

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

3 December 2003

Appeal No. 01.63/2003

Appeal Target: CHF 1,536,834

Programme Update No. 3; Period covered: July to September 2003

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 over 180 countries. For more information: www.ifrc.org

In Brief

Appeal coverage: 65%; See attached Contributions List for details.

Outstanding needs: CHF 542,004

Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: N/A

Programme Summary: The socio-economic situation continues to weaken, and the political climate remains unstable, with the result that greater numbers of people in Myanmar are forced to live on or below the poverty line. National health facilities are stretched, and many remote villages cannot access their services. Communities already living at their limit are not able to cope when fire and floods destroy their homes and livelihoods. The Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) is committed to changing its structure, systems and image within the country to better serve the most vulnerable communities. To this end, it is increasing its community-based training, undertaking a major branch survey, and preparing a far-sighted but realistic strategic plan (2004-2008). With a limited number of donors, the financial position of MRCS and its capacity to implement major programmes in health and disaster management is precarious. The national society and Federation delegation have had to drastically scale back on 2003 plans, maintaining only the most vital components of programmes and community-based training.

Operational developments

During the third quarter of 2003, the economic situation in Myanmar further deteriorated and the percentage of people living on or below the poverty line continued to increase. The exchange rate of both the foreign exchange currency (FEC) and the dollar against the kyat declined significantly with fluctuations almost daily. At the same time, food prices, including staples, continued to increase and people are finding it increasingly difficult to buy even basic goods.

Following the security incident in May, reported in the last update, the leader of the National League for Democracy (NLD) remained in protective custody until she was allowed to return home in September. The leader remains under house arrest and the international community led by the European Union, USA and Japan, as well as ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) partners are calling for her release as well as the release of other senior members of the NLD. In August 2003, sanctions were imposed by the United States, causing the shutdown of commercial enterprises particularly in the clothing industry. A reshuffle of the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) and the government, and the appointment of a new prime minister at the end of August 2003, signaled some changes ahead. A seven-step plan for the 'democratisation of Myanmar' has been outlined, with the drafting of a new constitution by the reconvened National Convention as the first priority.

This period of the year appears to have been spared major disasters, although some flooding has occurred along the Ayeyarwady which has been managed at the local level. An earthquake measuring 6.7 on the Richter scale hit Central Myanmar on 22 September, but fortunately with limited damage to property and persons. International organisations, as well as governments, are still awaiting the Special United Nations Report on Myanmar, which was scheduled for publication in March, but has not yet been made available.

The Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS), supported by the Federation Delegation continued to give priority to the on-going, comprehensive branch survey, the strategic planning process, establishing a greater delineation and further clarification of roles and responsibilities for governance and management, and the reorganisation of national headquarters so that it can better guide and serve branches.

Health and Care

Goal: There is real and sustainable improvement in the health of the most vulnerable in Myanmar.

Objective: MRCS's health and care capacity is enhanced through on-going capacity building within the organization, and through the increased involvement of communities in preventative and health education programmes.

Expected Results:

1. Increased capacity of MRCS at headquarters and branch levels for effective design, implementation and management of relevant health and care programmes.
2. Improved and expanded first aid training and service delivery programme focusing on community needs and targeting the most vulnerable populations.
3. Improved hygiene and sanitation practices in the communities.
4. Increased awareness of HIV/AIDS and reduced discrimination and stigmatisation of PLWHA

Progress/Achievements

Improving the capacity of the MRCS health division continues with the technical support of the two Federation health delegates, in addition to ongoing participation in training, international meetings and workshops. The head of the health division attended the Australian Red Cross HIV/AIDS network Asia Pacific (ARCSAN) annual meeting which included a gender workshop and exit strategies workshop, in

addition to the Asia Regional Taskforce HIV/AIDS meeting which included a strategic planning workshop. The assistant head of the health division attended an international workshop held by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in Yangon on information/education communication (IEC) resource analysis and development, as well as a project planning process (PPP) training in Bangkok. This workshop was also attended by two training division staff.

Strategic planning for MRCS continues with a workshop held in September, with MRCS health division staff taking an active role. The recruitment of new health division staff including deputy head of health division and two field officers has commenced. The health division expansion is being supported by the relocation of the division, and refurbishment of offices and purchase of equipment to support improved communications and team work. It is anticipated that renovation work and the relocation can take place early in 2004.

The training division continues to improve in capacity and outputs. Community based first aid (CBFA) training of trainers (ToT) plan continues on schedule with another two of 13 divisions and 60 participants receiving training in the quarter. Multipliers have also commenced in several branches, with local team leaders taking responsibility for these activities. A First Aid Instructor course for 45 participants from all over Myanmar was provided as part of World First Aid Day activities and celebrations. Improvement of the CBFA curriculum continues as capacity and resources improve. New topics include psychological support, explosive ordnances wound management and a triage module. A country-wide review of existing IEC resources to support training needs was undertaken and reprinting has commenced. The ToT, IEC resources and purchase of mannequins for all states and divisions, supports the improving capacity of the branches to manage and deliver CBFA training for the communities.

The ongoing improvement of the CBFA ToT programme has resulted in a comprehensive and participatory model of health education being conducted throughout Myanmar. All main health issues in Myanmar including hygiene, sanitation, HIV, malaria and tuberculosis are incorporated into the curriculum. Multipliers are now being undertaken in several townships, so the education is now reaching beyond the Red Cross volunteers (RCV) and branches to the communities.

The Keng Tung community-based health pilot project has used CBFA as the entry point to the rural and urban communities, and now has more than 20 trainers, reaching 11 villages and providing health education to over 160 community members during the reporting period. This education has resulted in improving health practices demonstrated by the project village communities.

The MRCS is now supporting four staff in youth and HIV training that includes a series of workshops to improve capacity in analysis, planning, implementation and evaluation of HIV programmes. Ongoing training was also provided to support the implementation of the Keng Tung project; building the capacity of staff, RCV and community members in their knowledge and ability to respond to HIV. The MRCS has a number of HIV-focused projects supported by different agencies in addition to the Keng Tung project, the focus being on HIV prevention through peer education.

Impact

The CBFA programme is having a significant impact on the strengthening of communities to respond to health issues and first aid. The Keng Tung project continues to strengthen the capacity of the branch and its target communities, and be recognised as a model for expansion to other townships.

Constraints

The health and training division is still under-resourced both in numbers of staff, financially, and in terms of physical resources. The final quarter of 2003 should see this situation improve, with the recruitment of new staff, and relocation to refurbished and resourced offices.

Coordination

Cooperation between ICRC and the Federation continues to strengthen the capacity of MRCS, with both Movement partners supporting MRCS in CBFA training activities, and regular meetings occurring to support information sharing and cooperation.

Ongoing consultation with government and other humanitarian organisations in collaboration with MRCS executive and management are resulting in a higher profile of MRCS and greater understanding of Red Cross activities and mandate. Cooperation for use of existing and new IEC resources has been agreed with the ICRC.

Regular meetings between health and training personnel continue to improve the coordination of the departments. Wider collaboration between all divisions of MRCS supports improving capacity at a broader level, with activities including communications and disaster management personnel supporting health, training and promotion activities.

Disaster Management

Goal: The risk of disasters is reduced and the resilience of the most vulnerable people in Myanmar is enhanced.

Objective: MRCS's capacity in disaster management is strengthened, based on its network of volunteers and branch structures and in strategic partnerships with the government authorities and other agencies.

Expected Results:

The programme will produce the following overall results:

1. MRCS is acknowledged as a leading organisation in disaster management with a recognised role in national coordination systems.
2. MRCS has an adequate response mechanism in place to fulfill its mandate in assisting the most vulnerable people in time of disasters in an efficient and swift manner.
3. MRCS can take full advantage of its nation-wide grassroots structures to promote community resilience to disasters.

Progress / Achievements:

The head of the MRCS disaster preparedness and response (DP/R) division attended a meeting of the regional disaster management committee in Bangkok in August. In September, three MRCS staff who now constitute the core team for organising and facilitating the disaster assessment and response team (DART) training participated in the regional disaster response team training course in Indonesia.

In July, with assistance of the Federation's Myanmar delegation and regional delegation in Bangkok, MRCS organised a contingency planning workshop for flood and fire disaster response situations. Based on the groundwork prepared through discussion at the workshop, the contingency plans will be finalised by the DP/R division by the end of the year, which then will be submitted to the society's governance body for formal approval.

Following the ToT pilot course in April, the DART training workshop in Yangon was held in September. It was the first of three DART training workshops planned this year that will cover all states and divisions of the country. The 40 participants included Red Cross officials of provincial and district levels from seven southern states/divisions and four personnel from the military medical corps, for whom the training provided a unique opportunity to learn the Movement's principles, mission and activities. Developed in

cooperation with the ICRC and the Federation, the workshop's programme incorporated issues of conflict preparedness and disaster management with emphasis on practical skills in damage and needs assessment and reporting.

In the reporting period, MRCS assisted, as part of the ongoing community based disaster preparedness project in Ayeyarwaddy division, four pilot villages in flood-prone townships of Hinthada and Thabaung. In addition to building guardhouses on dykes to monitor river levels, equipment was provided for watchmen, including raincoats, rubber boots, torches, life jackets, and helmets.

Impact

The aftermath of the earthquake which hit central Myanmar on 22 September made clear the effects of the series of DART training sessions organised in the last few months. The MRCS responded by swiftly dispatching assessment teams both from the local chapter of the Magway division, the most affected area, and the national headquarters. Information flow between headquarters and branches was noticeably better than in the past, though there still is a long way to go in improving the efficiency of emergency communications.

Constraints

As MRCS has strengthened its disaster management activities over last year, it is increasingly becoming evident that its DP/R division is understaffed and needs in particular a strong deputy to assist the head in overall coordination and management. The current programme coordinator, the position that is originally designed for such deputy roles, serves concurrently as the society's deputy executive director and thus cannot fulfill his role in the DP/R division. This issue must be addressed shortly by MRCS in agreement with the delegation, which is providing salary support for the position.

Coordination

A lack of reliable information in the aftermath of the recent earthquake in Magway led many humanitarian agencies in the country to refer to the Red Cross as a focal point for information sharing and coordination. Consequently, MRCS and the Federation held an information sharing meeting for interested parties after conducting damage and needs assessment. It is high time that the delegation should establish formal contact with the relevant government authorities so that it can more effectively promote better coordination in disaster management.

Humanitarian Values

Goal: There is increased awareness and application of humanitarian values, the fundamental principles and key national and global advocacy themes in Myanmar.

Objective: The awareness of humanitarian values in Myanmar, and the role and responsibility of the MRCS is enhanced.

Expected Results:

The capacity of MRCS to disseminate and publicise the role of the Red Cross Red Crescent has been developed.

Progress/Achievements

During the quarter, MRCS published two issues of the Red Cross newsletter highlighting the work of the national society and including a series of articles on CBFA, blood donation, protection of the Red Cross emblem, mine awareness, as well as highlighting information from Red Cross Red Crescent societies around the world. The English version of the MRCS newsletter is in progress.

In September, the communications department worked with the health and training divisions, and the Federation health delegates to prepare and conduct a nation-wide communications and first aid campaign to celebrate World First Aid Day. Branches across the whole country ran training courses, prepared displays of first aid materials and presented exhibitions and demonstrations of first aid treatments.

The communications division, in cooperation with the disaster management division and the Federation delegation, also played a key role in collecting and presenting information within the Red Cross, following the earthquake in Central Myanmar. With many organisations requesting information from the Red Cross, MRCS and the Federation jointly organised an information-sharing meeting five days after the earthquake. Four international and three local non-government organisations (NGOs) attended the meeting where they were provided with facts and figures, saw a display of photos taken on-site and discussed what actions had been taken.

Discussions and preparations are on-going for further information and dissemination materials to be prepared and printed by the MRCS, including a set of first aid wall posters. Additionally, the MRCS and Federation are also in discussion with ICRC about the various kinds of materials with general Red Cross messages that could be jointly financed by the three partners.

A two-week working visit from the Federation's regional information delegate provided for good discussions with the communication division on the role it can play in providing stories for the Federation newsletter *Southeast Asia Link* and website. The delegate also prepared stories on MRCS programmes after visiting Sagaing division during a CBFA training session, and meeting with staff and volunteers in Yangon. Two of these stories have already appeared on the Federation's website.

Impact

Increasing interest by the general public in Red Cross activities has been noted, and certain government authorities have also requested further information on Red Cross programmes and plans. The events of the Red Cross throughout the country to celebrate World First Aid Day had a two-fold result. Firstly, the public was made more aware of one of the most basic programmes of the MRCS, and secondly RCV felt motivated and proud to show off their skills and commitment to the Red Cross.

Constraints

Resources available to the communications department are very limited, with the already small, and now recently pared back budget severely challenging the output of division staff.

Coordination

The Myanmar delegation, together with ICRC and the Federation's regional delegation, has been supporting the expanding work of the MRCS communications division. Discussions are now on-going with the ICRC for more planned support in the production of information materials and training.

Organisational Development

Goal: The MRCS ability to address the humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable in Myanmar is strengthened.

Objective: MRCS has better foundation, capacity, and performance for running better volunteer based services and programmes more competently, and moves towards being a 'Well-functioning National Society'.

Expected Results:

The programme will produce the following overall results:

1. MRCS becomes a more credible and legitimate organisation that can mobilise wider support at international, national and local levels.
2. MRCS becomes a more viable organisation that can continuously develop itself in a sustainable and accountable way.
3. MRCS becomes a more effective organisation that can make a difference in the lives of vulnerable people in the changing environment.

Progress /Achievements

A branch survey preliminary analysis report was prepared based on questionnaire responses of 15 provincial chapters, 22 district sub-chapters, and 155 township branches. In preparation for the branch survey's second phase, MRCS selected 34 sample township branches for field visits, developed a protocol and travel plan, and field-tested a list of questions to be asked in semi-structured discussions in focus group meetings. At the fourth strategic planning meeting in September, held by MRCS, the Federation and ICRC, the preliminary analysis report was presented to the executive committee. This was followed by an exercise of internal organisational analysis of the society and intensive discussion on the national headquarters' structure.

MRCS sent a total of four staff to training workshops on the PPP, organised by the regional delegation in August and September. The trained staff will be used as facilitators for a PPP workshop in Myanmar planned next year.

Impact

Although the analysis of branch survey questionnaire responses and the preparation for the second phase took longer than originally anticipated, the preliminary report was appreciated highly by the executive committee. The process has been instrumental in bringing MRCS senior management staff together and encouraging them to work more as a team.

Constraints

Long discussions between MRCS and the delegation led to submission of a project proposal on the development of financial management systems to the Federation's Capacity Building Fund. The project was granted the funds to re-establish a finance and administration division at the society's national headquarters and conduct external audit, but the implementation has been delayed since the unexpected resignation in July of the society's honorary treasurer, until then the focal person for the project. There exists as yet no plan for MRCS to replace this vital position.

Coordination

The organogram of the national headquarters was discussed by the Movement partners again at the fourth strategic planning meeting, but not yet finalised. The piecemeal approach taken in the MRCS's reorganisation process so far has led to fragmented structure, functional gaps and overlaps, inefficient internal coordination, and growing friction and uncertainty within the staff. It is thus of urgent importance for the Federation and ICRC delegations to dedicate consistent and concerted efforts to assist MRCS to be able to present a clear overall design of the organisational structure over the coming months.

Federation Coordination

Goal: Sustainable long-term development of the MRCS is achieved through facilitating strong and effective coordination between MRCS present and potential partners.

Objective: Solid coordination and collaborative practices are put in place, enabling all partners to assist MRCS to develop and implement their long-term development strategy.

Expected Results:

The MRCS and its key partners (the Federation, ICRC, PNS and other organisations) recognise the vital importance of the CAS for the long-term sustainable development of the society, both as a flexible framework for enhanced coordination and programme management as well as a useful marketing tool.

Progress/Achievements

The growing relationship of the Myanmar delegation with partner national societies (PNS) was further strengthened during this period through personal visits and correspondence. In August, visits were made by the Danish Red Cross regional delegate and the human resources officer for Australian Red Cross. For Danish Red Cross, the visit was an investigatory trip with a view to a partnership being developed over the next months. For Australian Red Cross the trip served as an annual visit to their delegates in the field, and an opportunity for further understanding of the KengTung project. The delegation continued to keep partner societies updated on MRCS and delegation programmes, and a copy of the completed preliminary report on phase one of the branch survey and information concerning the protocol for phase two to all interested societies.

During this period, talks were also held between the Federation head of delegation (HoD) and representatives of the British Department of International Development (DFID) and AusAID with regard to actual or potential funding and relationships through the respective national societies or through the Federation, in the case of DFID. Discussions were also held between the HoD, New Zealand Red Cross (NZRC) and NZAID during a seven-city speaking tour of the HoD at the invitation of the NZRC - one of the key partners to the MRCS and the Federation's delegation.

The MRCS fourth strategic planning meeting was held in early September with a clear decision being taken on the question of the society headquarters structure. It was agreed that for the fifth strategic planning meeting in October, the MRCS would take the lead. A number of key players from five or six branches across Myanmar would be invited to the meeting that would be conducted only in Myanmar language, so that as great a participation as possible could be managed. The president and senior staff recognised that they need to get input and a 'buy-in' to the strategic plan from all the branches if it is to succeed.

The entire delegation participated in a three-day, off-site team-building and planning session facilitated by the regional human resources officer. With a larger team in place since the first quarter, and increased responsibility towards both the MRCS and partner societies it was felt important for the staff to understand better their roles and responsibilities, and to discuss how to improve individual and team performance.

Impact

In spite of, or perhaps because of the deteriorating economic and political climate, it appears there is a growing interest in the capacity and programmes of MRCS, both within the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement and from donors and governments alike. The informal information flow between the delegation and actual and potential PNS has increased the level of understanding and interest in the work of the Red Cross in Myanmar.

Constraints

As already outlined, MRCS is presently working on and committed to developing a comprehensive strategic plan for 2004-2008. Within this process it is also aware of the need for a cooperation agreement strategy (CAS) - seen as an extension of the strategic plan - providing actual and potential donors a clear

indication of external partnerships and support sought by MRCS. The national society is, however, aware that without a plan and CAS, it is more difficult to engage partners in the society's overall development and programmes. The strategic plan is slated for the end 2003, the CAS a few months later.

International Representation

Goal: Knowledge and understanding of Red Cross Red Crescent principles and values, nationally and within the international community is increased.

Objective: MRCS and the Federation have leading roles and visibility in national and international fora, respectively.

Expected Results:

MRCS and the Federation are positioned to influence the humanitarian agenda in Myanmar and mobilise resources.

Progress/Achievements

A constructive meeting was organised by MRCS with the minister of health, together with the directors of all departments within the Ministry of Health. The Federation was represented by the head of delegation and health delegate, and present from the MRCS were the president, senior advisor on communications and humanitarian affairs and the honorary secretary. Discussions focused on the roles of the MRCS and the Federation delegation with regard to health and DP/R programmes and it was agreed that further talks should be held in the next months.

The head of delegation also met with the incoming director for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) who also has the function of resident coordinator of UN organisations in Myanmar. Although discussions were rather general in nature, interest was expressed by the UN resident in establishing better links between the various international organisations working in Myanmar.

Impact

There is a growing recognition by the Government and by other agencies working in Myanmar, of the Federation as a key player in Myanmar and its particular role in supporting the capacity building and development of health and disaster management programmes of the MRCS throughout the country. There is also increased understanding of all components of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement and their differing roles, and their collective potential to make a considerable and positive impact within Myanmar.

Constraints

To date it has still not been possible to arrange meetings with the Ministries of Social Welfare and Home Affairs, and although the national society has stated its willingness to organise meetings, the lack of contact between the delegation and the ministries is now a matter for concern. It is planned that initial meetings will emphasise the key goal of the Federation as support to the capacity building and programme development of the MRCS. An issue to be examined at a later date is that of establishing a status agreement or memorandum of understanding between the Government and the Federation.

Coordination

Regular meetings between ICRC and the Federation heads of delegation, and a stated desire on the part of both to cooperate and coordinate activities wherever possible, has ensured a well-established partnership. Particular focus is given to the shared commitment to assist MRCS become more independent, and better known for its range of programmes and role as the leading humanitarian organisation in the country.

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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 (SPHERE Project) 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 website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

APPEAL No. 01.63/2003

PLEDGES RECEIVED

26/11/2003

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
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CASH

REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				1,536,834	TOTAL COVERAGE 64.7%	
CASH CARRIED FORWARD				125,419		
AUSTRALIAN - GOVT		112,650	AUD	95,246	23.04.03	HEALTH
AUSTRALIAN - GOVT				44,385	08.04.03	HEALTH DELEGATE
BRITISH - RC		10,000	GBP	21,475	01.04.03	CAPACITY BUILDING HEALTH
BRITISH - RC		15,000	GBP	32,535	09.05.03	ORGANISATIONAL DEV., BRANCH SURVEY
FINNISH - GOVT/RC		65,845	EUR	97,154	17.03.03	DISASTER PREPAREDNESS, HUMANITARIAN VALUES, ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
ICRC		5,000	USD	6,825	31.05.03	ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
JAPANESE - RC		83,181	USD	107,096	18.06.03	HIVAIDS & FIRST AID
JAPANESE - RC		99,817	USD	128,514	18.06.03	DISASTER MANAGEMENT
NEW ZEALAND - RC		50,000	NZD	37,475	16.06.03	DP TRAINING, DART TRAINING, HEALTH & CARE
NEW ZEALAND - RC		100,000	NZD	80,850	19.09.03	HOD, HEALTH PROGRAMME
CAPACITY BUILDING FUND				50,300	29/08/2003	PMM005
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				827,274	CHF	53.8%

KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
AUSTRALIA	DELEGATE(S)			47,638		
FINLAND	DELEGATE(S)			59,959		
JAPAN	DELEGATE(S)			59,959		
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				167,556	CHF	10.9%

ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				0	CHF	