

# Appeal 2004



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## Southeast Asia Country Summary:

### Brunei Darussalam

#### **National Context**

Brunei Darussalam, a small state with barely 360,000 inhabitants, is situated on the north-west coast of the island of Borneo. One of the smallest countries in the world, the kingdom's vast oil reserves also makes it one of the wealthiest. Forests cover roughly 75 per cent of the country. Brunei is a constitutional sultanate with an economy almost totally supported by exports of crude oil and natural gas. Revenues from these activities, as well as from the petroleum sector, account for over half of the country's GDP. The economy is a mixture of foreign and domestic entrepreneurship, government regulation and welfare measures, and traditional village activities. Plans for the future include upgrading the labour force, reducing unemployment, strengthening the banking and tourist sectors, and, in general, further widening the economic base beyond oil and gas.

#### **National Society Priorities**

Before independence in 1984, the Brunei Red Crescent was a branch of the British Red Cross. The Brunei Darussalam Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) was formed and recognised by the Movement in 1997. The BDRCS does not have a permanently manned office or paid staff, with the secretary general working with an informal task force in running the national society and conducting activities. However, the government presented the society with a new headquarters building in 1999. It also receives limited financial support from the government in the form of a B\$ 5,000 annual contribution.

BDRCS programmes and activities are limited to youth training in first aid, Red Cross Red Crescent fundamental principles and organising volunteers in camps or during events.

#### **Red Cross Red Crescent Priorities**

The BDRCS, while fairly active as a branch of the British Red Cross, has seen its activities reduce in recent years. Support is greatly needed to help the society strengthen itself into a well-functioning national society, to clarify its role vis-à-vis the government and also to raise its profile in Brunei.

#### **Partnerships**

BDRCS participates in various regional networks and hosted a meeting of the regional disaster management committee in 2002.

#### **Federation Secretariat Support**

Through 2004, the Federation secretariat's regional delegation in Bangkok will continue its efforts to establish dialogue with BDRCS to gain a deeper understanding of the society's priorities and activities and also to test fundraising potential.