

# FOCUS ON VENEZUELA 2003

## 1. Introduction

The economy in Venezuela is principally based on the export of petroleum and oil products. During the last decades, it has also exported iron, iron products, aluminium, coal, cement and non traditional products such as petrochemical materials.

The country suffers from a range of natural disasters. Geological faults cross the country from east to south-west affecting the entire Venezuelan coast and the Andes mountains, where almost 80% of the total population, approximately 19 million people, is located. It is also constantly affected by floods and landslides. In addition, violence is an issue of particular concern. The social problems the country experienced in 2002 and the social and political instability which divides the Venezuelan population, have left the population uncertain about the future. As a consequence, the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, ECLAC, estimates that the GDP will fall 3.5% by the end of 2002.

The National Society has 23 branches and seven sub committees which cover most of the national territory. Of its 5,000 members, 90% are active. The main activity of the National Society centres on health services, with its infrastructure of ten hospitals and 33 health stations making it the largest private hospital network in the country. Since the floods in December 1999, health care activities have been developed through HIV/AIDS, psychological support, recruitment of non-remunerated, voluntary blood donors, integrated management of childhood illnesses (IMCI) and water and sanitation. The National Society also carries out activities related with disaster management, tracing, recruitment, dissemination and communication. The institution does not receive financial support from the national government and the main funding source of the National Society is the medical assistance system.

## 2. National Context

### UNDP - Human Development Indicators 2002

Country Ranking - HDI	69
Total Population (millions)	24,2
% of the population living below \$1/day	23
% of the population living below \$2/day	
GDP per capita (US \$)	5.794
Infant mortality per 1,000 live births	20
Under 5 mortality per 1,000 live births	23
Maternal mortality rate per 100,000 live births	60
% of births attended by skilled health staff	95
% of population using improved water sources	84
% of population using adequate sanitation facilities	74
% of people living with HIV/AIDS	0,50
Annual population growth rate %	1,6
% population under 15 yrs of age	34
% population aged 65 and above	4,4

Net primary school enrolment ratio %	86
Adult illiteracy rate % MALE age 15 yrs +	93
Adult illiteracy rate % FEMALE age 15 yrs +	92,1

### 3. National Society Priorities

#### Health

- Primary health care in vulnerable communities (health brigades)
- HIV/AIDS programme
- Psychological Support
- Non-remunerated, voluntary blood donor recruitment
- Integrated management of childhood illnesses (IMCI)
- Water and Sanitation.

#### Disaster Response and Disaster Preparedness

- Evaluation of damage and assessment of needs
- Community education in disaster prevention
- Development of risk mapping.

#### Organizational Development

- Volunteering, including human resources and training
- Communication
- Strengthening of the development commission and the project office

#### Other

- Youth

#### AT A GLANCE

	YEAR	COMMENT
Statutes	???	Revision in process.
NDP		Development to be undertaken in 2003
Regulations		
CAS	????	First generation
Self Assessment		
Elections	????2	Each two years
Yearly audit	????	
Annual Report	????	

#### Main strengths

- Volunteer policies
- Project office
- Significant experience in health and relief
- Good image and relations

### Main challenges

- Centralization
- High dependent on the Caracas Hospital
- Statutes and regulations in need of revision
- Weak branches.

### Movement priorities 2002

Partner	Health	Relief	Disaster Preparedness	Humanitarian Values	Organizational Development	Other
ICRC			Tracing Conflict Prevention	Dissemination		
Federation	National Health Plan Primary health care, Water and sanitation HIV/AIDS Amazonico Programme	Training and contingency plans	CBDP	Non-violence	Support to the project office Distance education for communicators Web page	
American Red Cross	IMCI primary health care	Rehabilitation	CBDP		Project office Branch support	
Spanish Red Cross	Primary health care water and sanitation	Rehabilitation	CBDP		Project Office Volunteering Branch support	
Others*						Hospital

\* Private companies: Banesco y Adriática de Seguros.

\* The Federation Secretariat in Buenos Aires is supported by the Finnish Red Cross, the Norwegian Red Cross, the Spanish Red Cross, the Swedish Red Cross, DFID, and non Red Cross sources such as private companies and Embassies.

As a consequence of the floods and the subsequent appeal launched by the National Society, the Venezuelan Red Cross benefited from international support to respond to the needs of those affected. This funding continues to be used in rehabilitation and to support organizational development initiatives. At present, the American Red Cross and the Spanish Red Cross have delegates in the country and provide considerable support to the National Society. There is an agreement between the Venezuelan Red Cross, and the Federation, the American Red Cross and the Spanish Red Cross to support the development committee. There is close coordination with PNS based on the first generation CAS developed at the beginning of 2001.

### 5. Priority Programmes for Secretariat assistance

**Health and Care** - Oriented towards the development of the national health plan.

- Community Health
- Environmental sanitation
- HIV/AIDS
- Amazonico project.

**Disaster Management** - oriented towards prevention and strengthening of response capacity.

- Contingency planning; risk maps
- Creation of national intervention teams
- Community based disaster preparedness.

**Humanitarian values**

- Plan Sur Joven. Non violence education.

**Organizational Development**

- Strengthening of the volunteer management
- Support for the creation of a web page.
- Distance education for communicators
- Support for the drawing up of a national development plan.