

# 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

## MOLDOVA

30 June, 2003

Appeal No. 01.83/2003

Appeal Target: CHF 481,483 (USD 354,000 or EUR 310,000)

Programme Update No. 1;

Period covered: January – May 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: 23.3% (as of date of report issue. For up to date appeal coverage, click on weblink below: [http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf\\_appeals.pl?annual03/1-2-3%20-%20ap018303.pdf](http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?annual03/1-2-3%20-%20ap018303.pdf))

Outstanding needs: CHF 369,228 (USD 272,000/ EUR 238,000)

### Operational developments

Moldova has Europe's poorest economy and the crisis has continued to worsen over the past decade. Unemployment in some regions is as high as 50%. The country's external debt, at more than USD 1 billion, is a serious impediment to economic growth. A large slice of the country's 4.5 million people have left in search of jobs, most of them to work illegally in European Union countries. Thousands of Moldovan women - many kidnapped by people traffickers - are working in Europe's sex industry.

Although the IMF reconsidered its assessment of the GDP growth in Moldova in 2003 and forecasted a 6% increase, the humanitarian situation in the country remains critical. The continuing reliance on agriculture means that Moldova's economy is extremely fragile and vulnerable to adverse weather, higher fuel prices and scepticism of foreign investors. It is feared that recent improvements in the economic situation may be defeated by the harsh winter and late spring of 2003. Spring frosts damaged some crops. Another climatic factor affecting food supplies is a drought, which commenced in late April 2003.

HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and tuberculosis (TB) are among the most urgent public health problems in Moldova. According to UNAIDS, the estimated number of people living with HIV/AIDS at the end of 2001 was 5,500, primarily acquired through intravenous drug use. This official number is far below the estimates from Moldova's Ministry of Health, which lie between 8,500 and 11,300 (or 192–255/100,000 population) countrywide. This is roughly 1% of the population of reproductive age, placing Moldova's prevalence rate far beyond those of other Western countries. The number of persons who consume drugs officially increased in the period of 1991-2001 by 6.5 times. The estimated number of deaths due to AIDS in 2001 was 300. The incidence of tuberculosis has also grown markedly. In January 2002 official data showed over 12,000 registered cases of TB. In 2001 over 1,000 people died from TB in Moldova and 20% of these were children.

The national response to HIV/AIDS/STIs and TB in Moldova has not been adequate. To a large extent it has been due to socio-economic turmoil, insufficient funding, deteriorating health care system and the collapse of social safety nets as the nation shifts to a market-driven economy. The Government recognizes these problems and has

committed to intensifying the responses to HIV/AIDS/STIs and TB, with grant funds that have been already awarded by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria (GFATM), USAID and World Bank.

## Health and care

**Goal: The health status of the population is strengthened through an increased awareness of HIV/AIDS, STDs and TB. Impact on those affected is minimized and their quality of life is improved**

**Objective: The operational capacity of the Visiting Nurses Service of the Moldovan Red Cross (MRC) is strengthened to provide socio-medical services to the targeted, most vulnerable population.**

### Progress/Achievements

The Moldova Red Cross has a history of involvement in health programmes. The visiting nurses service (VNS) is one of its main activities. The service provides free assistance to the lonely elderly and disabled in target areas, through home visits, distribution of medicines, clothing, food and hygiene items. Although the Ministry of Health recognises the important work of the Moldovan Red Cross, at present there is no financial support from the government for the salaries of the visiting nurses. In order to perform tasks in the welfare services and to take over responsibilities in the areas such as TB/AIDS campaign, an improved VNS structure becomes increasingly important. Direct contributions towards this objective have however been limited to an allocation of CHF 8,419 from Yvonee Hentsch Fund.

### Visiting Nurses Service

**By the end of 2003, the MRC has a well-trained and equipped network of 40 visiting nurses, familiar with new methodologies in nursing care and first aid, through provision of seven first aid kits, as well as a three-day training of 40 nurses.**

These activities did not commence over the reporting period. The allocation from Yvonee Hentsch Fund will enable the Moldovan Red Cross to equip the visiting nurses with 14 first aid kits and 14 nursing kits.

**By the end of 2003, the communication capacities of 14 medical-social centres (MSC) will be strengthened through provision of fax machines. In addition, seven MSCs will be provided with basic furniture support.**

These activities did not commence due to lack of funding.



*Reaching those in need: a large family in Leova benefits from Moldovan Red Cross food assistance*

### Outside the appeal

Although not funded within the appeal, two bilateral programmes (supported by the Austrian and American Red Cross Societies) have worked towards the appeal goal of improved health of the population.

### VNS, TB/HIV

With the support of the Austrian RC the programme targets 350 TB-patients, who receive directly observed treatment (DOTS) in compliance with the WHO recommended strategy for TB control, and 650 vulnerable families at risk of developing TB. This programme is ongoing since May 2002 and will be completed by end of July 2003.

By the end of this programme the target beneficiaries will have been supplied with 10,000 food parcels and 5,984

hygienic kits. In addition, the MRC will produce and distribute 25,000 booklets on TB prevention and 25,000 booklets on HIV/AIDS.

Through this programme, the MRC was also able to secure a total of 43 nurse positions and 7 headquarters staff for 15 months.

### **Youth HIV peer education and harm reduction**

The Moldovan Red Cross has a number of youth volunteers already doing peer education and willing to do more for HIV/AIDS prevention. Furthermore, local authorities in Moldova confirm the need and the legality of harm reduction work targeting intravenous drug users. In May 2003 the British Red Cross allocated CHF 33,838 to support the Moldovan Red Cross involvement in youth peer education and harm reduction (needle exchange) in the cities of Chisinau and Balti. This project is an integral part of the 'Youth against HIV/AIDS' Programme carried out by the Moldovan Red Cross in the area of Organisational Development (*for details please refer to the Organisational Development section of this report*). The partners for Moldovan Red Cross in this project will be the Ministry of Health (who already run some needle exchange posts in the country), AIDS prevention centres, local administrations and NGOs.



*Protecting herself: This woman came for a vaccination after talking with Red Cross volunteers*

### **Measles and rubella**

During the reporting period, the network of nurses and volunteers of the Moldovan Red Cross was also utilised for the national immunisation campaign against measles and rubella. The activities took place from 1 October 2002 to 28 February 2003. The Moldovan Red Cross produced and distributed a total of 650,000 bookmarks containing information about the campaign and Fundamental Principles of Red Cross/Red Crescent. In addition, a total of 10,500 (6,000 in Romanian and 4,500 in Russian) copies of a volunteer guide "Handbook for volunteers", was produced. Soup kitchens were organised for street children. This was also a bilateral programme supported by the American Red Cross.

### **Impact**

- 350 TB-patients and 650 families at risk of developing TB received socio-medical assistance from the Moldovan Red Cross. During field visits, beneficiaries expressed satisfaction with the aid provided and requested it continue.
- The Ministry of Health of Moldova reported a successful vaccination campaign against measles and rubella and expressed appreciation of the social mobilization role played by the Moldovan Red Cross nurses and volunteers.
- The Moldovan Red Cross was able to maintain the visiting nurses service, without interruption in the delivery of daily care to the most vulnerable target groups such as homebound patients and lonely elderly.

### **Constraints**

- Difficulty in raising sufficient funding to cover the material and training needs of the visiting nurses service. CHF 43,841 is still required to cover the remaining needs.

### **Coordination**

In 2002, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria (GFATM) awarded Moldova a total of USD 11.7 million for five years.

On 10 June 2003 the World Bank approved an IDA grant of USD 5.5 million for the Moldova AIDS Control Project, which will reduce mortality, morbidity and transmission of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections. The proposed AIDS Control Project is one component of the Moldova TB/AIDS Programme, which is expected to include parallel financing from the following grants: the IDA grant of USD 5.5 million equivalent for AIDS; a USAID (U.S. Agency for International Development) grant of USD 4.0 million for TB; and a USD 5.2 million grant from GFATM. The Moldova Government finances USD 230,000. It is the first time that the World Bank (IDA) has approved a grant for AIDS control in Europe and Central Asia. Also, this project is an example of best-practice collaboration between the Bank (IDA) and the Global Fund.



*Only hope: the Red Cross is the only hope for this young man as he recovers and seeks to change his life*

Participation of the Moldovan Red Cross in the planned anti-TB activities was approved by the Country Coordination Mechanism (CCM), which has overall responsibility of coordination of TB/AIDS project implementation. The Moldovan Red Cross and the Ministry of Health signed a contract for USD 200,000 to provide social assistance to patients with TB and their families. Starting from 1 June 2003, the Moldovan Red Cross will take care of 5,000 TB patients and deliver 8,000 food parcels and 5,000 hygiene kits. According to the contract, 20 Red Cross nurses and 20 branch secretaries in the pilot areas will receive top-ups to their basic salaries. In addition, the Red Cross visiting nurses service will be equipped with 20 nursing kits.

The Austrian Red Cross remains committed to extend its support to the Moldovan Red Cross for another year. It is imperative that the current needs are re-assessed to avoid

overlapping with the GFATM programme and that a project proposal for the Austrian Red Cross is developed. The Federation Delegation has offered technical support to the Moldovan Red Cross in learning and application of the Project Planning Process methodology.

Preparatory work was done with the Moldovan Red Cross in anticipation of a contribution from the British Red Cross in support of youth HIV prevention activities in Moldova.

## **Disaster Management**

**Goal: The vulnerability level of the population is reduced through increased efficiency and effectiveness of the disaster response and disaster preparedness activities of the national society.**

**Objective: The disaster preparedness and response capacity is strengthened through support to the human, technical and material resources of the MRC.**

### **Progress/Achievements**

Natural disasters, including an ice-related emergency, drought, mudslides and floods experienced recently, have had a particularly adverse effect on the country's living standards and poverty, especially in rural areas. In this context, disaster preparedness and response have been one of the most important responsibilities of the Moldovan Red Cross. In 2003, the national society prioritizes development of relevant and efficient Disaster Preparedness structures. These include training of volunteers in disaster preparedness and response, as well as first aid, public education, strengthening of infrastructure, as well as networking with governmental organisations and other agencies. Activities are focused within the Disaster Management project supported by a DFID allocation of CHF 40,000.

### **Disaster Preparedness**

**By the end of 2003, the emergency centre of the national society is established and supplied with disaster preparedness stocks: 2,000 food and 2,000 hygiene items, 100 tents, 2,000 blankets, 1,000 sets of bed linen and 1,000 kitchen sets, as well as 100 first aid kits and clothing.**

Part of the required stocks will be procured with DFID funds. This project started on April 1, 2003. According to the implementation plan, during the summer the Moldovan Red Cross will procure and pre-position a total of 200 kitchen sets, 200 towels, 80 bed linen sets and 100 first aid kits.

**During 2003, 30 disaster response staff and volunteers will be on standby, trained, equipped and prepared to provide shelter, first aid and emergency relief assistance to 2,500 disaster victims.**

With DFID support, the MRC will also provide training to a total of 50 staff and volunteers. Two 3-day seminars on disaster preparedness and response are scheduled for July and October 2003.

**By the end of 2003, the MRC has improved methodologies in hazard identification, post-disaster damage assessment, needs analysis and reporting, to optimize mobilization and utilization of resources for relief at the local and national levels.**

This result will be obtained through the training of staff and volunteers as described above.



*Vital support: soup kitchens run by the Moldova RC are a ray of hope for many elderly.*

### **Outside the Appeal**

#### **Emergency relief to the vulnerable**

Over the reporting period, Moldovan Red Cross was also active in addressing the needs of the poorest among the elderly, the disabled and large families. With financial support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), nine soup kitchens in nine places were providing daily hot meals to a total of 2200 beneficiaries. In addition, 1,500 disabled people were receiving food and hygiene parcels. These activities covered 15 November 2002 to 16 March 2003.

In May 2003 the southern part of Moldova was affected by floods. The Moldovan Red Cross was one of the first organisations providing relief assistance. Clothing, food and hygienic items were collected locally and distributed by the Moldovan Red Cross.

### **Impact**

- As the disaster preparedness project is in initial phase of implementation, its impact will be assessed at a later stage.
- With financial assistance from the (SDC), the Moldovan Red Cross helped reduce the impact of harsh socio-economic conditions on the most vulnerable population groups.
- Vital assistance was provided to the people hardest hit by floods in the southern part of Moldova.

### **Constraints**

- CHF 282,926 is still required to achieve the appeal objective of strengthened disaster preparedness and response capacity of the Moldovan Red Cross.



*The only Santa Claus that visited this bedridden man from Ungheni was from the local Red Cross branch*

### **Coordination**

It is anticipated that from November 2003 the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation will continue to support four soup kitchens through a bilateral allocation of USD 58,240. The Moldovan Red Cross estimates that an additional USD 70,700 will be required to cover the remaining needs during winter.

The American Red Cross submitted a proposal to the US Government. If successful, this project will deal with 500,000 tons of dry milk, out of which 400,000 tons are to be sold and 100,000 tons are to be processed into dairy products (cheese, yoghurt, milk) in Chisinau. These products will then be distributed by the Red Cross visiting nurses to 13,500 elderly people. From July 2003, the American Red Cross will be supporting Moldova through its Office in Bulgaria.

## **Organizational Development**

**Goal:** The national society's role in society in Moldova is increased, through its ability to provide effective community-based services.

**Objective:** The organizational capacity of the Red Cross Society of the Republic of Moldova is strengthened at headquarters and branch levels, thus increasing its effectiveness in providing assistance to the most vulnerable.

### **Progress/Achievements**

The Moldovan Red Cross is a newly recognised National Society and organisational development is high on its list of priorities. However, the current financial situation does not allow any sustainable activities except for externally funded programmes. Material resource base of the local branches is inadequate, which affects the humanitarian work of the society. The Moldovan Red Cross needs to develop its capacity in youth volunteering and fund-raising. In addition, it needs to set up computer and telecommunication systems, including e-mail, so that information can be transferred between headquarters and regional branches. Organisational development work is supported by a DFID allocation of CHF 30,000.

### **Needs and capacity assessment**

**During 2003 an assessment of current capacities and needs of the headquarters and selected branches of the MRC will be conducted.**

An assessment of MRC's capacities and specific areas for capacity building assistance is essential to the development of a meaningful approach to meeting the OD goal of the National Society. Funding for such an assessment is, however, not identified yet. The need to conduct this assessment will be discussed with the national society.

### **Branch development, mobilisation and training of volunteers**

**By the end of 2003, the human resource capacity in the headquarters and three selected branches of the Moldovan Red Cross will be strengthened with a focus on youth and volunteers.**

This project is designed to develop the Moldovan Red Cross and its volunteer base through specific activities such as youth action against HIV/AIDS. With a strong involvement of youth and volunteers, the Moldovan Red Cross is now scaling up peer education and harm reduction activities. The DFID-supported project started on April 1, 2003. During April-May, the Moldovan Red Cross selected 10 youth volunteers, who will work in the project together with the implementation team and will be trained as peer educators. Contacts were made with other youth NGOs. Briefings, meetings and round-table discussions were organised with participation of volunteers, staff and representatives of the National AIDS prevention centre. An experience exchange meeting was held between the volunteers of the Moldovan Red Cross and SOROS Foundation. Preparations for tender to procure condoms were made. Information materials for the HIV prevention booklet were developed. It is planned that this work will integrate activities under the HIV/AIDS project funded by the British Red Cross (*please see Health and Care section above*).

### **Impact**

The impact of the project is to be assessed after the first year of implementation.

### **Constraints**

- Engagement and collaboration between the Moldovan Red Cross and people living with HIV/AIDS needs time to be developed.
- CHF 47,463 is still required to achieve the appeal objective of strengthened organizational capacities of the Moldovan Red Cross.

### **Coordination**

The Delegation liaised with the British Red Cross to ensure coherent and unified programming of HIV work supported by different partners.

## **Federation Coordination**

**Overall Goal: A well-governed and well-managed national society in Moldova working effectively together with partners within and outside the Movement and providing responsive and focused services to the most vulnerable.**

**Programme Objective: The Federation has increased its capacity to act as an effective coordination body for the benefit of the national society in Moldova.**

### **Progress/Achievements**

Moldovan Red Cross is a developing National Society facing enormous needs and requiring support in capacity building, coordinating interests and developing working sustainable projects. In the last several years, the Federation's support to the Moldovan Red Cross was limited, a situation which became increasingly difficult during 2002 in the light of the severe funding constraints. This situation has started to change gradually in 2003, with the refocusing of the Federation delegation (based in Minsk) structure and the allocation of new resources. A new model of support to the Moldovan Red Cross encompasses a comprehensive approach towards capacity building, by assigning one programme officer as a focal point in supporting the National Society.

Present strategy of the Federation in relation to Moldovan Red Cross is to scale up its support, in order to strengthen some of the National Society key functions. These include programme management, financial management, branch development, the role of the Moldovan Red Cross in civil society, as well as other aspects of an effective organisation with a mandate to assist the most vulnerable. Therefore, the Federation is concentrating its efforts on co-ordination, technical supervision and capacity building to enable the Moldovan Red Cross to maximise its resources.

In April 2003 Minsk delegation hosted a Partnership Meeting for National Societies from the region: Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova. They were joined by partner National Societies: the American RC; Austrian RC; British RC; Danish RC; German RC; Norwegian RC; Swedish RC and Swiss RC. In addition there were representatives from the Minsk, Moscow and Budapest Federation delegations, the Geneva Secretariat, and ICRC. The meeting contributed to a better understanding between the Moldovan Red Cross and its partners. It promoted improved coordination, cooperation and strategic partnerships. After the meeting, the Norwegian Red Cross suggested development of a funding application to the Norwegian Government in support of the Federation's annual appeal for Moldova. The application was prepared jointly by the Moldovan Red Cross and Federation delegation and submitted.

### **Impact**

During the current reporting period, much time was taken up for the development and introduction of the new model of support to the Moldovan Red Cross, as well as for maintaining and increasing Federation coordination and representation functions in Moldova. The impact of these efforts on the Federation's capacity to act as an effective coordination body will be measured at a later stage.

### **Constraints**

The main constraint is the time required to have the new support structure accepted by the National Society. In addition, dialogue between all concerned parties needs to improve.

### ***For further information please contact:***

- *Moldova Red Cross Society, Larisa Byrka, President; email: [Moldova\\_RC@mdl.net](mailto:Moldova_RC@mdl.net) ; phone: 373 2 72 96 44; fax: 373 2 72 97 00*
- *Minsk Delegation, Stefan Seebacher, Head of Delegation; email: [ifrcby02@ifrc.org](mailto:ifrcby02@ifrc.org) ; phone: 375 (0) 17 216 21 08; fax: 375 (0) 17 221 90 60*
- *Federation Secretariat, Miro Modrusan, Desk officer, email: [miro.modrusan@ifrc.org](mailto:miro.modrusan@ifrc.org) ; phone: 41 (22) 730 43 24; fax: 41 22 733 03 95*

*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.*

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