

# COUNTRY STRATEGY-VENEZUELA 2004



## 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, 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. Violent social revolts were ongoing throughout 2003 as the country was literally divided between those who support Hugo Chavez' government and those who don't. Just recently, signatures were collected for a referendum that could end Chavez's mandate before the end of his presidential term. Venezuelan democracy is in a very weak position at the moment and media freedom is limited.

## 2. National Context

### Human Development Indicators 2003

Country Ranking - HDI	69
Total population (millions)	24.8
Life expectancy at birth	73.7
Annual population growth rate %	1.7
% population under 15 yrs of age	33.5
% population aged 65 and above	4.6
% urban population	87.2
% of the population living below \$1/day	15
% of the population living below \$2/day	32
GDP per capita (US \$)	5,073
Infant mortality per 1,000 live births	19
Under 5 mortality per 1,000 live births	22
Maternal mortality rate per 100,000 live births	60
% of births attended by skilled health staff	95
% of population using improved water sources	83
% of population using adequate sanitation facilities	68
% of population with access to essential drugs	80-94
% of adults living with HIV/AIDS	0.50
Women living with HIV/AIDS	-
Children living with HIV/AIDS	-
Net primary school enrolment ratio %	88
Adult literacy rate % MALE age 15 yrs +	93.3
Adult literacy rate % FEMALE age 15 yrs +	92.4

(UNDP 2003)

## 3. Priorities of the National Society

Foundation VRC	1895
Recognized by ICRC	1896
Number of branches	24
Active volunteers (estimated)	6,224

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 other activities related with disaster management, tracing, recruitment, diffusion, and communication. The VRC does not receive financial support from the government and the main funding source of the society is the medical assistance system.

The core areas are:

### **Health and Care**

- Primary health care in vulnerable communities (health brigades).
- HIV/AIDS.
- Psychological support.
- Non-remunerated, voluntary blood donor recruitment.
- IMCI.
- Water and sanitation.

### **DPP and Disaster Management**

- Evaluation of damage and assessment of needs.
- CBDP.
- Development of risk mapping.

### **Organizational Development**

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

### **Other**

- Youth.

### **AT A GLANCE**

VRC	COMMENT
<b>Statutes</b>	In process
<b>National Development Plan</b>	2004
<b>Cooperation Agreement Strategy (CAS)</b>	Yes
<b>Self Assessment</b>	
<b>Last Elections</b>	
<b>Next Elections</b>	
<b>Yearly audit</b>	
<b>Youth representative in the NS governance</b>	Yes
<b>Disaster response plan in NS plan</b>	Yes
<b>Disaster response plan integrated with the government plan</b>	In process

### **Main strengths**

- ÿ All programmes working well.
- ÿ Well functioning project office.
- ÿ Significant experience in relief.
- ÿ Good image and relations.
- ÿ Volunteers present throughout the country.
- ÿ Health assistance.

**Main challenges**

- ÿ Centralization.
- ÿ Weak branches.
- ÿ Weak internal communication.

**4. Red Cross and Red Crescent Priorities**

As a consequence of the floods and the subsequent appeal carried out by the National Society, the Venezuelan Red Cross has had International support to respond to those affected which has been used till 2003 in rehabilitation and to support institutional development in the core areas of *Strategy 2010*.

Partner	Health	Relief	DPP	Humanitarian values	Organization Development
ICRC			Tracing, conflict prevention	Dissemination	
Federation	HIV/AIDS		CBDP		
American Red Cross	Water and Sanitation programme				
Spanish Red Cross	Deltas project				Project office, branch support

**5. Priority Programmes for Secretariat Assistance****Health and Care**

- ÿ HIV/AIDS.
- ÿ Amazonico programme.

**Disaster Management**

- ÿ CBDP.
- ÿ Contingency plan for El Niño Phenomenon.

**Organizational Development**

- ÿ Support for the drawing up of a national development plan.
- ÿ Harmonization with ICRC.