headquarters and branches, continues to pose a challenge.

#### **Activities & Achievements**

The branch survey will include questions related to youth activities and volunteer management and prepare the ground for a youth programme strategy. This strategy will be incorporated into the national society strategic development plan.

#### **Constraints**

The MRCS youth division at headquarters, working with the Red Cross educational programme in schools, does not have a well-organised structure. It is staffed by one person with an unclear job description, working with two

senior advisors and the executive director/acting division head. Information available on its activities is scarce and unclear.

### **Coordination and Management w**

The General Assembly in April elected 45 members to the Central Council and 15 new Executive Committee members. Besides its original role in governance, membership of the Executive Committee working group (reduced from eight to six) serves as a provisional management body.

Three members of the group were re-appointed including the president, senior communications advisor and honorary secretary. The posts of the honorary treasurer, senior health advisor, and senior disaster advisor were filled. The executive director remains a council member but no longer in the Executive Committee.

Three MRCS heads of division (disaster management, health and communications) were appointed during the reporting period, a step towards the separation between governance and management. This process required continuous support and assistance from the delegation and meticulous coordination with the ICRC. The Australian Red Cross regional programme coordinator visited the delegation in June.

### **Federation Delegation w**

The Myanmar delegation underwent substantial personnel changes during this period. The former head of delegation ended his mission in June, and the new head took up her appointment towards the end of September. In July, the health delegate's mission also ended. The new organisational development/disaster preparedness delegate served as acting head of delegation during much of this time. The delegation continues to be staffed with two locally recruited officers, in finance and communications.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation w**

The head of delegation monitored progress of programme activities through frequent meetings with respective MRCS heads of division. The national society provided monthly financial reports, monitored in-country by the delegation and in consultation with the regional finance unit, forming the basis of the delegation's reports to donors.

### **Performance Factors w**

***Timeliness*** *Has the programmed timeline been adhered to this period?*

Programmes have not progressed according to plan for the reporting period. Reasons include funding delays, a longer than anticipated transition period for the Executive Committee, difficulties in the recruitment of high calibre management, and the absence for several months of a head of delegation and health delegate.

***Appropriateness*** *Given the local context, have resources and strategies been sensible and sufficient?*

Resources and strategies are sensible but need adjustment to accommodate delays in programme implementation. Activities are expected to pick up in the final quarter of 2002, with the new team in place at MRCS headquarters and country delegation. Implementation delays in 2002 are likely to affect funding for the 2003 Appeal.

***Cost Effectiveness*** *Have the programmes been run in a reasonably cost-effective manner?*

Cost effectiveness continues to be monitored by the delegation and all programmes are conducted in the most cost efficient manner possible.

***Innovation and Creativity*** *Have any new approaches to achieve objectives been explored?*

After the initial phase, participatory learning activities will be an effective tool for community based disaster preparedness and community health programmes, both integrated with other projects as well as at the grassroots level. The preparatory field visit to Kengtung saw focus group discussions conducted in two MRCS programmes - first aid and HIV/AIDS. These were held with a view to develop an integrated health programme and forge greater ties between staff of various programmes. ***Human Resources*** *Have appropriate human resources been available and utilised?*

The lack of qualified and competent human resources poses a severe constraint and increasing demand from the expanding INGO sector in Myanmar further exacerbates the situation. To revitalise MRCS, the Federation provides salary support for external appointments to new positions at headquarters.

**Gender** *How were the differences in social roles considered? What opportunities were taken to empower women?*

Gender issues were discussed during formulation of the disaster management policy and continue to be reinforced in the selection criteria for first aid courses. Although the Executive Committee, executive director and heads of division are male, and most junior positions filled by women, the Federation's persistence in gender matters is expected to have an impact on MRCS in the long term.

### **Lessons Learnt**

Changes to the Executive Committee, recruitment of senior and middle management staff at headquarters, and personnel changes in the delegation led to general uncertainty and a lack of direction for the national society during this period. At the same time, the real needs of MRCS have emerged, with a recognition that an opportunity exists to change the way MRCS works. This is shared among leadership and reflects political changes in the light of events during May. The Federation delegation's capacity building and technical support, in coordination with ICRC, donor Red Cross Red Crescent societies and other stakeholders, is crucial to help MRCS ride out this critical transition period.

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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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<b>Myanmar</b>						ANNEX 1
<b>APPEAL No. 01.35/2002</b>		<b>PLEDGES RECEIVED</b>				27.12.2002
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
<b>CASH</b>						
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				<b>893'448</b>		<b>TOTAL COVERAGE 103.6%</b>
CASH CARRIED FORWARD				235'170		
BRITISH - RC		18'000	GBP	43'043	08.05.2002	MRCS HEALTH DPT, FIRST AID KITS, BRANCH ASSESSMENT STUDY
FINNISH - GOVT/RC		28'600	EUR	41'833	20.05.2002	ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT, DISASTER PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE
FINNISH - GOVT/RC		20'202	EUR	29'616	31.10.2002	HEALTH & CARE, DELEGATE IN COUNTRY COSTS
JAPANESE - RC		31'570'000	JPY	399'171	16.04.2002	DEVELOPMENT, DP, CBFA, NATIONAL COORDINATION
NEW ZEALAND - RC		100'000	NZD	73'060	20.11.2002	HOD + HEALTH
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				821'893	CHF	92.0%
<b>KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)</b>						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
AUSTRALIA	DELEGATE(S)			32'525		
FINLAND	DELEGATE(S)			7'721		
JAPAN	DELEGATE(S)			63'737		
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				103'983	CHF	11.6%