

SITUATION REPORT



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

EAST ASIA: HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

*14 February
2001*

appeal no. 01.29/2000

situation report no. 2

period covered: 1 November 2000 - 31 January 2001

In October 1999, the Federation and the government of China signed a status agreement, paving the way for the opening of the East Asia regional office in Beijing in February 2000. The establishment of this office is now nearing completion. Offices have been rented, and the RO moved into its new premises on 15 January. The process of employment of support staff is ongoing and should be completed by early March.

An emergency appeal seeking CHF 3 million after blizzards and bitter cold in the Chinese Autonomous Region of Inner Mongolia was launched on 24 January.

The context

The East Asia region is a large geographical area and one of the most populous regions in the world. It includes China (population 1.3 billion), the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (22.5 million), Japan (125.4 million), Mongolia (2.5 million) and the Republic of Korea (45.3 million). The region is characterised by significant social, political, cultural and economic diversities and several language groups. In addition, it

is extremely prone to natural disasters; such as floods, drought, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, snowfall, typhoons and cyclones which have important social and economic consequences.

Vulnerability in the region is caused by a combination of regularly occurring natural disasters, economic deprivation and social exclusion. The diversity of the region is reflected in the five National Societies, in terms of their funding base, opportunities and capacities. Through the establishment of a regional office in Beijing in February 2000, the Federation aims to increase the level and quality of co-operation and support among National Societies in the East Asia region and the Asia and Pacific region as a whole, particularly to boost capacity building initiatives.

Latest events

China/Inner Mongolia •

On 24 January, the Federation launched an appeal for CHF 3,056,180 to provide immediate supplies of food, quilts and coal to help 60,000 nomadic herders survive the harshest winter in 50 years in the Chinese Autonomous Region of Inner Mongolia. Blizzards and bitter cold over the last few weeks have already caused 39 deaths. Over 220,000 head of livestock -- the mainstay of the rural economy and the main source of food for herders and their families -- have also perished. The Red Cross will target 60,000 people in the prefectures of Xilin, Chifeng and Xingan with emergency assistance for up to four months. The Red Cross Society of China (RCSC) has issued a national appeal for Inner Mongolia, and has already distributed 1,700 quilts to those most in need.

A field/reporting delegate has been assigned to this operation to carry out monitoring/reporting missions to all the prefectures covered in the appeal. The field delegate will work with staff from the RCSC relief department to ensure that the operation is running to plan.

Mongolia •

Mongolia is again in the grip of a bitter winter, with daily temperatures below -40°C. Once more, alarming losses of livestock are being reported. According to the findings of a joint Federation/Mongolian Red Cross (MRCS) assessment team, up to 6 million animals could die this year. In response to the deteriorating conditions of the herders, already exhausted by multiple disasters for two years running, the MRCS has launched a national appeal. The Federation is also envisaging launching a new appeal to help the herders.

The Federation's Mongolian office has received and inspected wheat flour from Russia and a local purchase. To date 1,454.25 mt. have been received and distributed as part of the winter relief operation launched last February, thus completing the end of Phase 3 by the end of December 2000. Phase 4 now begins, and will be completed at the end of February.

The Federation and the MRCS participated in a UNDP Lessons Learned Exercise held in December. After this workshop MRCS ran its own workshop on 'Lessons Learned' from the 1999-2000 "dzud" disaster and in order to define future objectives. The Secretaries of the local Red Cross branches, governors and parliament members of some disaster affected aimags participated. The group emphasized that all organisations involved in relief operations should use one common questionnaire format for needs assessments and should aim to consolidate information through coordination and cooperation among all parties involved. The workshop ended with a live TV and print media event to inform the public of Red Cross activities and to draw attention to the current and potential disaster situation in Mongolia.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)/Republic of Korea (RoK) •

The process of family visits/reunions continued during the reporting period, with a further 100 family members visiting from RoK and DPRK from 30th November to 2nd December. Further inter-Red Cross

talks are planned for early 2001 to discuss issues of common interest, including the continuation of the family visits/reunions.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

Establishment of Regional Office •

The status agreement between the International Federation and the Government of China (GoC) was signed in October 1999. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) has allocated offices to the Federation as close to the headquarters of the Red Cross Society of China as possible. (The RCSC also agreed that the Federation maintain one small office within its HQ).

The Regional Office (RO) moved into its new premises on 15 January. Besides accommodating the RO, they provide enough space for temporary staff assigned to special operations, as is often the case during the frequent natural disasters in East Asia. Work stations will also be available for members of the Movement visiting Beijing and especially for representatives of National Societies working in China or the region.

The move will significantly raise the profile of the Federation in Beijing since, among other considerations, the Federation will now be listed in the Beijing 'Diplomatic List'. In addition, many offices of the international media are located close to the new RO. The full establishment of the RO, including the recruitment of support staff, is expected to be completed in early March

Visits and personnel movements •

Both inter-regional and external Red Cross relations were further strengthened during the reporting period. The Head of the Regional Office (HoRO) facilitated a Basic Training Course at the invitation of the Japanese Red Cross during the first week of November 2000. At the end of November, the HoRO met in Beijing with the Secretary General of the Norwegian Red Cross, who also visited the Federation delegation in DPR Korea. The Secretary General of the Netherlands Red Cross visited the RO on 27 November and was briefed on current and planned activities in the region. The Director of the Secretariat's Asia Pacific Department visited the RO 28-30 November and also met with the leadership of the RCSC and the MoFA.

Also during the reporting period, the Head of the International Division of the RCSC took up a staff on loan position in Geneva and the Deputy Secretary General of the DPRK Red Cross was assigned as the Head of the Federation's delegation in Armenia.

Finance Development Project •

The project continues to proceed as scheduled. Recently, a Project Management team was formed and a counterpart for the Finance Development Delegate identified. This programme is now firmly established and accepted within the RCSC. The first workshop for finance staff from two pilot provinces (Inner Mongolia and Sichuan) and HQ finance staff, a total of 10 participants, was held in Beijing 18 -- 22 December.

English Language Training •

The RCSC has submitted a detailed project proposal for English language training to the RO, indicating that it is committed to the initiative proceeding as planned. A formal project proposal and budget are being prepared for submission to potential donors.

HIV/AIDS •

The RCSC has submitted a proposal to the RO to hold a workshop on HIV/AIDS in Yunnan Province in 2001.

Outstanding needs

Current coverage of the appeal stands at 44.9%. Further contributions are needed to ensure the maintenance and success of the regional programmes.

External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

The Regional Office continues to maintain contacts with embassies, UN agencies and media in Beijing.

From 4 to 8 November 2000, the Federation Head of Delegation, DPRK, visited 21 embassies in Beijing, giving briefings on the current situation of the Federation operation in the DPRK. On 8 November, the Head of the Regional Office chaired a press session in Beijing, attended by 20 representatives of the international media, at which the HoD DPRK presented the Federation operation in DPRK.

In January, the Federation relief delegate in Mongolia participated in a joint assessment mission with a special UNDAC team to evaluate the impact of the latest winter disaster on the herder community. The assessment mission was cut short after a tragic accident on 14 January in which three UN officials were killed when their helicopter crashed.

An information delegate from Geneva has been assigned to the Delegation to deal with media activities during the launch of the appeals for China's Autonomous Region of Inner Mongolia, and for Mongolia. All major Beijing-based news agencies were contacted prior to the launch of the Inner Mongolia appeal, and the regional relief delegate and the information delegate gave interviews to APTN, Reuters TV, AP, AFP, BBC, and Boston Radio. Other interviews were given in Geneva. Video footage taken during the assessment mission in Inner Mongolia was made available to APTN and Reuters, to be dispatched to over 250 subscribers around the world, and was picked up, among others, by CNN.

Contributions

See Annex 1 for details.

Conclusion

Now that it is installed in its own premises, the Regional Office can concentrate its energies on working towards the objectives outlined in the Appeal. However, if it is to succeed, it needs a guarantee of steady funding in support of its activities.

Peter Rees-Gildea
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This and other reports on Federation operations are available on the Federation's website: <http://www.ifrc.org>

East Asia						ANNEX 1
APPEAL No. 01.29/2000		PLEDGES RECEIVED			02/13/01	
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
CASH						
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				1,332,000		TOTAL COVERAGE 44.9%
Balance carried forward from 1999				463,980		
REALLOCATION OF CASH				100,000		
AUSTRALIAN - RC		13,542	CNY	2,741	12.12.00	PURCHASE OF COMPUTER & PRINTER FOR RCSC INTERNATIONAL DEPT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				566,721	CHF	42.5%
KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
Canada	Delegate(s)			31,540		
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				31,540	CHF	2.4%
ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				0	CHF	
THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS ARE LINKED TO THIS APPEAL:						
P54900, PCN001						