

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

EAST ASIA: REGIONAL PROGRAMMES

14 May 2004

In Brief

Appeal no. 01.69/2003; Appeal target: CHF 762,888 (USD 524,000 or EUR 517,000); Appeal coverage: 77% ([click here to go directly to the Financial Report](#)).

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

During 2003, the Federation's regional delegation worked closely with the East Asia national societies, the two country-based delegations and the partner national societies (PNS) active in the region to ensure that effective and well coordinated disaster relief and developmental programmes were carried out. Two major issues dominated the year's international headlines from the region – the Democratic Republic of Korea (DPRK) nuclear arms issue and the outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). While the former had no direct impact on the Federation's work, it is worth recalling that the Federation is one of the largest players among the international organisations working in DPRK to ensure that humanitarian services and international linkages are maintained. The actual health impact of the SARS epidemic on the region, even though significant in China, was far less than its economic and social consequences. From a Red Cross Red Crescent perspective, the epidemic highlighted the importance of having adequate public health services in place, and the role that the national societies of the region can play in supporting the governments' health authorities to deliver these.

In terms of disasters, the East Asia region was again exposed to numerous disaster events and the Federation launched three emergency appeals during 2003. Two were launched respectively in January and July to support the *dzud* and flood affected populations in Mongolia and China. In May, an Asia-wide appeal was launched to support the Chinese, DPRK and Mongolia Red Cross Societies, as well as several Southeast Asia societies with their response to SARS. Although no international appeals were launched, there was considerable publicity generated for the Chinese Red Cross (RCSC) relief operations in response to earthquakes in Xinjiang (February), Yunnan (July), Inner Mongolia (August) and Gansu (October) provinces.

In addition, the Republic of Korea (RoK) was struck by typhoon Maemi in September, which caused a wave of destruction that set back the country's economy and left 87 people dead and 28 missing. The RoK Red Cross

mounted an immediate response to provide relief to the victims. Japan also experienced several large earthquakes over the year, with the largest in Hokkaido reaching 8.0 on the Richter scale. Fortunately, there was no widespread human suffering caused by these.

Besides disaster relief activities, the focus of the regional delegation during the course of the year has been on strengthening working relations and cooperation on development-oriented programmes. Particular attention has been given to breaking down the barriers between “Federation-supported” and “bilateral” programmes and trying to instil a working culture of mutual cooperation and the sharing of experience to ensure the overall quality of Federation Red Cross Red Crescent programming in the region.

Objectives, Achievements, and Constraints

Disaster Management

Programme 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.

Achievements: The main thrust of this regional programme was to follow up on a series of evaluations of relief operations conducted by the Federation with three of the 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 with China and Mongolia having also conducted relief operations in 2003. A particular focus was placed on helping the national societies take forward the recommendations from evaluation reports to develop the most relevant and effective operations and future national society/Federation cooperation. The reviews in China, Mongolia and DPRK have created the foundation for strategic changes improving the way the 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. There are strong indications that the national societies in the region are increasing their capacity to respond faster and more efficiently to natural disasters.

In parallel, the regional delegation has been able to build up a much clearer understanding about the national societies’ disaster management needs, strengths, and capacities from having been closely associated with the reviews in 2002 and 2003, and from direct involvement in two of the relief operations. The regional delegation’s disaster management programming seeks to provide a solid foundation for country level capacity building activities and emergency response. In China, new and innovative ways of working are being introduced through developing the existing water sanitation project into a more comprehensive community vulnerability reduction programme, which presents a new approach towards addressing vulnerabilities in China. This project can serve as a model for integrated interventions in other provinces in China, as well as in other countries in the region.

China: 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 comprehensive review report was completed in April and has been translated into Mandarin so that it can be thoroughly considered by RCSC management. The review raised a number of issues which have implications for both RCSC and the Federation and highlighted a number of areas requiring improvement, several of which have already resulted in changes in both organisations. The comprehensive review document is recognised by both RCSC and the Federation as an important document that will shape the future cooperation between the two organisations.

Recommendations from the review were also incorporated into the Federation appeal launched in July for the 2003 flood relief operation (Appeal 18/2003) when large scale floods hit China from May onwards, affecting a total of 27 provinces. At the same time, the review's recommendations are being incorporated into the planning for 2004 disaster management activities being developed by the RCSC and the Federation to address short and long term disaster management strategy and procedures.

DPRK: The regional disaster preparedness/disaster response 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 DPRK Red Cross in disaster 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 the leading agency in this 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 times of emergency.

Mongolia: 2003 commenced with another *dzud* - a series of harsh climatic conditions that have affected Mongolia seriously in the past four years. These have led to the widespread destruction of pasture land and the death of millions of herders' animals, leaving many in the agriculturally based country destitute. In January, the Mongolian Red Cross Society (MRCS) and the Federation launched an appeal (Appeal 02/2003) in response to the *dzud*. The relief operation was based on recommendations made in a comprehensive independent review of MRCS programmes including previous relief operations that were carried out in late 2002.

At the start of 2003, the MRCS did not possess a strong logistics capacity and had no staff trained in Federation logistics procedures and standards. The review conducted in Mongolia identified a need for the Federation to provide support for MRCS in this area. Accordingly a logistics/disaster management workshop was held in June for MRCS staff at both selected provincial (*aimag*) and headquarters levels. The workshop was initially intended to be a regional workshop but, due to travel restrictions imposed because of SARS, it was solely for MRCS staff. One of the key priorities for the MRCS in 2004 will be to improve the society's logistics system.

Impact: All three national societies involved with the review processes initiated by the Federation in DPRK, Mongolia and China in 2002/03 are starting to take steps to meet the significant challenge of improving the abilities of communities at risk to cope with disasters. The incorporation of feedback and suggestions made within the reviews has resulted in improvements in all three of the societies' capacity to implement and manage disaster response activities. These processes have also helped the societies get a better understanding of value of monitoring and evaluation and how these can help develop some new approaches to recovery and disaster preparedness. In each country, however, there are very differing challenges in taking this work forward. One of the key objectives of the Federation's regional disaster management programme for 2004 is to introduce new approaches to disaster management based on the experience being gained and adapted to the specific context of each of the national societies.

Constraints: The Federation has launched four large relief operations in East Asia over the past two years. Constraints to improving the efficiency of these operations have been twofold. Firstly, the Federation's and the national societies' disaster management procedures and strategies, as they stand, do not fully support fast and timely interventions. Secondly, the overall donor response has been unpredictable, and in some cases too slow, to meet the immediate relief needs of the beneficiaries. These issues will also be taken up in the coming year.

Humanitarian Values

Programme 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.

Achievements: During the course of the year, the Beijing-based international media frequently used the Federation during emergency periods as a source of information. Numerous interviews were given to international media on the various relief operations in China and elsewhere in the region. In addition, some 15 stories were written for the Federation website. Video material was also produced and distributed to all international media. Additional communications initiatives have included the provision of information material and special briefings to governments, diplomatic missions, media and international organisations, and contributions to the Federation's website on the International Water Conference and Harm Reduction Conference.

In the latter part of 2003, a strategy was developed to publicise and raise funds to expand the water sanitation and health education project in southern China. It included the production of a brochure in English and Chinese, a technical newsletter, and an article in the Red Cross Red Crescent magazine. In DPRK, it was agreed to develop advocacy material as well as to continue to strengthen the communications department. With the financial and technical support of the Danish Red Cross, an initial preparatory workshop was organised in late 2003 prior to the holding of a full communications workshop scheduled to be held in the spring of 2004. Several audio-visual presentations were produced to better present the Movement and its challenges to donors, media and other groups.

As part of efforts to reinforce communications within societies in Asia Pacific, the Federation commissioned in August/September 2003 a review of its performance in information and publicity as a follow up to the communications strategy for the region developed in mid-2001. Following an extensive dialogue with national societies, a report was produced entitled "To Create a Culture of Communications". Recommendations of the report clearly indicate a need to refine the current information activities and approach as one key component of the overall support being provided to the region's societies and their partners.

The findings of this report were discussed at a meeting of regional information specialists held in Kuala Lumpur in September 2003, and a revised regional communication strategy developed and subsequently adopted. Under this latest version of the communications strategy, the focus of the Red Cross Red Crescent is on improving visibility which is seen as central to improving the effectiveness of programmes and facilitating both the development of national societies and sustained media coverage and public advocacy.

Impact: The Federation has been able to achieve a good degree of visibility and support for the Red Cross Red Crescent emergency operations in East Asia during the year, and to position itself as a credible source of information. This work will be taken forward in 2004 in line with the newly adopted information strategy, and an emphasis will be placed on building a better awareness of national societies' activities outside relief operations.

Constraints: Travel restrictions implemented during the SARS outbreak prevented the regional information delegate from travelling within China and to the other countries in East Asia. The regional communications network meeting was postponed and activities around the World Red Cross Day in China were cancelled.

Federation Coordination

Programme 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.

Achievements: Promoting good coordination and cooperation among all Movement partners in East Asia is a key part of the Federation's strategy for the region. Based on active lobbying, led by the Federation regional officer in Geneva over the past two years, a momentum has been built up in which PNS are increasingly willing to share ideas and experience and to work together and 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 delegation in Beijing to develop its programming in a collaborative way in China, Mongolia and DPRK.

This process is now being actively taken forward by the regional delegation. The former head of the regional delegation, who had built up the delegation since its inception three years ago, ended his mission in April. An experienced Federation Secretariat staff member post has since replaced him. Contacts have been established with all the PNS working in the region, and work is underway to collect and analyse information on past programmes and plans. Furthermore, the delegation now has the capacity and experience to be able to offer advice and guidance to PNS that want to develop programmes with national societies in areas such as HIV/AIDS, disaster management and information/communications. The regional delegates have also established good contacts and working relations with a number of international and national organisations active in the humanitarian field, as well as with donor country embassies based in Beijing, which further enhances the opportunities for mobilising well-planned and coordinated assistance to national society programmes in the region.

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 being joined by some PNS that are re-launching or expanding previous cooperation activities. These include Australia, Britain, Canada, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United States, as well as the ICRC, which supports a three-year dissemination programme. The RCSC itself is keen to expand its cooperation with sister societies and now looks to the Federation to play an active coordination role in view of the large number of PNS that are working in the country.

Elsewhere in the region, and as noted above, 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 the key issues, opportunities and challenges. This is helping build the basis for working in a strategic and collaborative way to support the programmes and organisational development needs of the societies in question. In Mongolia for example, several PNS have, or are developing projects to support the new strategic direction of the society to move into more developmental activities.

Another important aspect of this programme is to foster regional cooperation among the societies of the region. A meeting held in November 2003 brought together leaders from all five societies to share current experience and explore ideas for the future. Progress by each society in implementing the action plan from the 2002 Manila regional conference was presented, and there was a lively exchange of views on the experience being gained. Participants also reviewed the key issues that would be coming up at the forthcoming international conference and other statutory meetings to be held in Geneva at the end of the year.

Although health activities were not directly specified in the 2003 Appeal, the Federation has expanded its regional health activities and has commenced with building a regional health programme, which reflects the regional strategy. The regional programme aims to complement country-based work by supporting HIV/AIDS programmes in DPRK and Mongolia, including cross border initiatives, by promoting knowledge and sharing experience in health education campaigns about epidemic disease prevention, blood donor recruitment and by advocating for and making Red Cross health programmes better known to international organisations and other agencies.

The East Asia regional health delegate-HIV/AIDS coordinator provides technical assistance to MRCS youth peer education activities. In addition to peer education, and in collaboration with the railway authorities, MRCS has implemented three HIV prevention campaigns on trains running from Ulaan Baatar to the border with China. The train campaigns aim to educate passengers, and the residents of the town along the rail line, about HIV/AIDS prevention.

The DPRK Red Cross's Federation supported health promotion activities include community-based first aid and health promotion relating to the prevention of malaria, rational drug use, waterborne diseases, acute respiratory infections and breast-feeding/safe delivery. A review team, led by an independent consultant accompanied by representatives of the Federation and PNS, is part of an ongoing annual review process of the society, which commenced a few years ago. Following the team's most recent visit, workshops for HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention of other communicable diseases were recommended and are now planned for 2004.

Impact: Collaboration among East Asia's five national societies and the Federation is increasing and extending beyond emergency relief activities to include a greater emphasis on regular dialogue and intra-regional support.

Constraints: As has been mentioned previously in this report SARS had a significant impact on the societies' ability to physically meet and travel. Additionally, in the case of the RCSC, the society was heavily occupied with SARS prevention and response activities.

International Representation

Programme 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.

Achievements: The Federation's East Asia regional delegation participates as an active member of the regular UN coordination meetings held in Beijing. These cover disaster management and health, especially HIV/AIDS, themes. Although they focus mainly on China-related issues, they serve as a useful forum to highlight the Federation's work in other countries of the region. In the course of the coming year it is planned to build on initial contacts that have been established in the region with organisations such as UNICEF, WHO, UNDP, the Asia Development Bank, the UN university in Tokyo and the Asian Disaster Reduction Centre in Kobe.

Finally, the delegation will be responsive to opportunities for profiling issues of importance and concern to the Federation and its member societies that arise through relevant regional or international meetings that will be organised in the region in 2004.

Impact: The International Federation and the region's national societies are continuing to develop improved relationships with international agencies in East Asia.

Constraints: Nothing significant to report.