

# 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

26 May 2004

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilising the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organisation and its millions of volunteers are active in over 181 countries. For more information: [www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org)

### In Brief

**Appeal No. 01.65/2004; Programme Update No. 1; Period covered: 1 January to 31 March 2004; Appeal coverage: 51.4 %; Outstanding needs: CHF 651,467**  
[\(click here to go directly to the attached Contributions List \(also available on the website\)\).](#)

**Appeal target: CHF 1,341,482 (USD 1,006,112 or EUR 858,549)**

**Programme Summary:** Over this period, the economic situation continued to weaken and the changing political climate was viewed with a degree of cynicism by the international community. However, recognition was given to some changes taking place and the preparations for the National Convention to be held from May 2004. The Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) continued to commit its energies to changing its structure, systems and image within the country to better serve the most vulnerable communities. To this end, it increased its community-based training and carried out a number of monitoring and evaluation visits to states and divisions, undertook the final branch survey visits, and continued to work towards the preparation of a far sighted but realistic strategic plan (2004-2008). In a planning meeting for the executive and senior managers of MRCS, together with the Federation and ICRC delegations, a timeframe was plotted for a number of key challenges and activities to be undertaken before the Partnership Meeting scheduled for May 2004. Negotiations began or continued with a number of new partner societies who are interested in supporting programmes together with MRCS, particularly at the branch community level.

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This programme update reflects activities to be implemented over a one-year period. This forms part of, and is 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, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

## **Operational developments**

For the period January – March 2004, the international community continued to regard the overall weakening economic climate and evolving political situation in Myanmar with a certain degree of suspicion and cynicism, although at the same time there was also growing recognition that a number of changes were taking place. A number of missions to and from neighbouring nations, including China, India, Thailand, Lao PDR, Malaysia and Japan, were undertaken by the government for trade and cultural talks. The country prepared for the National Convention slated for May 2004, and the government stressed the importance of peace and tranquility and the participation of all national races in implementing the seven-point road map towards democracy. The international community recognised that it was necessary to prepare the way and agree appropriate channels for future support and assistance, particularly in the humanitarian field; e.g. the British government's aid agency, the Department for International Development (DFID), presented its first proposals for a significant investment in poverty reduction programmes over the next 3-5 year period.

Against this background, and with a strengthened Federation delegation in place since the end of 2002, MRCS continued to show its commitment to changing its structure, systems and image within the country to better serve the most vulnerable communities. At headquarters level, a new head of the finance and administration department was appointed in January, and a new head and deputy head of the health division were appointed. A number of other key positions at headquarters were also filled as part of the overall capacity strengthening of the five divisions to lead the national society. Substantial and steady progress was made on the development of a long-term strategic plan (2004-2008) for the national society, and the branch survey visits were completed and the report begun. More attention was paid to communication with branches and a number of monitoring and evaluation missions were undertaken by the training team to follow up on the multiplier community-based first aid (CBFA) training. The Keng Tung pilot project for capacity building at the branch level, with first aid as the entry point, developed steadily and a workshop on stigma and discrimination for health professionals was the first of its kind in the country.

The Danish Red Cross Society, working under the umbrella of the Federation, began the preparatory phase for a community-based health project, and discussions also continued with the M3 Consortium (British, German and Swedish Red Cross Societies) regarding their support for a community-based health/disaster preparedness programme. MRCS took responsibility for gaining agreement and authorisation for access to the areas where these programmes will be undertaken, and for providing management support.

As indicated in previous periods, planned activities, staff appointments and programmes were delayed, causing a significant underspend in some programme areas and delayed reporting to donors. Requests for extended timeframes for programme implementation and fundraising continued to be an important and time-consuming aspect of the delegation's work.

## **Health and Care**

The MRCS health and training divisions are supported technically and organisationally by the Federation delegation. Technical support to the health and training divisions continues to be provided by two health delegates who are concentrating their efforts on the training programme review, improvement and expansion, as well as the Keng Tung community-based health project implementation. Additionally, support was provided to assist in the expansion and organisation of human resources for the newly expanded divisions.

### **1. Capacity building in health**

The health division recruited new staff during this quarter, boosting its capacity significantly. New recruits include the head of division (HoD), deputy head of division and a second field officer. All staff salary is supported by the Federation. The field officer participated in the blood donor recruitment colloquium in China, and a health advisor participated in the "SARS lessons learned/public health in emergencies" regional workshop. Since returning from these workshops, both participants have developed proposals and plans for future MRCS work in these areas. The HoD participated in the MRCS strategic planning process.

## **2. Community-based health (including malaria, tuberculosis, water and sanitation, HIV/AIDS)**

MRCS is being supported to develop a project proposal for a community-based health project based on the Keng Tung pilot project, to be funded by a consortium consisting of the German, Swedish and British Red Cross Societies. The health department also assisted a Danish Red Cross Society delegate in the preparatory phase of another community-based health project, with implementation to start later in 2004 under the overall umbrella of the Federation delegation.

## **3. Keng Tung pilot project for branch capacity building (via community-based health)**

With Federation technical support, MRCS continued to refine communication/reporting systems to support the Keng Tung Project. This need has also been supported with the recruitment of a head of finance that is now beginning to refine financial management systems to support programme management at the branch level. Technical support at the branch level also continued. Project team members and Red Cross volunteers received training during this quarter, including organising and participating in a HIV/AIDS stigma and discrimination seminar for health professionals. The seminar was organised by the project steering committee, with technical support from the delegate and national headquarters coordinating efforts at the national level. Strong support and active participation by the local and national health authorities included the national AIDS programme deputy manager, the Keng Tung hospital medical superintendent, matron and the HIV/AIDS physician. Technical support was also provided by UNAIDS and Australian Red Cross AIDS programme for the region. Recommendations included more seminars to support changing behaviours and attitudes by health professionals in their care and support of people living with HIV/AIDS. Typical stories from health professionals attending the seminar included "AIDS disease is not transmitted by touching, though automatically my heart is frightened if the patient is known as a positive case" and "how can the project help us to learn more than now, as I know that it is not yet enough?" Other training for team members included project proposal writing and monitoring and evaluation.

During this quarter, the Keng Tung project undertook a review of year one and planning for year two. Active participation and input by the project steering committee, project team and Red Cross volunteers demonstrated improving project management and implementation skills and knowledge of their community. Volunteer training and mobilisation has been effective in supporting project implementation with satisfaction being expressed by Red Cross and community volunteers. Expansion to 11 new villages this quarter allowed for review and improved implementation processes which included advocacy, participatory rural appraisal and CBFA training. Community feedback highlighted impacts in areas of health knowledge and behaviour change, evidenced by the construction of latrines in some villages and improved environmental sanitation. Plans for specific projects in target villages to support safe water or latrine construction are being made with the full participation of and ownership by communities.

## **4. Strengthening first aid/community-based first aid training**

Capacity building of the training division continued. The head of training division participated in the MRCS strategic planning workshop, the strategic planning for disaster management workshop, and also acted as facilitator for three community-based disaster preparedness training programmes in order to gain knowledge for future integration of CBFA and disaster management. Two part-time trainers became full-time to support training programme expansion.

By the end of 2003, the training programmes were consistently using a participatory model for delivery, and the success of this approach was evident with the commencement of CBFA multipliers and improved participation by participants. During this quarter, four training-of-trainers courses were conducted over 11 days, with 120 participants each receiving a first aid kit and certificate. Multiplier trainings continued to be implemented at the branches and it is estimated more than 10,000 volunteers will receive the three-day CBFA multiplier training this year.

A reporting system has been introduced with dedicated responsible people at each branch being nominated, resulting in increased contact with national headquarters. Monitoring and evaluation is ongoing and lessons learned include identifying lack of Red Cross knowledge in the community and the need for improved branch support. Information, education and communication (IEC) materials, along with first aid policy, were distributed to branches and some materials continue to be printed. Seventeen branches received mannequins for improved CPR training. The improved curriculum has promoted practical exercises, role plays and group work. Cooperation and support continues with ICRC providing funding for training and materials in addition to technical support for planning.

## **5. Reproductive health**

MRCS' existing reproductive health project was completed this quarter and a proposal and plan will be submitted to the Federation delegation for ongoing support for this project; it has been evaluated and recommendations will be incorporated into future planning.

## **6. Volunteer blood donor recruitment**

The attendance of the field officer from the health division at the colloquium in China, mentored by a Federation health delegate, has provided MRCS with technical knowledge to support the development of a proposal and plan for a pilot project for volunteer blood donor recruitment in Yangon and Mandalay. An IEC basic information booklet has been developed for potential blood donors and distribution to branches has commenced in addition to motivation work to improve community knowledge about blood donation.

### **Constraints**

Human resource numbers have increased to better support health and training programme activities, with ongoing training occurring to support improved staff knowledge and skills. However, the lack of health structure to support defined roles and responsibilities continues to hinder improvements in communication, reporting and decision making processes, and there continues to be no clear definition of roles and responsibilities between governance and management.

## **Disaster Management**

Disaster management (DM) is supported technically and organisationally by the Federation delegation. Technical support to the division continues to be provided by a disaster preparedness (DP) delegate (50 per cent); together with a local DP officer, efforts were concentrated on the DP training programme. Additional support for strategic planning in DM was provided by the DP delegate from the Bangkok regional delegation

### **1. Strategic planning**

MRCS held a workshop in March to draft DM strategic directions with assistance from the Federation's regional delegation in Bangkok and the Myanmar delegation. Two MRCS staff had been sent in advance to a similar workshop in Lao PDR in order to observe and learn from the Lao Red Cross Society's planning process. The DM strategic directions, drafted by the workshop's 18 participants representing national headquarters and branches, will constitute a key part of the national society's five-year strategic plan.

### **2. Community-based disaster management**

Pilot training workshops on community-based DM were conducted in February and March in the four villages of Ayeyarwaddy division where the national society has facilitated community level risk reduction activities since 2002. The main objective of the four pilot workshops was to field test a new training curriculum designed to cover the basic knowledge and skills essential for practical DM in a community context. A consultant was hired from the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre to participate in and assess two of the workshops as an observer, and to provide technical advice for the improvement of the training programme.

### **3. Leadership training**

The senior DM adviser and the head of the DM division participated in the "Management and Leadership Development" course for disaster managers, organised by the regional delegation in February. The regional delegation also provided an opportunity for one staff member of the Myanmar delegation to attend a regional community-based DM training in Lao PDR in March.

### **4. Integrated approach to community-based disaster preparedness/first aid**

MRCS continued preparatory work on the integration of its participatory DP activities at community level with the existing community-based first aid and health awareness training. The integrated programme aims to more effectively empower communities to enhance their resilience to disasters and health hazards, and is also expected to provide an ideal entry point for the national society's branch capacity building efforts. The development of a new community-based DM training curriculum, which was developed by the MRCS DM division in close collaboration with the training division, signifies a key step forward. Strong commitment from all the relevant parties within the

national society to coordinate closely with each other and with counterparts in the Federation, ICRC and other interested partners is crucial for the success of this cross-sectional undertaking.

### **Impact**

During the first quarter (which is the driest season in the country), many MRCS branches responded to fire disasters with increasing efficiency in information sharing and coordination with national headquarters. The recent improvement can be attributed to the branch leaders' growing awareness of the importance of information flows in DM as a result of the "Disaster Assessment and Response Team" (DART) training that started last year. MRCS held a meeting in January to review experiences from last year and to plan for DART training in eight more provinces this year.

### **Constraints**

During this reporting period, MRCS undertook the organisation of the annual shipment of replenishment items for 18 storage centres strategically located across the country. The replenishment of non-food relief items is planned to continue in an incremental manner in parallel with the ongoing logistic management training for branch leaders so as to better prepare MRCS branches to respond to disasters effectively and, at the same time, provide incentives for branches to improve their stock management and reporting systems. Despite the efforts made in the past few years by national headquarters to establish better logistic management systems, branch responses were very poor when, at the beginning of the year, they were asked to report on the conditions and balances of stock. This has made it difficult for national headquarters to optimise the replenishment plan.

## **Humanitarian Values**

The communication division, established in 2002, continued to be provided with technical and organisational assistance from the Federation delegation, particularly from the liaison officer, with significant support from the ICRC.

### **1. Red Cross newsletter**

The already well established Red Cross newsletter continued to be produced with two issues published in Myanmar in February and April. The newsletter highlighted the work of MRCS and included a series of articles on Red Cross principles, community-based first aid, DM, blood donation, protection of the emblem, mine awareness, information on branch surveys, as well as information from other Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies around the world.

### **2. Training programmes**

The communications team continued to work with other divisions within training programmes and workshops, using these not only to share information and techniques but also as an entry point for the dissemination of Red Cross principles and knowledge about the Movement. In addition, communications division staff organised the training workshop on "Communication Networks within Myanmar and Report Writing" from 24 to 26 March. They regularly gave lectures on Red Cross principles, international humanitarian law, Geneva Conventions, and the role and responsibilities of MRCS, at the Central Civil Service Institute in Yangon and Mandalay, to school Red Cross volunteers, and at regular Red Cross volunteer training sessions all over the country.

### **3. Events**

In March 2004, the communications team was reinforced with a new staff member who is responsible for Red Cross dissemination, this position being supported by ICRC. The communications division has been taking a stronger overall advocacy role and is at the forefront of a number of key public events of the national society. Work started on preparing for the exhibition at the annual "Outstanding Red Cross Volunteers" camp in Yangon, the third issue of the Red Cross newsletter, Red Cross messages and materials, and public relations activities for Red Cross week to be held from 5 to 11 May. News agencies and Myanmar television were also contacted regarding coverage of World Red Cross Day events and planned interviews with officials of MRCS, the ICRC and Federation delegations.

### **4. Support to overall MRCS development**

The head of the communications division continued to play an active and key role in the organisation of strategic planning meetings, the communication networks training, and the leadership training. Moreover, he was largely responsible for MRCS reporting.

### **Impact**

The recruitment of the new dissemination officer in the communications division has been a major change for strengthening the national society's communications capacity in the future. There appears to be a growing awareness among the Red Cross of the greater need for publicity, image building activities and communications.

### **Constraints**

A major constraint is the very limited funding for the communications sector. Although the communications team recognises the inadequate resources and their limited capacity, they are trying hard to get better results, not only in implementing MRCS' communications programmes and projects, but also in improving the society's image. The Myanmar delegation, together with ICRC and the Federation's regional delegation, need to provide further support for the expanding work of the MRCS communications division. Discussions are now ongoing with ICRC for more support in the production of information materials and training.

## **Organisational Development**

At the present time, a key element of the Federation and ICRC delegation's support is overall organisational development (OD) and capacity building of MRCS. All Federation delegates have a responsibility to work with their respective counterparts to strengthen headquarters and branch structures, and train staff and volunteers to more effectively undertake their roles and responsibilities. Particular direction and support is provided by the organisational delegate (50 per cent), aided by the locally employed branch development officer.

### **1. Strategic planning process**

The sixth strategic planning meeting was held in March, attended by MRCS governance and management and the delegations of the Federation and ICRC. Participants agreed on key objectives that go into the national society's five-year strategic plan, as well as the process to prepare a draft plan, before the partnership meeting scheduled in Myanmar in May.

### **2. Finance and administration**

MRCS recruited a head of finance and administration division in January with assistance from the Federation's Capacity Building Fund. In charge of re-establishment of the division, he has since worked to properly close national headquarter's accounts for the past two years (2001-02 and 2002-03) so that an external audit can be conducted. The Federation's Myanmar delegation arranged study trips for him to visit sister national societies in the Philippines and Malaysia, as well as the Federation's regional finance unit in Kuala Lumpur to learn their financial management systems.

### **3. Branch survey**

MRCS conducted branch survey field visits to eight provinces. A visiting team organised semi-structured discussions in focus group meetings at eight provincial chapters and selected 16 sample township branches. While three more visits are yet to be completed in the second quarter, the delegation brought in the regional human resources officer as a consultant to start preparing for the branch survey final report.

### **Impact**

The recruitment of the new head of finance and administration division has been a major boost for the urgent yet very delicate task of strengthening the national society's financial accountability and transparency, which is a prerequisite for any resource development needed to establish sustainability in the future; MRCS' financial management practice has started to improve.

### **Constraints**

The extremely stretched human resource capacity at national headquarters was the main cause of delays in the branch survey and strategic planning. However, the delegation has made it clear to MRCS that it cannot continue to support new positions unless the national society sorts out its organisational structure, along with the issues of staffing and salary scale, and presents a long-term plan to establish financial self-sufficiency.

## **Coordination, Representation and Delegation Management**

The Federation delegation continued to work constructively and openly with MRCS, building a strong working relationship and trust, but recognising the real challenges and constraints such a partnership entails. The delegation considers it must play the roles of both promoter and defender of MRCS to the outside world, as well as being a constant support and constructive critic of the national society as appropriate. Additionally, MRCS, the Federation and ICRC agreed on important steps in the OD process in 2004 at a joint planning meeting held in January. From that time, work began jointly with all Red Cross partners on preparation for the Myanmar Partnership Meeting slated for May 2004. This will be the first such meeting in 10 years so is of the utmost importance for the national society as well as for the Federation delegation.

Close cooperation between the Federation and ICRC delegations remains vital to ensure consistent support for the OD of MRCS and its steady progress. Changes to key persons (i.e. ICRC head of delegation and cooperation delegate, the Federation's OD/DP delegate) which have taken place recently or are expected to over the next few months, will require both delegations to renew their commitment to a coordinated and sustained approach toward the national society's capacity building.

Equally important, the delegation recognised its responsibility to sister national societies, providing support to MRCS through the Federation, providing them with information and reports as well as organising visits and special programmes as required. The key donors to MRCS, namely the Australian, British, Finnish, Japanese and New Zealand Red Cross Societies, continued to seek advice from the delegation regarding priority issues and programmes, and others, namely the Danish, German and Swedish Red Cross Societies, requested further consultation and cooperation regarding support to branch development projects. All have indicated their desire to work under the umbrella of the Federation delegation, although different relationships and requirements are emerging. All have given positive signs that if MRCS continue to consolidate their recent progress, they will consider longer-term funding within the coming years.

The Federation is not well known in Myanmar and even within the international community there is a high degree of misunderstanding about its role and activities. Efforts continue to be made to clarify its position, activities, working methodology and responsibilities within Myanmar, particularly as regards MRCS. However, in spite of, or perhaps because of the deteriorating economic political climate in the country, 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 partner national societies has increased the level of understanding and interest in the work of the Red Cross in Myanmar.

APPEAL No. 01.65/2004

## PLEDGES RECEIVED

18/05/2004

## CASH

REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->					TOTAL COVERAGE	
					1,341,483	51.4%
CASH CARRIED FORWARD					455,886	
AUSTRALIAN - GOVT/AUSAID			9,145	28.01.04	HEALTH DELEGATE	
FINNISH - GOVT/RC	22,000	EUR	34,309	23.04.04	HEALTH & CARE DELEGATE	
SWEDISH - GOVT	150,000	SEK	25,275	26.03.04	ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DELEGATE	
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH					524,615	39.1%

## KIND AND SERVICES ( INCLUDING PERSONNEL)

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
AUSTRALIA	DELEGATES			73,200		
FINLAND	DELEGATES			63,800		
JAPAN	DELEGATES			28,400		
Note: due to systems upgrades in process, contributions in kind and services may be incomplete.						
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				165,400	CHF	12.3%

## ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET

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