

ANNUAL REPORT



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

SAHEL SUB-REGIONAL PROGRAMMES

10 February 2004

In Brief

Appeal No.: 01.41/2003 ([Click here to access the 2003 Appeal](#))

Appeal target: CHF 349,372 (USD 239,722 or EUR 237,536)

Appeal coverage: 57.3% ([Click here to access the Final Financial Report](#))

Appeal 2004: Sahel sub-regional programmes no. 01.39/2004 ([Click here to access the 2004 Appeal](#))

This Annual Report reflects activities implemented over a one-year period; they form part of, and are based on, longer-term, multi-year planning.

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

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Overall analysis of the programme

After a transitional period, linked to the arrival of a new Head of Office and stabilization of its financial situation, the Sahel Sub-Regional Office began to function at a brisk pace to meet the needs of the seven national societies it directly serves (see below). Feedback from national societies during the Federation's General Assembly in November 2003 was unanimously positive regarding valuable services provided to them since after the regionalization process two years ago. Relations with the ICRC regional office continued to develop throughout the year, leading to fully coordinated planning for 2004 national society programme budgets. Relations with the various bilateral delegates in the region (Danish Red Cross, Spanish Red Cross, French Red Cross, Belgian Red Cross, and Italian Red Cross) grew in some cases, although there is still much room to strengthen communications and coordination. With the addition of organizational development and health staff in 2004, the office should be able to properly meet the expectations of the national societies in the region and reach its full potential.

The Sahel region was replete with emergencies among them: severe food insecurity in Mauritania due to poor rains; population movements to Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger resulting from the armed conflict and ethnic tensions in Côte D'Ivoire; meningitis epidemics in Niger and Burkina Faso; severe storms in Gambia; and floods in Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal, and Mauritania – all of which required special

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support and funding coordination to access DREF¹ funds, support [FACT](#) teams and other technicians, launch and report on appeals. Results were satisfactory, and national societies were pleased with improved level of support, although much more needs to be done to improve coordination and streamline processes.

As a year of heavy operations and programmes, the year 2003 has been a year of “learning by doing” since an unprecedented level of funds was coordinated and managed by the office; the office now is clear about its capacities and weaknesses. Nonetheless, this new regional structure has been valued by national societies in the region. With an adequate injection of financial support in 2004, the regional office should be able to demonstrate even greater value.

The Sahel sub-region is comprised of Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, the Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal. Click on the name of the national society below to access the individual Federation web page:

[<Burkinabe Red Cross Society>](#)

[<Red Cross of Cape Verde>](#)

[<Gambia Red Cross Society>](#)

[<Mali Red Cross>](#)

[<Mauritanian Red Crescent>](#)

[<Red Cross Society of Niger>](#)

[<Senegalese Red Cross Society>](#)

Objectives, Achievements and Constraints

Organizational development

Objective

To assist the Sahel sub-region national societies in moving closer towards the Characteristics of a Well-Functioning national society, by promoting and development and capacity building throughout all programmes and activities of the West African national society's, as well as promoting effective co-ordination of bilateral and multilateral support and co-operation programmes.

Achievements

- The sub-regional office provided professional guidance and technical assistance to targeted national societies that rely almost exclusively on volunteers for management. They achieved this by recruiting a part-time technical advisor for Gambia Red Cross, seconding staff from Mali Red Cross as well as the Head of Office' missions to each country in the region. Emergency operations also provided opportunity for discussions on institutional change, particularly with the Mauritanian Red Crescent.
- All the national societies fulfilled the self-assessment process for their strategic development plans. This is inline with the Federation's [Strategy 2010](#) objective of fostering well-functioning national societies.
- The Sahel office assisted national societies to improve their branch capacities through community-based programming involving and developing their networks of volunteers, members and community participation. This has been achieved mostly through its support for health programmes, such as polio eradication, meningitis, and measles vaccination campaigns in Niger, Burkina Faso and Gambia, and health and food security programmes in Senegal, Mauritania, Gambia and Niger.
- Work was initiated in Gambia to improve management and recruitment of volunteers through a membership drive and volunteer detachment system from branch to headquarters.

¹ DREF –The disaster relief emergency fund (DREF) is the Federation's main tool for providing money to start operations in times of disaster. It supplies immediate funding for both major and minor disasters, enabling the Federation and National Societies to react rapidly

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Impact

- The national society self-evaluations are serving as base line information on which they, with the help of the regional office, are establishing the change process and development goals.
- A regional development officer has been recruited to coordinate Federation's assistance to the national societies in 2004. The regional office has established goals with each of the national societies regarding their respective development processes and agreed upon the type of support required.
- The formerly 'neglected' national societies are pleased with the new level of development (and other) support they are being offered through the sub-regional office; support will be intensified in 2004.

Constraints

- Late recruitment of a suitable development officer contributed to delays in the provision of technical assistance in some cases.
- Little progress was made within the objectives linked to management of human resources, particularly youth and volunteers although they are priorities for the national societies. This situation has now been rectified and with proper financial resources, well-grounded technical support will begin within the region in coordination with the Volunteer 2005 Office in Nairobi.

Field Management

Objective

Dakar office is providing an optimal level of service to national societies in the Sahel Region by managing common Federation resources, representing the Federation, coordinating and communicating with national societies, supporting national societies in responding to disasters as they occur and in managing multilateral programmes for which the Federation has responsibility.

Achievements

- The sub-regional office has clearly established itself as the first port of call for support in disaster response, organizational development and program development.
- The sub-regional office effectively offered support to the national societies for the following disaster responses.
 - Côte d'Ivoire population movement crisis: Support to the National Societies of Burkina Faso and Mali for response included FACT team coordination, liaison with partners (UN, Movement, others), and on-going monitoring.
 - Mauritania Drought and Food Security emergency operation: Support included financial transfers, narrative and financial reporting, delegate supervision, liaison with bilateral partner national societies (French Red Cross and Italian Red Cross) working on the ground in other programmes.
 - Heavy rains and Floods operation: Support included the launching of operational response in five countries (Senegal, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger), coordination with Regional Delegation on needs assessments, DREF allocations, external funding and donor liaison, budget preparation, organization of RDRT technical support from within the region to Mali RCS, and narrative reporting.
 - Gambia Red Cross Society squall emergency relief operation was facilitated through a DREF allocation, financial transfers, and operations updates.
- OD: see OD programme section above for details.
- The sub-regional office offered technical and financial support to six different emergency and primary health care programmes in four national societies.

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- Dialogue and review towards optimal support of national societies took place through the Head of Office's missions to each country and through regular communications with the national societies by email, phone, fax, etc. and coordination with partner national societies.
- New business opportunities in favour of the societies in the region have been launched through the [ARCHI 2010](#) officer at the Secretariat in the form of large multi-country funding proposals to the Global Fund and others for joint bed net distribution and vaccination programmes.
- Federation resources were coordinated and managed for two meetings of the sub-regional working group. This group plans sub-regional and regional approaches to address the three priorities identified by the national societies in the region: disaster management, health, and finance and resource development.
- Communication has improved in the region by means of email, phone, fax and the head of office's mission; the regional office has also been able to establish regular and low-cost communication.
- Coordination has improved in the region. The Sahel office has maintained relationships with other organizations, within and without the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, and the governments of the region. The head of the sub-region has remained the representative of the Federation.
- The sub-regional office coordinated the region's participation in the Francophone Executive Leadership Programme; seven national society representatives were trained in Project Planning Process and regional disaster management, two attended health emergency training in another sub-region and four were supported to participate in the Federation's social mobilization conference in Windhoek. The Senegalese Red Cross was supported to mobilize its volunteers seconded to the December International Home Based and Community HIV/AIDS Care Conference in Dakar and the national society's logistical support to the Red Cross participants from the world over.
- Sahel Regional Office administration and accounting/financial management have been performed efficiently for over 20 projects and emergency operations. The office contributed to the move of the Regional Delegation (RD) to Dakar through administrative support and financial coverage while the RD was establishing itself.
- Sahel Regional Office collected, translated, synthesized and prepared standard Federation programme updates for seven national societies and the regional office, plus four relief operations across six countries.

Impact

- All national societies in the sub-region are now systematically working through and relying on the regional office for their contacts with the Federation Secretariat.
- The regional office has established clear visions with each of the national societies for where each would like to go in their respective development processes and has agreed upon the type of support required.
- The foundation was laid for the CAS processes in Gambia, Burkina, Senegal, and Mauritania through the establishment of coordination mechanisms ("Friends of Gambia partners group", Burkina "Round Table" dialogue, relations with bilateral delegates in the region).
- The Sahel Sub-Regional Working Group was noted by the other sub-regional working groups (Mano River, Lagos, and Yaoundé) as the most advanced in the regionalisation process. The group's experiences and keys to success were shared at the overall West and Central Africa Regional Working Group meeting, thereby contributing to the development of the other groups.
- All national societies now regularly receive electronic copies via the Regional Office of all messages from Geneva Secretariat including field and headquarter position openings and important documents such as the last year's General Assembly, Council of Delegates, and International Conference enabling them to more easily replicate, disseminate widely to their membership and discuss internally.
- National societies feel better supported and more confident in liaising with their UN and NGO partners who in turn have a better understanding of the Federation and the support it offers to national societies, thereby contributing to stronger partnerships and expanded funding,

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- Funds were successfully raised for 18 out of 22 annual country programmes in six countries, plus four emergency operations, and regional office enabling all seven national societies to conduct health/HIV/AIDS, food security, financial management systems development, and rebuilding of branches.
- All national societies were able to take full advantage of all training opportunities offered.
- As there has been a marked increase in transfers to national societies this year, the regional office has begun an integrated approach to financial management linking the financial management systems development programme with Federation financial transfers monitored through the office's accounting unit. This entails a team approach to reviewing and analysing field returns and providing feedback to each national society on each field return. Future activities include the development of guidelines to assist the national societies to strengthen their financial reporting and eventually move them from a working advance to cash transfer system.
- Contacts with various bilateral national society partners operating in the region has helped improve coordination, expand information-sharing, and avoid duplication of resources. These partners include the Danish Red Cross, Spanish Red Cross, French Red Cross, Italian Red Cross, and Belgian Red Cross, and the ICRC Regional Office based in Dakar

Constraints

- Some difficulties have been experienced due to a lack of Disaster Management Coordinator at Regional Delegation level which has at times created confusion and unclear communication channels for response to emergency situations, in particular the multi-country flood operation.
- Due to lack of a health officer, it was challenging to provide more than basic technical support to the national societies.
- Achievement of actual Cooperation Agreement Strategy agreements will be contingent upon the creation of multi-year development plans which to date only exist in two countries (Senegal and Cape Verde).
- To adequately pursue business opportunities requires more staffing resources (health and OD) which will become available in 2004.
- The full potential of the regional working group system was not realised in 2003 due to the limited progress by some other groups and the subsequent inability to share experiences and resources across sub-regions.
- More work needs to be done to further develop representation and advocacy within the sub-region, but was not possible due to workload and operational urgencies.
- The quality of the financial returns submitted by some national societies is quite low.
- The provision of timely, donor-oriented reporting continues to be very much linked to national societies and their ability and commitment to submit reports related to programmes for which they have received funds, and on the timely transfer of funds to national societies. Both are still a challenge in the sub-region given delays in communications, banking, and the re-establishment of the Regional Finance Unit at the Regional Delegation. Reporting should improve in 2004 with health and OD staff being brought on and the introduction of the PPP planning tool in 2003 for the preparation of national society programmes and appeals; these steps should contribute to more coherent reporting by the national societies.

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