

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

EAST ASIA REGION

25 June 2003

Appeal no. 01.69/2003; Appeal target: CHF 762,888 (USD 524,000 or EUR 517,000)

Programme Update No. 1; Period covered: January to June 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.
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In Brief

Appeal coverage: 27.4%; please refer to the Contributions List for this appeal on the Federation's website at http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?annual03/1-2-3%20-%20ap016903.pdf.

Outstanding needs: CHF 559,020

Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: SARS appeal no. 13/01

Programme Summary: In spite of the relatively low response to the appeal to date, satisfactory progress is being made in most programmes given in particular the delays brought about by the SARS outbreak. National societies of the region are gaining experience in designing and managing a range of appropriate relief and health and care programmes that address the basic needs of populations in their countries. There is considerable interest on the part of many participating national societies (PNS) to provide assistance in a collaborative way and recognition of the value that the Federation can bring in programming and coordination.

Operational developments

While the eyes of the world have been mainly focused on the conflict in the Middle East and its consequences for future global stability, several events in East Asia in the first half of the year are likely to have far-reaching effects on the geo-political and economic environment in which the Red Cross Red Crescent will be operating in years to come. The past months have seen the slow build up of the North Korea nuclear crisis and the threat of a nuclear arms race in the region. Although tensions remain high and the situation poses a very real threat to both regional and global security, one positive element has been China's willingness to act as a balancing force able to organise talks bringing the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and US governments together in Beijing, in April. This may reflect the fact that China is now seeking to re-position itself on the regional diplomatic stage, mirroring its emergence as a major player on the economic front.

The other major event has been the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) affecting primarily China, but also other countries in East and South East Asia. While the crisis appears to be diminishing in China and neighbouring countries, strong advice comes from the World Health Organisation (WHO) to maintain a high degree of caution. Although the overall economic impact of the disease may not be as severe as first feared (except in certain sectors such as tourism and the airline industry), what will be particularly interesting to observe will be the implications for the Chinese government's policy on public health, and its willingness to address issues of

public concern more openly. So far SARS has not affected DPRK, undoubtedly a great relief given the poor state of the country's health facilities. There is certainly an opportunity for national societies in the region to reflect on their future role in public health given that one of the clear messages from this crisis has been the importance of strengthening health education and prevention programmes, particularly in rural areas.

Disaster Management

Goal: National societies are better prepared for disasters and are improving the ability of communities at risk to cope with disasters.

Objective: The disaster preparedness and response capacity at national and regional level is improved through an integrated regional disaster management (DM) approach.

Expected results:

- The East Asia regional delegation has a clearer understanding about Mongolia and DPRK national societies' development needs, strengths, and capacities and a plan of action for more systematic support to these societies from the regional office is developed.
- Opportunities for strengthened regional cooperation are explored.
- Disaster management information and knowledge sharing between the national, regional and global level is improved.
- Completion of one regional training workshop on DM related issues.

Progress/Achievements (activities implemented within this objective)

The main thrust of the programme so far has been to help conduct and follow up evaluations of relief operations in three societies in the region. East Asia is a highly disaster prone area and the national societies in Mongolia, China and DPRK were all involved with relief operations in 2002. Particular focus has been placed on helping them take forward recommendations from evaluation reports so as to develop relevant and effective operations as well as future national society/Federation cooperation.

In January **Mongolia** was affected by a dzud (a natural phenomenon precipitated by summer droughts followed by harsh winters), which this time showed the national society better prepared for the disaster. The Mongolian Red Cross Society (MRCS), together with the Federation, launched an appeal. The relief operation was based on recommendations made by an independent review in late 2002 of the national society's programmes, including previous relief operations.

The review found both appeals (2000 and 2001), and their two extensions (2000 and 2002) contained accurate analyses of the needs, considered capacities of the government and other actors, and identified realistic and appropriate actions in response to the disasters. They were generally good examples of Federation emergency appeal planning. Furthermore, the review recommended that an emergency appeal for 2003 should be launched, accompanied this time by a longer-term strategy for poverty reduction in Mongolia. The strategy would focus, in particular, on how the Red Cross can address the needs of the urban vulnerable as well as rural populations.

In 2003, the review created the basis for a better and, in the initial stages, faster relief operation. The appeal targeted vulnerable groups affected by the dzud mainly in rural, but also for the first time, urban areas. It also included pilot components on branch development and volunteer involvement as part of the relief operation. The regional disaster management delegate and the logistics coordinator from the Federation delegation in DPRK spent January in Mongolia assisting the national society with the first phase of the launch and implementation of the operation. The Federation delegation was in a transition period at the beginning of the year, but by February a new head of delegation arrived together with relief and logistics coordinators for the relief operation. The MRCS, Federation delegation and the regional disaster management delegate, are now starting the process of developing a longer term disaster management strategy, based on a voluntary capacity assessment (VCA) carried out earlier in 2002 and a review of the relief operations.

The review also identified logistics as being one of the major challenges for MRCS and the Federation in terms of running effective relief operations. The MRCS did not in the beginning of the year have a strong logistics capacity, and had no staff trained in Federation logistics procedures and standards. The review identified a need

for the Federation to provide support for MRCS in this area. Accordingly a logistics/disaster management workshop will take place in June for MRCS staff at both selected provincial (Aimag) and headquarter levels. The workshop was initially intended to be a regional workshop, but due to SARS imposed travel restrictions, the workshop will solely be for MRCS staff. A second logistics/DM workshop is scheduled to take place in the second part of the year for the remaining Aimags, and possibly relief staff from Chinese Red Cross.

In March 2003, a review of the **China** floods operation 2002 was carried out by an independent consultant, assisted by two experts from the Federation Secretariat in Geneva and a PNS representative. The purpose of the review was to:

1. Evaluate the timeliness, efficiency and relevance of the 2002 China Flash Flood operation;
2. Evaluate to what extent the RCSC/Federation have been successful in terms of incorporating the findings and recommendations provided by the 1999 and 2000 Flood evaluations; and
3. Based on these findings (1 and 2 above), and the recent developments related to the Strategy for Change, develop recommendations for the future scope of RCSC/Federation cooperation in the field of disaster response.

The comprehensive review report was completed in April and has been translated into Mandarin for consideration by RCSC management. The review raises a number of issues, which have implications for both RCSC and the Federation and has been recognised by both organisations as an important document to help shape the direction of the management of future relief operation. Some recommendations have already been addressed while others will take considerably longer to implement. There is nevertheless little doubt that this third review of flood operations in China will have significant influence on not only relief operations, but also the future scope of RCSC/Federation cooperation.

Although outside the reporting period, the regional disaster management delegate participated in the 2002 review of the disaster preparedness/disaster response (DP/DR) programme in DPRK headed by an independent consultant. The purpose of the review was:

- To review progress and assess, where possible, the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the DPRK Red Cross disaster preparedness programme.
- To make recommendations for the development and future direction of the disaster preparedness programme.

In overall terms the review team concluded that in the last two years the DP/DR programme had made a significant contribution to the capacity of the DPRK Red Cross to respond to disasters. The programme has been successful in defining a clear role for the Red Cross in preparedness and response, which is both acknowledged and appreciated by the government and the main international humanitarian actors in the country. The DPRK Red Cross is considered to be the leading agency in the field, concentrating on clearly defined competencies, including search and rescue, first aid and non-food aid assistance, all of which complement the role of government authorities during a disaster response.

The review team furthermore found that the objectives and activities of the DP/DR programme were generally appropriate and well designed in terms of achieving the stated programme goal, with the exception of one or two activities that will be addressed as part of the ongoing DP/DR programme.

Impact

The East Asia regional delegation has been able to build up a much clearer understanding about the national societies' disaster management needs, strengths, and capacities through its close association with reviews in the past year, as well as its direct involvement in two of relief operations. There are strong indications that national societies in the region are increasing their capacity to respond faster and more efficiently in case of natural disasters. These reviews in China, Mongolia and DPRK have created the foundation for strategic changes improving the way societies prepare for, and respond to disasters. In all three countries processes have been initiated which will have both short term and long-term consequences.

As part of these changes, all three national societies have started to take steps to meet the significant challenge of improving the abilities of communities at risk to cope with disasters. In each country, however, there are very

differing challenges. In **China** the sheer size of the country and the vast numbers of vulnerable people with high risk of being affected by disasters constitutes a major challenge. In the southern provinces of Guangxi and Hunan, RCSC, with support from the Federation, is implementing a sanitation programme with a community based health promotion programme as an integrated component. In most community based programmes one of the biggest challenges is to get access to the communities and to ensure a genuine involvement. This is already being achieved in these two provinces and the RCSC and Federation are presently discussing how this entry point to the villages can be further developed, to include broader disaster preparedness issues.

In **Mongolia**, the challenge of reaching the communities is almost the opposite of the situation in China, with a small population living scattered over a very large area. As part of the 2003 dzud appeal a number of pilot projects were included, aiming at developing new ways of addressing long term vulnerabilities and improving the populations' ability to cope with disasters. Although in their early stages, the first pilot projects, including food for work initiatives, look promising.

In **DPRK**, a pilot community based disaster preparedness programme has been initiated, and interesting links to the community based first aid initiatives are being established. However, the programme has been without a disaster preparedness delegate for most of the reporting period somewhat hampering implementation.

Constraints:

Moving ahead with several of the issues raised in the relief reviews will require time and discussion within each national society as they have more far-reaching policy and organisational/communications implications. Language and cultural issues also need to be respected and addressed in a proper manner.

As with all the other programmes in the region, progress has been adversely affected by the outbreak of the SARS virus and the travel restrictions imposed on travel in the region. As the regional delegation is based in Beijing, one of the areas hardest hit by SARS, it has been difficult for the regional delegates to travel for most of the reporting period.

Humanitarian Values

Goal: The Movement's fundamental principles and humanitarian values have been better understood by internal and external stakeholders in East Asia.

Objective: The degree of visibility, cooperation and support for the Red Cross Red Crescent in East Asia, through communications and advocacy, has increased.

Expected Results:

- The launching of the World Disasters Report for the benefit of the local and international media has enabled the latter to better understand the importance of disaster preparedness and disaster response in general and specifically in disaster-prone countries such as China.
- Information officers from national societies of the region have improved their skills in promoting the Red Cross image among internal and external stakeholders.
- In cooperation with the ICRC, regional training modules including the existing tools such as "From Principle into Action" kit have been adapted to the needs of the national societies in East Asia
- At least three training workshops have been conducted annually.
- A communication module is designed and key RCSC staff members received the appropriate training at the second Leadership training.
- National societies understand better the importance of media for the Red Cross work. The establishment of audiovisual libraries enable them to promptly provide the media with photo and video coverage of disasters when needed.
- The international media and donors, government and non-government agencies understand better the role and the activities of the national societies within the context of the Movement.
- The advocacy projects around the RCSC anniversary, International Red Cross Day as well as World AIDS Day have contributed to improve the knowledge and the awareness of the Red Cross within the community.

Progress/Achievements (activities implemented within this objective)

Media relations

The reporting period saw several emergencies in the region, one after another. As stated earlier, in January the Federation launched an emergency appeal to support the population of Mongolia suffering another year of dzud; in February, the province of Xinjiang in far western China, was struck by a major earthquake; and in April, the SARS virus started to spread throughout East and South East Asia.

In Mongolia, the regional information delegate carried out a seven-day mission to the most affected areas to obtain a first-hand account of the situation, accompanied by a freelance journalist/cameraman and two representatives from MRCS. Several interviews were given to international media in addition to stories written for the Federation website. Video material was also produced and distributed to all international media. In Beijing, visits were made to major diplomatic missions in January and February to mobilise support for the dzud appeal.

In Xinjiang, the RCSC facilitated access to the disaster region for the Federation reporting delegate, the only expatriate to visit the region. The visit contributed to raising the Red Cross profile, as both the reporting delegate and regional information delegate were able to give interviews to international media on RCSC assistance to people affected by the earthquake. The presence of a delegate in the field enabled the Federation to issue seven information bulletins within the space of two weeks. Although no international appeal was launched, the RCSC national appeal raised close to RMB 8 million (almost USD 1 million) in cash and kind through assistance from several governments. The Japanese government donated about USD 250,000 in cash and in kind; Greece gave 200,000 euros in humanitarian assistance; the United States donated USD 100,000 for the purchase of food; and the Canadian government released CDN 50,000 to help with the reconstruction of a school.

As for SARS, from the outset the Red Cross was seen as playing an important role in fighting the outbreak. The national society was one of only four organisations mandated by the government to raise funds for SARS work. The Hong Kong Red Cross branch, followed by the RCSC headquarters and several provincial branches developed activities to assist the population. The regional information delegate provided background information to the international media on the Red Cross response and contributed to stories and press releases for the Federation website.

The presence of a regional information delegate in Beijing has highly contributed to increased visibility of the RCSC in particular, and the Movement in general, in the international and national media.

International Water Conference and Harm Reduction Conference

From 13-23 March, the Federation participated in the Third World Water Forum of Freshwater in Kyoto, Japan, organised as part of the International Year of Water. To illustrate the situation in several regions, the Federation developed a web page of Red Cross Red Crescent news, information about water and sanitation programmes, water facts, and images from Federation operations. A story was written on the highly challenging situation in DPRK.

In early April, in Chiang Mai, Thailand, the Federation participated in the fourteenth international conference on the reduction of drug-related harm. A story illustrating the peer education programme with former drug users in China's southern province of Yunnan was written for the Federation website and interviews given to international media.

International and national media

Since the Red Cross is frequently the only international organisation that has access to disaster areas in China, the media often uses the Federation as a reliable source of information. Thus good relations have been developed with both the international and national media based in Beijing. The international media, in particular, often makes use of Federation pictures and video. The Federation works closely with Associated Press Television Network (APTN) whenever an emergency strikes.

Promotional material

Several audio-visual presentations were produced to better present the Movement and its challenges to donors, media and other groups. A Movement presentation focusing on the Red Cross programmes in East Asia was

produced, for use when first meeting national media representatives. It was also presented to the China's People's Liberation Army in Xian province during an ICRC-sponsored international humanitarian law seminar and in Tianjin province at the invitation of the Red Cross branch. Another presentation was tailored for the donors meeting held in Beijing in February (see International Representation section).

Capacity building support to national societies

DPRK

An eleven-day visit was conducted to DPRK in April to meet two objectives: meet with the national society and discuss various communications issues; and have a better understanding of programmes in the region. One of the outcomes of the visit was to increase the visibility of the DPRK Red Cross by gathering material for the Federation website and other Federation publications.

Achievements:

- Two stories were written for the Federation website: the first covered the water and sanitation and health education programme, while the other focused on disaster management. A text was written for Federation news on training seminars organised jointly by the Federation and WHO in Pyongyang, on SARS prevention.
- The national society has agreed to the idea of producing promotional material on its programmes for external audiences; a publication and video material will be produced and completed by the third quarter.
- The national society has requested that a communications training workshop be run later in the year.

China

Regular meetings were held with the RCSC to discuss communication projects and how to better promote the national society. The society regularly informs the regional information delegate on significant issues. The regional information delegate in turn provides them with international news clippings. Discussions are underway as to how to help the society get better and more regular access to international media and events.

Working Group meeting and regional communications network meeting

The East and South East Asia communications working group, which includes representatives from the societies of Singapore, Philippines, Macau and Japan as well as the ICRC, met in Beijing from 24 to 29 February. During the two-day meeting participants discussed implementation of the regional communication strategy, endorsement of the strategy in the two regions, and planning for the third regional communications network workshop in Bangkok in May. The meeting was also an opportunity to look at activities carried out during the previous year, including the role of national societies at the Manila conference. Finally, the East and South East Asia regional delegations reaffirmed their intent to cooperate closely on issues related to the strengthening of the regional communication network and the implementation of the regional strategy. Due to the SARS outbreak, the May workshop had to be postponed until later in the year.

Impact

The international media based in China are using the Federation frequently during emergency periods as a source of information. For the first time, during the China floods in Hunan province in August 2002, the international media were able to travel to disaster areas in China together with the regional information delegate.

Constraints

Since the beginning of the SARS outbreak, the regional information delegate has not been able to travel within China nor to the other countries in East Asia. The regional communications network meeting was postponed and activities around World Red Cross Day in China were also cancelled.

Federation Coordination

Goal: An effective, non-competitive and harmonized cooperation between all stakeholders has been achieved in the best interests of beneficiaries and National Societies

Objective: Cooperation agreement strategies in China, Mongolia and DPRK contribute to increased cooperation, thus strengthening the national societies' capacity to implement at least one of its priority programmes.

Expected results:

- A regional partnership meeting has taken place during the first quarter of 2003;
- An annual meeting hosted by the regional delegation, gathering leaders from five national societies from the region and heads of delegation has taken place;
- A regional basic training course (BTC) for future Red Cross Red Crescent delegates has been hosted by the RCSC;
- In China, an increasingly strategic and inclusive planning process for HIV/AIDS prevention and care has resulted in formulating a sectoral cooperation agreement strategy (CAS) among stakeholders;
- Information sharing meetings with national societies working in China have been convened twice a year and co-chaired by the RCSC and the regional delegation;
- In DPRK and Mongolia there is evidence of the active use of the cooperation agreement strategies as a guiding strategic document by stakeholders.

Progress/Achievements (activities implemented within this objective)

Gradual progress has been made in the first half the year in spite of a number of practical problems and constraints. Based on active lobbying, led by the regional desk in Geneva, a momentum has been built up in which participating national societies (PNS) are increasingly willing to share ideas and experiences and to work together with the Federation Secretariat to help societies in the region strengthen their programmes and organisational structures. The Netherlands Red Cross for example is expanding its involvement in the region and has based a delegate within the regional office in Beijing to develop its programming in a collaborative way in China, Mongolia and DPRK.

This increased momentum is most evident in China, where there is a mix of PNS that have been collaborating directly and actively with RCSC for several years joined by PNS that are re-launching or expanding previous cooperation activities. These include America, Australia, Canada, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, as well as the ICRC, which supports a dissemination programme. The RCSC itself is keen to expand its cooperation with sister societies and has signalled this year that it would appreciate the Federation paying an active coordination role in view of the large number of PNS that are now working in the country.

For its part, the Federation Secretariat is also interested in developing more actively its coordination role. The former head of regional delegation, who had built up the regional office since its inception three years ago finished his mission in April, and has been replaced by an experienced Secretariat staff member. Furthermore the delegation has the capacity and experience to be able to offer advice and guidance to PNS in several sectoral areas including HIV/AIDS, disaster management and communications. Regional delegates have established good contacts and working relations with a number of international and national organisations as well as with donor country embassies based in Beijing.

Elsewhere in the region, the Federation has commissioned several comprehensive programmatic reviews in Mongolia and DPRK, which have been shared and discussed with interested PNS in an approach designed to ensure that a common understanding is built up around key issues, opportunities and challenges. This in turn should help build the basis for working in a more strategic and collaborative way to support the programmes and organisational development needs of the societies in question.

Another important aspect of the programme is to encourage regional cooperation between societies of the region. A certain level of activity already exists but, for the reasons noted below, no effective progress in supporting this work has been achieved in this period.

Impact

It is probably too early to assess the impact of these efforts to enhance Movement coordination to meet the overall goal and objective of this programme. Furthermore, the overall economic, political, and social environment in these three countries differs greatly. Thus modes of cooperation that might be effective and practical in one country are not realistic or achievable in another. There are signs nevertheless that PNS and the ICRC are willing and able to enter into longer term commitments to support societies programmes, and to commit time and resources to strengthen mutual knowledge sharing and networking.

Constraints

The major impediment to making more active progress in this area has been the SARS outbreak. This has led twice to the postponement of the planned partnership meeting, which would have been a key opportunity to discuss and consolidate the aspirations for increasing Movement cooperation in the region. A few individual visits by PNS representatives were carried out in the first part of

the year, but there has been little scope for multilateral dialogue. A meeting of PNS desk officers will be held in Geneva in late June but this will unfortunately not involve societies from the region.

International Representation

Goal: International stakeholders are increasingly supporting Red Cross Red Crescent global and regional initiatives for the benefit of the targeted vulnerable groups

Objective: Regional vulnerabilities and national societies' priorities have been better understood by stakeholders especially by the international media and embassies based in Beijing.

Expected results:

- The regional delegation has organised two public relations events focused on one specific theme and in advance determined an advocacy issue of interest for the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement,
- Representatives from national societies from the region have attended at least two important international or regional conferences on global issues such as HIV/AIDS;
- National societies from the region are aware of new models of HIV/AIDS prevention and care, and have used the opportunity to meet donors and international partners and to highlight the successes and experiences of their national societies;
- Head of regional delegation and core delegates have regularly attended embassies, UN and government of China events and functions with a view of raising the profile of the International Federation thus laying a solid basis for support.

Progress/Achievements (activities implemented within this objective)

In February, a meeting was organised in Beijing by the regional delegation to contribute to a better understanding of the Movement in general, and the Red Cross Society of China (RCSC) in particular, attended by some 20 major diplomatic missions, international donors such as World Bank, and core UN agencies. Presentations focused on passing messages about the Red Cross role in preparing for and responding to disasters, and also its work in HIV/AIDS, with a strong accent on youth peer education.

The Federation has sponsored a representative from the RCSC to attend a WHO organised international meeting on SARS in Kuala Lumpur, at the end of June. The meeting will enable the society not only to profile its own role and the work of other societies and the Federation in East Asia, but will also provide an opportunity to contribute to the Federation's international representation efforts. Unfortunately, the plan to send an experienced RCSC staff member to the International Conference on Harm Reduction in Thailand in April had to be cancelled due the SARS outbreak.

The regional delegation participates as a member of the regular UN disaster management coordination meetings, chaired by the World Food Programme representative on behalf on United Nations Development Programme. These meetings have provided useful opportunities to brief donor embassies and the UN community on the Federation's work in disaster related activities, including the flood operation and SARS. As a result of the prompt announcement launching the SARS appeal, contributions were received or initiated from the governments of Luxembourg, New Zealand, France and the United States.

An opportunity for RCSC has started to emerge with the signing in April of the global agreement between the International Olympic Committee and the Federation. This will help the RCSC lobby with China's National Olympic Committee to have a role in the 2008 Olympic Games, to be held in Beijing. The Federation will help organise meetings between the RCSC and other societies that have been successful in this area in their own countries.

See also the Humanitarian Values section above for other activities related to this objective.

Impact

The profile of the Federation and RCSC has been raised among the international community through various activities. In the case of the SARS appeal, this has led directly to increased income for the operation in China, just as the lobbying work on behalf of the Mongolia dzud appeal did so at the start of the year.

Constraints

As already noted, the SARS outbreak represented a significant gap in carrying out certain activities during the reporting period, although activities based in Beijing were able to go ahead as planned.

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