

# **NICARAGUA: HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE**

22 August 2000

*appeal no. 01.20/2000*

*situation report no. 2*

*period covered: April - June 2000*

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*As Nicaragua is a disaster-prone country, it is incumbent upon the Nicaraguan Red Cross (NRC) to continue incorporating disaster preparedness and prevention elements into their rehabilitation programme in order to strengthen their disaster response. Community development as an integral part of that process plays an important role in an over-all effort of the NRC.*

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## ***The context***

Due to its geographic position and a large number of faults and active volcanoes, Nicaragua is affected by recurrent natural disasters. In addition, the country is still recovering from the consequences of a civil war. The worst disaster in the country's recent history was Hurricane Mitch in 1998. The impact of this hurricane was devastating and the population remained very vulnerable. Consequently, heavy rains at the end of last year had serious effects on the country. The population which was slowly beginning to recover once again suffered a setback to its progress.

## ***Latest events***

At the beginning of May this year, several districts in the Chinandega area were on yellow alert as the San Cristobal volcano was spewing ash and there was a high risk of lava flows. Apart from some small flows though, this did not turn out to be a major event and after several weeks of activity, the giant reverted to normality.

However, the rainy season began and floods were reported on the Atlantic coast of the country, at El Rama. Recently, the rains have diminished and no more major flooding has been reported.

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

### **Disaster Response (DR) •**

#### *Rivas Project*

At the end of May, the final report of the ECHO Emergency Assistance project in Rivas was prepared and despatched, bringing this project to its conclusion.

#### *Temporary Housing Programme*

Its main aim is to provide temporary housing for the victims identified by the Nicaraguan Red Cross until their new permanent houses are completed. Drinking water sources and basic sanitation services represent an integral part of this programme. About 4,000 most affected families by Hurricane Mitch benefit from this project. These are the people who are not able to return to their original place of residence because of the vulnerability of the area.

This programme is scheduled to close on 15 August 2000. However, an extension will shortly be requested in order to meet recently made commitments. As the funds allocated to this programme are not going to be completely exhausted, a three-month extension will be requested in order to use these funds in community education in disaster preparedness.

The following units of temporary housing have been completed:

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Temporary housing units</b>
Netherlands Red Cross	299
French Red Cross	60
Spanish Red Cross	1000
Austrian Red Cross/CHICA	300
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>1659</b>
Jubilee House Community	400
CARE	358
HABITAR	109
Ruben Dario Foundation	82
MOVIMONDO	160
UNDP/INIFOM	941
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>2050</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3709</b>

In addition to agencies mentioned in the above table, requests from Ayuda en Acción, Maranatha and Entrepueblos are being negotiated for the construction of additional 78 housing units.

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In addition to agencies mentioned in the above table, requests from Ayuda en Acción, Maranatha and Entrepueblos are being negotiated for the construction of additional 78 housing units.

The PNS present in Nicaragua are working together with the National Society on several projects for the rehabilitation and building of houses, schools and shelters. The PNS involved in these activities include the Red Cross Societies of Austria, Spain, the United States, Belgium, France, Canada and the Netherlands.

### **Disaster Preparedness (DPP) •**

#### *Community-based Disaster Preparedness*

This is a regional programme covering Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama. The third phase of this programme has been just completed.

As planned, a national assessment workshop was held in April as part of the follow-up to the programme. Participants from all over the country participated in this workshop which was co-ordinated by the Federation. At the end of the workshop, a final report on the programme was prepared and was presented in Costa Rica during the regional evaluation of the programme.

#### *Strengthening the response capacity*

In May and June, two Federation-supported national workshops on relief were held, one for directors of the Nicaraguan Red Cross branches, the other for the heads of operations in the branches. The NRC staff were given training and information on the issues such as the Santo Domingo Declaration, Strategy 2010, development co-operation policies in the event of disasters, damage assessment and needs analysis, action plans, disaster situation reports, the law on the National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Response and the Nicaraguan Red Cross relief plan. As part of the same project, the refurbishment of the radio office and workshop was completed and various relevant items were given to the National Society.

#### *Water and sanitation training*

At the end of June, a regional workshop on water and sanitation was held. The main objectives of this workshop were to exchange information and experience between the Federation, the Participating National Societies (PNS) and the Operating National Societies (ONS) regarding drinking water and sanitation projects in Latin America and to discuss the role of the Federation in relation to drinking water and sanitation activities in Latin America.

#### *America Operations Review*

As part of a Federation initiative to learn lessons from the experience (Hurricane Mitch, Hurricane Georges, Venezuela Floods) a consultant visited Nicaragua in June in order to conduct interviews with a range of stakeholders. The review findings will be available in September.

### **Health •**

In mid-April, the Federation strengthened its support to the NRC through a new health delegate. The main activities in health include technical support to the Blood Bank, the Gulf of Fonseca Project and support to the area around Lake Managua, Cocibolca.

Monthly health meetings with participants from the NRC, PNS working in the country and the Federation have been introduced.

#### *Gulf of Fonseca Project*

This pilot programme set up in 1997 for the Gulf of Fonseca (a geographical area that includes territory in the countries of El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua) includes community development, disaster preparedness and training of various branches with special emphasis on health. In Nicaragua, the programme covers five municipalities in the department of Chinandega and will benefit more than 150,000 people over a period of three years. The operation commenced in May with a meeting of the NRC staff involved in rehabilitation of structures and procurement. A project co-ordinator was recruited by the National Society.

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Further to the visit of the British Red Cross desk in March in order to do a field study, a consultant visited the region end-June to evaluate the project. Interviews were arranged with the Ministry of Health, WHO, UNICEF and others.

The Gulf of Fonseca Project started well but has been recently hampered by the lack of transportation. Funding for the transportation is presently under negotiations.

#### *Technical Assistance to the Blood Bank*

The rehabilitation of the Blood Bank continues. The design will be submitted end-August. The tendering process for the construction is presently going on. A part of the new equipment has been already purchased (1 microbus, 2 centrifuges, small items of equipment, 1 computer). Once the renovation is completed, the Federation technical assistance will ensure maintenance of a high level of service in the National Blood Centre.

#### **Integrated Community Development •**

##### *Cocibolca Project*

The NRC is currently drafting a project for assistance to 3 departments situated around Lake Cocibolca and the department of Masaya. This project will benefit 7 branches in the departments of Chontales, Boaco, Rio San Juan and Masaya, which have not received any assistance so far. The activities proposed in the project cover health, institutional development and DPP. The proposal, now being revised, represents an integrated project with an ID component aimed at strengthening local capacities in order to attain the level of "well-functioning branches" while its health and DPP components aim at local communities.

#### **Humanitarian values •**

A third workshop for departmental Councils was held with the support of the ICRC. This time, the workshop was held on 24 June in Rivas. The main issues discussed included the Framework for Capacity Building, government directives and Strategy 2010.

#### **Institutional Development •**

A feasibility study on the National Training Centre has been concluded with positive results. The study showed that the idea of a National Training Centre aiming at strengthening the capacity is quite viable. At the same time, the Centre could become a valuable income-generation source.

So far, a contractor has been selected to demolish the old building. All those interested in designing the new building have been invited to tender. The design should be selected by October upon which tenders will be invited for the construction of the building.

In May, a meeting on relief including a presentation on Development Co-operation Policy was held as a part of the training for directors of departmental branches.

To speed up the computerisation of the NRC accounting system, the utilisation of the project's funds was analysed and discussed. Two of the partners in this project, UNICEF and the American Red Cross, have provided bilateral support to this project.

On 30 May, a meeting was held with all directors of the Nicaraguan Red Cross to ensure the implementation and good understanding of this programme. A small procedural manual was prepared for this meeting. Further to the meeting, the Nicaraguan Red Cross has designated local counterparts who will ensure the observance of the procedures.

## ***Outstanding needs***

Further to the visit of the British Red Cross desk in March in order to do a field study, a consultant visited the region end-June to evaluate the project. Interviews were arranged with the Ministry of Health, WHO, UNICEF and others.

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## ***Outstanding needs***

Although the Japanese Red Cross Society announced bilateral support for the regions of Chontales and Boaco and the Italian Red Cross Society for San Carlos, funds are still urgently needed for the Masaya Red Cross branch as that area has been recently struck by an earthquake.

Donors are kindly invited to extend further support to the rehabilitation programme as well as to disaster preparedness and prevention, institutional development and health.

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

Regular relations are maintained with a number of organisations working in Nicaragua. Regular monthly meetings are held with ECHO in order to co-ordinate activities. External relations include continuous exchange of information together with distributions of situation reports and other Red Cross Red Crescent publications.

Regular contacts with the media are maintained through the Press Office of the NRC.

### ***Contributions***

See Annex 1 for details.

Peter Rees-Gildea  
Director  
Operations Funding and Reporting Department

Santiago Gil  
Director  
Americas Department

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