

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

CENTRAL ASIA

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This Programme Update is intended for reporting on Annual Appeals.

Appeal No. 01.52/2002

Appeal Target: CHF 8,263,482

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Operational Developments

The regional delegation made a successful start of the implementation of annual appeal objectives and forging new partnerships in a number of areas, in spite of the generally slow donor support in these first three months. The Government of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan outlined priorities for the current year as reducing poverty and raising wages. In Kyrgyzstan, however, the government owes a total of 180 million some (\$3.8 million) in pensions and wage arrears, while the 2001 inflation rate is 3.7, compared to 9.6 in 2000. Poverty and economic crisis is the main concern of the population. Top priorities for Kazakh government is to ensure annual GDP growth 5-7 percent, raise per capita GDP to \$1.600-\$1.700 and reduce to under 20% the percentage of the population living below the poverty line.

The President of Kyrgyzstan issued a refugee law that sets out the terms of granting, loss and deprivation of refugee status and gives all refugees equal legal status irrespective of race, sex, religion and the country of origin.

Disaster Response

Objective 1: To improve knowledge and skills within the national societies (staff and volunteers)

Implementation of drought response in Uzbekistan allows the Uzbek Red Crescent and the Federation personnel share experiences and enhance their operational skills and capacity. During the operation the NS staff and volunteers went through regular trainings in logistics (transport and warehousing of goods), relief distribution (pre-distribution and distribution arrangements, crowd control techniques), visibility (dissemination of the information about the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement), monitoring and reporting.

Objective 2: To support national societies in their efforts to facilitate post-disaster rehabilitation and increase the population's resilience by mobilising community resources.

In order to follow-up emergency relief efforts and to assess longer-term needs of the drought affected population, Uzbek Red Crescent with the Federation support initiated an early warning system. It covers nine of the affected regions of Karakalpakstan with total population of 350,000 people. Comprehensive questionnaires will be carried out by the volunteers network to identify the situation with food availability, local market prices, population migration, health, access to infrastructure and other related factors. The results will allow the Uzbek Red Crescent to identify possible future needs for humanitarian intervention. On the other

hand, it is a good chance to become a local source of reliable and updated information for other humanitarian agencies in the region.

The Kazakh Red Crescent covered essential food assistance, health care and safe drinking water awareness campaigns during the flood response operation in East Kazakhstan, which affected 4.500 people last year. This year's assistance to the affected population focused on post disaster rehabilitation, provision of seeds and construction materials, as well as coal to cope with severe winter conditions.

Objective 3: To improve logistics management within the national societies of central Asia

Newly recruited NS logistics officers took part in the exchange visits to learn the Federation logistics procedures. Apart from that, the Federation is seeking funds through the regional DP programme to support setting up strategic warehouse in some of the societies, provided the NS secured the land, which is the case in Turkmenistan.

The Kazakh floods and the current Uzbek drought operations provided an opportunity for both NS to do local procurements following the Federation procedures.

Population Movement

Objective 1: To improve the social status for vulnerable groups of population

Despite the chronic lack of donor response during first three months the activities to meet this objective saw the progress. Social Rehabilitation Center in Bishkek for the Afghan Refugee women and children organized by the Kyrgyz Red Crescent is working with the support from a local NGO (ISTL). The project started last year and was supported by the Kyrgyz Red Crescent for seven months. The refugee community took over full responsibility of the center since there is no funding. The Kyrgyz Red Crescent extended its support to continue art and music classes until March 2002.

Objective 2: To improve the nutritional status of the most vulnerable families in the displaced communities and reduce their reliance on humanitarian food aid.

Nothing was initiated so far due to the lack of funding at this stage.

Objective 3: To improve the social and economic status and increase self-reliance of displaced communities in the region.

The Turkmen Red Crescent activities, including income generation projects, such as mini bakery for refugees (opened in Ashgabat in January 2002), are supported by UNHCR. The project will provide jobs for fourteen refugees and give out 50 loaves of bread every day to the most needy refugee families, who attend Turkmen Red Crescent soup kitchen.

Disaster Preparedness

Objective 1: To develop disaster preparedness plans of national societies in the region with clear policies and operational guidelines and procedures.

The importance of having operational guidelines and disaster preparedness (DP) policies was discussed with CANS. DP Plans in the region are currently at different stages of development. Based on the outcomes of the SWOT analysis and lessons learnt from previous response operations the Kazakh Red Crescent prepared a plan of action with clearly identified roles and responsibilities of the HQ and branches. Uzbek Red Crescent along with the plan of action for 2002 (DP projects submitted to the regional delegation), developed contingency plan for Humanitarian Crisis. Following the DP and conflict preparedness workshop run by the Kyrgyz Red

Crescent /Federation/ ICRC, the Kyrgyz Red Crescent is planning to make the DP Plan, and started capacity assessment at branch level.

Objective 2: To strengthen the capacity of the national societies in the region to respond to disasters effectively and on time.

Disaster preparedness training is based on needs assessment through pre-post test and follow up activities. It was implemented through meetings and workshops aimed to develop the CANS skills in disaster management and DP policy planning at oblast and rayon level. Total of 22 workshops/meetings took place in four countries during the reporting period (four in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, six in Turkmenistan and eight in Uzbekistan). Three types of DP training curriculum was designed for three categories of trainers, namely, instructors, rapid response teams and community trainers. Kyrgyz Red Crescent expanded its training programme at grass-root level with focus on practical training.

In order to increase the CANS capacities to respond to disasters effectively the stock and procurement of relief items (mattresses, bed-linen, hygiene kits) for the DP warehouses was finalized. To reduce transportation costs some of the relief items in Turkmenistan were purchased locally. Kazakh Red Crescent agreed with Emergency Committee in East Kazakhstan to use their warehouse free of charge.

Objective 3: To link different elements of disaster management such as early warning, risk mapping, prevention and mitigation activities to address the gap between the community's vulnerability and the existing capacity

Based on the results of VCA the Turkmen Red Crescent developed four projects aiming to mitigate the risks and reduce vulnerabilities towards rayon specific disasters. These include mitigation the impact of mudslides and floods on people and agricultural lands; fighting desertification/strengthening sands; cleaning and fortification of drainage system in the selected district; and sea coastal improvement and fortification. These projects are under discussion with local authorities to identify roles and responsibilities, and community participation. Uzbek Red Crescent initiated a tree planting project in three landslide prone areas. After agreement with local authorities total 28.000 plants were purchased, and 10.000 trees already planted. Kazakh Red Crescent implemented 2 mitigation projects in Akmola oblast on the basis of VCA: one mitigation workshop to increase communities' coping mechanism in severe winter conditions, and the second one for the fishermen on thin ice conditions. As a result of these and other awareness and safety activities traumatism rate has reduced from 14% to 43%. Kyrgyz Red Crescent is about to start mitigation project in Talas, Osh and Naryn oblasts, focusing on drainage of debris flow collectors, located in nearby areas. The project will protect rural communities from mudflows. It will be implemented by Kyrgyz Red Crescent staff and volunteers, local authorities and communities themselves. This project will increase volunteer base of the Kyrgyz Red Crescent through recruitment and training of new volunteers amongst these communities.

Objective 4. To increase awareness in communities at risk and in selected disaster prone areas.

To ensure the increased awareness among communities at risk, Turkmen Red Crescent produced 1.000 posters and 25.000 training pamphlets with emphasis on code of conduct before/during disaster, organized meetings in 15 schools and a hospital, set up 17 information boards in 2 hospitals and 3 pension payment offices, and conducted regular meetings in all five pensioner clubs to increase people's knowledge about possible disasters and preventive measures. Raising awareness activities in Kazakhstan included big public campaigns and distribution of DP brochures and leaflets, six TV and radio presentations and fifteen publications in local newspapers. Kazakh Red Crescent participated in the International exhibition in disaster preparedness and response, where it made a presentation and displayed its printed material.

Objective 5. To strengthen the technical, administrative and human resources capacity of the five national societies focusing more on the oblast/rayon level.

The regional DP programme continues to provide administrative and salary support to the four CANS (Kazakh Red Crescent, Kyrgyz Red Crescent, Uzbek Red Crescent and Turkmen Red Crescent) on a monthly basis. It

also maintains office support, development of Internet and communication skills. Turkmen Red Crescent employed a new DP Officer and an assistant to DP coordinator, in charge of stock distribution and monitoring of the mitigation projects. Community based disaster preparedness voluntary committee was established in three areas of the country to provide knowledge sharing. Trained in preventive health and disaster preparedness volunteers started classes in selected schools. New HF radio station will be installed in Semipalatinsk (East Kazakhstan DP Centre) after necessary preparations.

Objective 6. To improve and maintain good integration/links with other programmes and other organisations.

The DP programme is run in close cooperation with other programmes and organizations in all four CANS. In Turkmenistan DP programme involves youth and health components through joint workshops. Search and Rescue Team train youth and disabled athletes on a weekly basis. Uzbek Red Crescent works with Assistance Fund Open Society on equipping and maintaining First Aid and Rescue mobile team, based in dangerous parts of the mountainous highway. American Red Cross supports the Uzbek Red Crescent capacity building in disaster preparedness and response. The ICRC contributes to the Humanitarian Crisis operation (shipment, transit of humanitarian aid to Afghanistan). Kazakh Red Crescent has a close cooperation with state committee for Emergencies and ICRC in the areas of disaster and conflict preparedness.

Humanitarian Values

Objective 1. To promote the Red Cross and Red Crescent Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values within and outside the Movement.

Despite a serious and chronic lack of funding the programme is progressing in all five CANS thanks to support from other programme budgets. The VI regional information officers meeting, funded by disaster management and health programmes, took place in April in Almaty. The meeting gave the chance to newly hired information officers from Uzbek Red Crescent and Tajik Red Crescent to have essential basics on public relations and information work. Global Action against HIV/AIDS related stigma and discrimination was discussed during the meeting. Information officers will present the stigma concept to their colleagues back home. Final decision on their involvement in further actions in the region will be taken by CANS themselves.

The VI regional information meeting adopted a Declaration, which was addressed to the leadership of the CANS. It presented the analysis of the current financial situation and put forward proposal to address the issue to the consideration of the CANS presidents meeting in Almaty held few days later.

Objective 2. To raise the profile within the region at branch and national level, as well as outside the region and in general public, of the activities and key messages in the core areas.

In February, the regional delegation organized a field visit of the international and local media to the drought affected regions of Uzbekistan. Correspondents from BBC Radio, Reuters, TV producer and freelance journalist from Tashkent filmed the implementation of relief operation and food distribution in the north of Karakalpakstan. The report was posted on the Federation web site for a wide audience. The regional delegation continue publication of the regional newsletter to highlight key activities (11th issue released in February and distributed within and outside the region), however the CANS publications might be put on hold due to lack of funding.

Objective 3. To advocate on behalf of vulnerable people, promoting public support and understanding of the situation for people affected by issues, related to HIV/AIDS, TB, disasters and migration

The CANS information departments actively participated in the societies' advocacy activities. This quarter they participated in organizing the World TB Day with focus on raising awareness in health, disaster preparedness and population movement issues. Kazakh Red Crescent youth campaign to increase the knowledge of key messages among volunteers and to ensure community involvement in the Red Crescent activities is presented on the Federation website. Kyrgyz Red Crescent held a press-conference to highlight refugee issues and launch the first Afghan refugee magazine in Dari language.

Objective 4. To develop the communication capacity of national societies and to involve volunteers in information activities.

Regional delegations of the Federation and ICRC agreed to work closely on cooperation with local media issues. Training workshop for the volunteers-journalists was carried out by Kyrgyz Red Crescent at branch level.

Objective 5. To provide technical support to marketing and resource development activities to promote the national societies and programme sustainability.

This objective is repetitive, partly falls under other activities. This makes the regional delegation decide to put on hold implementation of this objective.

Health and Care

Objective 1. To prevent the increase in the incidence of tuberculosis

Activities during the reporting period included implementation of two pilot projects in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, one in Turkmenistan and five in Kyrgyzstan. They started with preparation arrangements (recruitment of project coordinators, training of visiting nurses, selection of patients). During the reporting period Red Crescent visiting nurses provided services to 282 people, including 15 default TB patients and 26 new TB cases throughout the region. Total of 227 health promotion campaigns were held in schools and 4380 printed material distributed to schools and other 27 institutions (factories, markets etc.). As part of social support 210 patients received hot meals, 192 people received hygiene kits and 200 patients - food parcels.

Although the activities progressed well, a number of important issues, such as reporting, visibility and monitoring require improvement. In some project sites, like for example in Dashoguz, better coordination will help to avoid duplication of Government/Red Crescent activities.

The Aral Sea programme, supported and managed by the American Red Cross, is implementing nutritional education as an important element of disease management. The programme provides basic nutritional information as it applies to TB and low-cost/no cost, locally-available sources of the requirements. Other educational components include basic hygiene for TB patients and basic information on DOTS. Decision was made to limit initial operations to five oblast centers (Nukus, Urgench, Bukhara, Navoi and Kyzyl Orda) since the majority of TB-infected in the Aral Sea region are concentrated in urban areas.

Objective 2. To prevent the predicted HIV/AIDS epidemic in the region

The CANS youth volunteers carried out raising awareness campaigns among communities and youth in particular, on HIV/AIDS/STD issues through peer education and health campaigns in schools, universities and public places. Kyrgyz Red Crescent plans to maximize coverage with the extension of programme to the rural areas. In Kazakhstan, trained youth volunteers carried out 23 workshops for 270 schoolchildren on AIDS/HIV/STD. In Uzbekistan, similarly 28 Red Crescent volunteers were trained to provide further training at branch level.

Objective 3. To improve the health of women and their children

The last year's pilot projects in Kazakhstan (Semipalatinsk and Abai, the most affected by nuclear explosions) are included this year in the annual appeal and are jointly funded by the Federation and Japanese Red Cross. The projects aim to provide training (including outreach training) for nurses/midwives in women health and safe motherhood issues. Trained Red Crescent midwives visited 190 pregnant women at homes, carried out 160 training sessions and distributed 273 information materials. Total of 84 pregnant women attended 23 sessions in maternity houses, as a result 12 out of 16 pregnant had deliveries without complications. In Karaganda (Kazakhstan) and Gulistan (Uzbekistan) the project is in its initial stage.

These activities received good media coverage in Semipalatinsk. With the financial support of “Lion Club” (Sweden), mothers received 130 baby kits. These activities have very positive feedback and require future extension to address the needs of women in rural areas.

Objective 4. To intervene effectively in emergencies with basic first aid.

Kazakh Red Crescent / Central Asian Medical Centre (CAMS) agreed on cooperation in providing First aid (FA) training for commercial companies in Kazakhstan. In Turkmenistan, with the support of British Red Cross, American Red Cross and Spanish Red Cross, the Turkmen Red Crescent incorporated First Aid (FA) elements into the preventive health programme for schoolchildren in the bordering Afghanistan territories. First aid component in Tajikistan is part of health relief project funded by ECHO and includes volunteer recruitment and training at community level, development, printing and distribution of FA material

Objective 5. To raise the profile and capacity of the national societies in the region.

The CANS are expanding TB and safe motherhood projects in the region. However, the health management in majority of cases remains inadequate. Only two countries, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan have health programmes run by full time medical coordinators, which affects coordination, monitoring and reporting activities. This important issue needs to be addressed at headquarter’s levels of the respective NS.

Raising the profile increased through the implementation of the Aral Sea programme. Substantial monitoring to support the program activities have provided concrete evidence to the level of professionalism and accuracy in CANS activities in this regard. It is expected that the high profile Nutrition Education Teams (NET) will also do much to promote the activities of the CANS in the Aral Sea region.

Institutional and Resource Development

Objective 1. To improve the legal basis and image of the national societies by 2003.

Presidential Decrees served as a legal basis for the CANS since their respective countries became independent. Today, Kazakh Red Crescent, Kyrgyz Red Crescent and Uzbek Red Crescent are in the process of drafting the Red Crescent and emblem protection laws in order to improve the legal basis, public image and status.

Kazakh Red Crescent held its 16th congress meeting in March, which adopted a new indicative emblem (red crescent), changed the Society's name and approved amendments to the statutes, recommended by the Joint Commission in 2000. This put forward the process of recognition and admission of the Kazakh Red Crescent to the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and will lead to improved image of the society among all stakeholders both within and outside the country; raising the profile of the NS in relation with the public interest to the emblem issue and establishing appropriate relations with national government.

Objective 2. To promote leadership and management skills in the national societies in order to implement effective organisational changes.

Regional leadership training scheduled for April was postponed till June as requested by all CANS for better timing. The training aims to enhance the leadership and management skills of CANS, as well as to establish appropriate structures, policies and procedures.

Regional programme coordination unit initiated management training for Kazakh, Tajik and Uzbek Red Crescent societies, due to take place in May this year. This training will be an initial stage to establish core groups with skills in the organizational change management, management and leadership. The process will be followed-up with in-country support to encourage application of the management skills in practice.

The Turkmen Red Crescent plans to continue quarterly meetings for middle level leadership at branches to encourage sharing experience in personnel management, fund-raising and to expose branch chair people to alternative style of management. Uzbek Red Crescent set up a focal point for training and other technical support functions, with a view to establish a core group of trainers to promote management skills.

In line with the objective and as a follow-up to Project Planning Process training organized by the Secretariat the programme coordination unit is planning to conduct project planning, monitoring and reporting training for the CANS in order to improve the overall quality of project planning, implementation and reporting. A new concept of logical framework in project planning will be introduced to the programme coordinators in all five CANS in the next quarter. The training cycle will start with the headquarters level and with possible funding will be continued at branch level, as identified by the CANS as training priority. This will not only improve programme planning and implementation, but will be of great importance when approaching and working with donors.

Objective 3. To build capacity at branch level in order to increase branch effectiveness, strengthen community participation in the Red Cross and Red Crescent and build local sustainability.

CANS are taking steps to establish more open and participatory decision making process and better communication and coordination through involving branches, volunteers and youth in their activities. Kazakh Red Crescent brought together branches, volunteers and youth for a strategic planning workshop in March to discuss draft strategic plan for 2002-2006. Participation of volunteers and youth coordinators both in the meeting and the Kazakh Red Crescent congress contributed to strengthening community participation in Red Cross and Red Crescent activities. The role of branch volunteers (50% of the congress delegates) in the decision making and the NS development process has been articulated in the strategic plan approved by the congress. Two youth officers and 1 volunteer were elected for the first time in National and Executive Councils that demonstrated the increased role of Red Crescent Youth movement.

The knowledge and analysis of local vulnerabilities is used as a basis for the NS planning at branch level. Kyrgyz Red Crescent plans to replicate the experience gained from the last year's pilot VCA and involve more branches. Furthermore, it finalized bilateral project with Netherlands Red Cross on community and branch development in two branches and plans to turn this successful experience into twinning cooperation. Turkmen Red Crescent, similarly runs one project in Lebap and drafted four more vulnerability projects. Decision was taken to increase human resource base at branch level to have clearer structure and avoid practices of having one person in charge of many programmes.

Objective 4. To establish a sustainable, vibrant Red Cross and Red Crescent youth movement and Red Cross and Red Crescent approach to volunteering in central Asia.

Central and branch youth centers of the Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Uzbek Red Crescent societies run fund-raising activities to develop a sustainable Red Crescent Youth Movement in their respective countries. Diversified activities help raising funds to assist the most vulnerable, partly cover running costs and provide services involving volunteers.

Objective 5. To diversify the funding base of the national societies in the region to improve their financial sustainability

In order to become less reliant on external assistance Kazakh and Kyrgyz Red Crescent applied through Netherlands Red Cross and Spanish Red Cross to TACIS for funding branch development and health programmes.. The Turkmen Red Crescent branches have been very active in initiating income generation projects, including computer center, video salon, language classes and tire repair center. However, increasing publicity to raise the CANS profile is hindered by funding constraints both in the CANS and in the regional delegation. This may also be a result of a low appreciation of information work in real life, while officially information is declared important.

Objective 6. To build a strong network of people from within and outside the region who can provide technical support to further development of the national societies in the region.

A successful initiative of production of a quarterly bulletin on the CANS development issues to facilitate regional learning process continues this year. Production and circulation of the bulletin contributes to building development network within the region.

Regional Cooperation

Objective 1. To co-ordinate the implementation of a coherent regional assistance strategy to address issues of vulnerability in central Asia.

The implementation of the RAS will be assessed in July through two days workshops with each CANS. Based on this assessment further plans will be documented.

Objective 2. To promote partnership in order to increase the impact of the work of the national societies in the region by building on the comparative advantages of different components of the Movement and other organisations.

Kyrgyz Red Crescent and Turkmen Red Crescent actively cooperate with other organizations present in the countries, such as UN family. However, due to the ongoing change process of the regional delegation reporting practice and also due to departure of three country delegates, there is no information available on the cooperation with UN.

Objective 3. To strengthen links between the national societies in the region at all levels co-operation and to promote their lead role in setting the Movement's agenda in the region.

Regular regional leadership, organizational development, health, disaster management, information meetings to bring together the NS, regional delegation and ICRC are being planned for the next quarter. However, it is not realistic for the CANS to organise meetings on rotation basis, as was originally planned, for funding reasons.

Objective 4. To increase the participation of the national societies in the region in global activities of the Federation and wider civil society.

No major events took place at this reporting stage so far.

Coordination and Management

Objective 1. To provide efficient management, co-ordination of and practical support to the Federation and partner national societies in their assistance to national society development and programmes in the sphere of health, disaster preparedness and response and promotion of humanitarian values.

Kazakh Red Crescent is one of the three (Armenian and Mongolian Red Crescent) NS included in the societies' in transition survey run by organizational development (OD) department in Geneva. The first meeting aimed at collecting information on the 10 years of cooperation was held in January. The second step, analyzing meeting will take place in May, and the third, the consensus meeting will be conducted in June. This process will probably be important for further development plans.

With the new reporting unit in place it is expected that the overall reporting quality will improve and standards met. In addition to the two logistics/Geneva visits to the region (October 2001 and March 2002), the internal audit team carried out a detailed audit on regional procurements and came up with positive results. Logistics development programme is put on hold due to funding constraints and is expected to start soon.

Objective 2. To raise and maintain the profile of central Asia in the Movement and of the Movement in central Asia and establish networks for knowledge-sharing with key stakeholders.

The quarterly OD-bulletin will be issued in April in addition to the mentioned earlier regional newsletter. Information activities are currently supported by the regional health and disaster management unit due to the funding constraints both in the regional delegation and the CANS.

Objective 3. To mobilize resources from within and outside the region through co-ordinated mechanisms

in promotion of humanitarian values, health, disaster preparedness, disaster response and organisational development.

All the potential PNS were approached in January for assistance, and Spanish Red Cross agreed to fund a regional organizational development delegate for 12 months starting in April.

Objective 4. To establish an effective and efficient Federation structure in the region to maximize local capacities and to implement the regional assistance strategy.

The quarter saw restructuring in the regional delegation. The major change was related to the programme coordination unit, as there is no longer country based delegate in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

Outstanding needs

Please note that this report is being together with Programme Update no. 2; since the period covered in this report is January - March, 2002, there is no accompanying list of contributions. The update list of contributions can be viewed on the Federation's website or at the end of Programme Update no. 2.

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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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