

# ***SIERRA LEONE: EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE TO THE SIERRA LEONE RED CROSS***

28 January, 2000

*appeal no. 14/99;*

*situation report no. 3*

*launched on 31 May, 1999 for 3 months; appeal revised on October 13, 1999; this programme is now covered under the Federation's 2000 Appeal for Sierra Leone period covered: September 1 - December 31, 1999*

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*The arrival of the United Nations Sierra Leone Peacekeeping force (UNOMSIL) constitutes a very positive step forward for the peace process, allowing humanitarian activities to reach previously inaccessible northern areas of the country. The Sierra Leone Red Cross Society (SLRCS) expects to re-establish health clinics and branches as early as possible in 2000, and assist with rehabilitation. Despite the positive developments, the disarmament process is slow and a cautious and in view of the security situation a prudent approach is being maintained to carry out the programme objectives within the overall peace process.*

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## ***The context***

Since the return of the ICRC and the Federation to Freetown in May, 1999, humanitarian assistance programmes and support to the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society (SLRCS) have been re-established. The ICRC is the lead agency, focusing on emergency health and relief, while the Federation is focusing on providing capacity building and programme support. The Federation launched an initial 3-month, CHF 753,000 appeal on May 31, 1999, followed by a revised CHF 1,222,000 appeal launched on October 13, 1999. The revised appeal has been fully covered.

Implementation of the planned programme was hampered in 1999 by a lack of access to key areas of the country due to security constraints. The SLRCS, the Federation delegation, and the planned activities also underwent major restructuring in order to reduce overhead costs. This has resulted in an under utilisation of the funds received, with approximately 800,000 CHF expended by the end of 1999. The activities will now be implemented under the Federation's 2000 Appeal for Sierra Leone (01.04/2000),

and the outstanding balance will also be transferred to the 2000 Appeal. A final financial report on Appeal 14/99 will be made available by the end of March, 2000.

## ***Latest events***

The arrival of the UNOMSIL peace keeping contingent has created a conducive atmosphere for progress, and all parties now appear to support the peace process. The deployment of UN forces during the December 1999 to January 2000 period to areas which had been inaccessible for the last 2½ years or more has also increased hopes that humanitarian organisations will now be able to initiate assistance to these areas.

The Federation delegation team has expanded with the arrival of a Finance/Administration delegate, and recruitment is currently underway for a Health Delegate to support and reinforce the clinic and the Traditional Birth Attendant (TBA) programme.

## ***Red Cross/Red Crescent action***

### **Cholera outbreak •**

Activities focused on containing a cholera outbreak and taking steps to prevent any new outbreaks. A total of 852 tons of garbage was collected, and 1,060 wells were chlorinated in Bo, Kenema, Western Area, Mattru and Bonthe. A total of 7 VIP latrines (4 compartment type) were built in IDP camps, and schools and health clinics.

### **First Aid Volunteer training •**

First Aid training was conducted for 356 NGO staff, 60 peer educators, and 60 community volunteers in Bo, Kenema and Western Area. Four refresher courses were conducted for 34 First Aid volunteers. First Aid emergency preparedness training was held for 51 new Red Cross volunteers joining the Action Response Teams in the Western Area. Three simulation exercises were organised, each involving 25 volunteers.

### **AIDS/HIV Prevention •**

AIDS/HIV awareness courses were conducted for 180 maritime workers. Focus group discussions were conducted for 15 commercial sex workers. AIDS/HIV awareness symposia were carried out at 10 schools. Peer educators carried out activities on World AIDS Day in collaboration with Ministry of Health and Sanitation. 16,000 condoms have been distributed.

### **Mother Care •**

Three Safe Motherhood training courses were organised for 60 TBAs in Bo, Kenema and Western area. Safe delivery kits were distributed to the trained TBAs.

### **Blood •**

Approximately 1,123 units of blood were collected from the blood centre at Connaught Hospital, from the newly established collection centre at the Maternity and Children's Hospital, and via the mobile collection unit. Screening for Hepatitis B and C, syphilis, and AIDS/HIV was carried out for all the units collected.

### **Health Clinic Support •**

A total number of 50,806 patients were treated at the SLRCS clinics, and health education classes were conducted for 25,605 women. With the departure of the IDP caseload at the Stadium camp, the temporary health clinic serving the camp was closed. A total of 6 clinics were in operation at the end of December, 1999, but plans are underway in January to open a temporary clinic at a new IDP camp in Bo, and to reopen the SLRCS clinics in Makeni and Magburake.

### **Institutional Support to SLRCS / Reactivating Provincial Branches •**

Preparations are underway to give Branch Status to Bonthe District as it now has 5 active volunteer groups. The planned re-activation of the Makeni and Port Loko branches had to be postponed due to the security situation, but with clinics being re-established in Makeni and planned for Port Loko these branches are to be re-established as early as possible in 2000.

## ***Outstanding needs***

With the appeal fully covered and with cost savings achieved, all the planned needs have been covered and most of the targets already met with the exception of the 4 SLRCS clinics for which the reopening and refurbishing has been delayed due to the security situation.

It is expected that the funds which remain available will enable the National Society to reach the target of operating 10 clinics in the rural areas, as well as allow the Federation to support the SLRCS programmes for the first three months of 2000.

## ***External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media***

The SLRCS and Federation regularly participate in meetings organised by the Commission of Resettlement, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction, including UN agencies, UNOMSIL, and International NGOs. Weekly tri-party meetings are held with the ICRC.

## ***Contributions***

See Annex 1 for details.

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