

BELARUS, MOLDOVA, UKRAINE: HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

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The activities described in this Situation Report benefited from the budget lines covered by the Federation TB Appeal (8/99). With no future donor support, the programmes identified in this Appeal will encounter a critical point. A review of priorities and a revised budget will be reflected in the next Situation Report.

The context

This decade has been characterised by a difficult transition from the break-up and decreasing influence of the former Soviet Union, plus efforts to implement a more dynamic political process and legal systems, as well as a move to more stable market economies which are capable of benefiting the entire society of a country.

During this period, millions of people have relied on or adapted various survival techniques to subsist. Health care systems in each country have been severely affected, and this, together with the need to protect the most vulnerable from the sharp side of transition, have made well targeted humanitarian programmes in each country essential. The collapse of the health and social services has had a disproportionate impact on vulnerable groups, especially with newly emerging diseases such as tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) reaching epidemic proportions. Most recently, the crisis in and collapse of the Russian financial system has compounded the problems throughout the region. In addition, Belarus has been afflicted by a particularly devastating and long-term problem: the Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster in 1986 which caused radioactive fallout in large areas of Belarus as well as in the neighbouring countries of Russia and Ukraine, rendering some 20 per cent of the nation's land no longer viable. Approximately two million Belarus residents still live in the contaminated areas, and the Federation has established a long-term programme and appeal to provide assistance (separate strategy).

Natural disasters (earthquakes, severe storms, flash floods and mudslides) take a tremendous toll each year on the entire region, and a key concern is updating disaster preparedness strategies so that effective responses can be organised. Various categories of unstable populations (migrants, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees are a serious problem.

In view of these circumstances, the role of the Red Cross as one of the auxiliary bodies to the humanitarian services of the respective governments has dramatically increased.

The National Societies of all three countries are signatories to the "Almaty Declaration" (Almaty Conference, December 1996) emphasizing the Federation's support in four key areas: Institutional and Resource Development (ID/RD) reform and legal advice; Disaster Preparedness (DPP); Population Movement (PM) and the Visiting Nurses Services (VNS), while continuing to assist in acute disaster response situations. On 22 to 25 January 2001, a follow-up to Almaty Conference will be held in Kiev (Kiev Conference) in order to analyse the progress made and to make projections into the future. The 15 National Societies of the NIS formed a Co-ordination Committee to prepare the conference, the presentations and the material. Substantial efforts and resources are needed to arrange this conference.

All three National Societies of this region have decided to improve the "Legal Mandates" (official recognition for their expertise in key activities) with their respective governments.

Latest events

Belarus •

"The level of the socio-economic reform in Belarus shows that there are difficulties in the transition to a market economy". This was said at the international conference on reform in East European countries which opened in Minsk on 13 April with the participation of the Belarusian government officials, representatives of international organisations, experts of independent research centres and Latvian, Polish, Russian and Ukrainian diplomats.

As many as 283 new HIV/AIDS cases were reported in Belarus in the first half of 2000. According to the National Centre for AIDS Prevention, this number represents a 30% increase over January-June 1999 period. Out of the total number of HIV-infected people, young people aged between 20 and 29 accounted for 70%, people under 20 for 19%, jobless persons for 51%, ex-prisoners for 24% and industrial workers for 14%. As many as 210 cases or 74.2% got infected through drug injections. As of 1 July, Belarus has had 3,035 registered HIV-infected people. Each of the country's six regions has been affected. In the Gomel region, 119 HIV/AIDS cases were reported in the first half of 2000 as against 125 in January-June 1999. Minsk has the country's second highest AIDS rate. In January-June 2000, 42 HIV-infected persons were registered in the city, twice as many as in the first six months of 1999. The Minsk region had 17 HIV/AIDS cases in the first half of the year, 180% more than in 1999. The Minsk district, i.e. the area immediately surrounding the city, accounted for 12 cases. Eight persons with AIDS have died in Belarus this year and 94 since 1987. Twenty-two children were born of HIV-infected mothers in 2000 and 123 since 1987. Eighteen of these children have been diagnosed with HIV.

An intergovernmental agreement on co-operation has been signed between Belarus and Ukraine and is aimed at carrying out preventative measures to avert emergency situations and ensuring preparedness for active operations to eliminate them. This document is particularly important in view of the increased potential danger of natural disasters and industrial accidents. Joint efforts have been

planned including the construction of dikes and other structures along the border of the two countries, environmental control of the condition in the Pripyat basin, the liquidation of forest and peat fires in border areas, daily exchange of information and cross-border informal meetings of relevant authorities. The importance of a timely, full and accurate information has been emphasised.

According to a survey prepared by WHO, the Disability Adjusted Life Expectancy (DALE) in Belarus is very different for men and women. Women can expect to live for 67.2 years in good health while for men it is only 56.2 years, or 11 years less. This difference is mostly a result of male alcohol abuse leading to high rate of accidents, violence and cardiovascular diseases. On the world life expectancy list, among 191 countries, Belarus ranks 83rd.

Young people aged between 16 to 29 account for 51.4% of the total number of jobless persons in Belarus. According to the official data, two thirds of the unemployed youths are women. The number of jobless youths has been on the rise in the last several years. The proportion of unemployed people among the graduates of institutions of higher education and specialised secondary schools is about 25%. Recent surveys showed that 64.6% of the questioned young people held their economic potential in low esteem. Only 7.2% of the interviewed had an opportunity to help their parents while 53% said that assistance from their parents and relatives was the main source of their income. Twenty-eight per cent of the interviewed young people feared losing their jobs.

Moldova •

The Moldovan government approved the National Programme on Poverty Reduction. This document determines the "poverty line" at the level of 70 lei per month. According to the experts of the Department of Statistics, this figure does not reflect the real situation, since the minimum of subsistence reached 233.1 lei per person in Moldova. It was stated at a governmental sitting that three thirds of the Moldovan population already live under this minimum as each 5th Moldovan citizen receives less than 70 lei a month. Families with more children, single parent and young families, disabled and pensioners are among the poorest. According to the official data, 103.8 million lei will be spent in 2000 to reduce poverty (as of 1 May the rate is 1USD = 12,60 lei). The International Monetary Fund (IMF) announced a visit to Moldova, tentatively on 12 July. Representatives of the World Bank will also be among the delegation members. The main goal of their visit is reportedly to work out with the Moldovan government a new assistance programme in the frames of the Strategy on Poverty Reduction. It is expected that the IMF, the World Bank and the donor countries will commit about \$150 million to Moldova for this purpose. The appropriate strategy will be prepared in close co-operation with the Moldovan authorities while taking into consideration opinions of non-governmental organisations, political parties and mass media.

The Council of Europe will assist Moldova to set up a Flood Centre. This decision was conditioned by the Agreement on the Prevention, Defence and Assistance in the case of natural disasters and man-made calamities. Moldova signed this agreement in 1997. This centre will closely co-operate with other countries parties to this agreement and relevant Moldovan institutions in compliance with the Moldovan statute and law presently in force. Taking into consideration that Moldova regularly suffers from various unexpected and severe disasters and calamities which call for enormous expenditures, the Moldovan government supported the need for efficient measures in this area. According to the experts, 30,000 houses situated in the basins of the Dniester and the Byk with about 150,000 people are within the zones which are under a constant threat of flood. The establishment of the above-mentioned centre will be a concrete step by the state in pooling efforts in combating these calamities.

The representatives of WHO, the Federation, the Pharmaceutists without Borders and Caritas made a study visit to Moldova. The main purpose of the mission (22 to 26 May) was to examine the implementation of the programmes for combating TB in Moldova. The experts visited the Orhei

uyczd, the penitentiary institutions in Bendery, where they had meetings with the representatives of the donor organisations acting in Moldova. According to some of them, Moldova has to reconsider the National Programme on Combating TB and to include it in the Directly Observed Short Course Treatment (DOTS) Strategy, which had already been successfully applied in some other Eastern European countries.

Ukraine •

According to the State Employment Centre, official unemployment rate reaches 4.34%. About 1.32 million people were registered as unemployed on the books of the Centre in January 2000. The highest unemployment rates were observed in the western and northern regions of the country including the Ivano-Frankivsk, Ternopil, Volyn, Rivne, Lviv, Sumy, Zhytomyr and Chernihiv oblasts. The actual unemployment rate in Ukraine is estimated to be 28-32%, though. On March 20, the Ukrainian Economic and Political Studies Centre announced that around 35-40% of the working population, i.e. around 7-8 million people, can be regarded as unemployed.

A joint military-civilian disaster relief workshop, with 285 medical experts from the United States and Ukraine as well as 130 officers in reserve from the California National Guard, took place in Kharkiv on 16 May. This exercise, entitled "Rough and Ready 2000", was the first event of this kind in Ukraine. It involved air, water and land exercises designed to improve inter-departmental co-operation, disaster preparedness, emergency response and civil planning and to provide valuable bilateral training on management of major natural disasters and large-scale casualties. The five-day exercise was conducted in the spirit of the Partnership for Peace Programme (PFP) and as part of the State Partnership Programme (SPP) between California and Ukraine. Belarus, the Czech Republic, Japan and India were participating in the exercise as observers.

According to the health sources, nearly 90% of the Ukrainian population are on the verge of falling sick. The Kiev Centre for Nutritional Health launched a programme to improve the situation and help people avoid negative influence of ecological factors and the consequences of malnutrition. The programme is expected to be extended to all Ukrainian cities within the next three years and would be financed by regional self-government bodies. The programme is implemented with the support of the Ukrainian Cossacks and the Ministry of Health Care and aims at creating centres which will give an opportunity to people to receive information about the current ecological situation in the country, healthy nutrition and healthy living.

According the official media, dangerous communicable diseases are progressing in Ukraine. In Kharkiv, the number of consumptive patients has increased this year by 314 people or by 9.7% compared to the same period in 1999. Only one third of the needed funds have been provided so far to combat tuberculosis in the country. According to the official data, there are 1,500 HIV-positive people in Kharkiv. Unofficially, the numbers are 10 times higher. Seven people have already died of AIDS this year. Often, HIV-positive people decline to take criminal responsibility for transmitting HIV virus. An inter-departmental meeting at the oblast prosecutor's office discussed this issue.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

Belarus •

Disaster Response

Addressing the needs resulting from extreme poverty, the Belarusian Red Cross disaster response programme was focused on providing food and relief items to the most destitute in the framework of the Winter Assistance programme funded by ECHO and the British, Canadian and Swiss Red Cross Societies. During the implementation period, food parcels were provided to 34,965 people, clothes and footwear – to over 65,000 people with low income, hygiene parcels – to over 1,800 bedridden invalids and TB patients. The Swedish Red Cross supplied 6 trucks with 93 tons of used clothes and shoes. More than 1,000 people with low income, orphans and children from socially disadvantaged

families received hot meals. One thousand children were provided with school items. More than 3,500 volunteers (mainly senior school children and students) were involved in the programme.

Population Movement activities are mainly funded by and implemented jointly with the UNHCR (provision of food, relief items, legal counselling, Russian language courses). In addition, refugees are covered by the Federation's Winter programme. They received food parcels (funded by the Swiss Red Cross), used clothes (funded by Swedish Red Cross), soap (bilaterally from the French Red Cross).

Disaster Preparedness

The National Society is defining its role in the state disaster preparedness structure. This year, the medical part of the Belarusian Red Cross Disaster Preparedness service was included in the Ministry of Emergencies' list of agencies providing aid during disasters. In June, the Belarusian Red Cross Disaster Preparedness volunteers took part in the exercises held by the Ministry of Emergencies. Emergency stocks of clothes and other relief items are planned to be set up by the Red Cross in all regions.

To enhance its ability to provide assistance to victims of catastrophes, the Belarusian Red Cross runs a First Aid training programme. During the first half of 2000, a group of instructors conducted the First Aid training for school children in Grodno Oblast, Minsk, Molodechno and Borisov. On 12 June, an agreement on co-operation was signed between the Ministry of Education and the Belarusian Red Cross. It defines joint efforts in adding humanitarian issues to the education/upbringing process and to children health care. Annual young rescuer competitions are planned. In May-June, the National Society headquarters arranged competitions of young road inspectors and young firemen.

Health

The visiting nurses service plays a crucial role in places with no other medical care for the sick, disabled and the elderly in their homes. At present, there are 462 visiting nurses providing home assistance to 4,575 lonely people in need of permanent care. More than 30,000 people have been served at 117 Red Cross medical and social centres during the first half of 2000.

The focus, however, is on the TB/HIV/AIDS/STDs project funded by ECHO, implemented with support of the Danish Red Cross and co-ordinated by the Federation. Visiting nurses and Red Cross activists have been trained on TB/AIDS prevention. In total, 3,000 TB patients and 3,000 lonely elderly and bedridden patients (TB risk category) have been served. In accordance with an agreement with the Ministry of Health, the Red Cross has provided the directly observed treatment to about 2,000 TB patients. Some 98 medication distribution points function under the programme (77 located in out-patient clinics and 21 in Red Cross medical and social centres). About 48,745 kg of second-hand clothes from the Danish Red Cross (41,150 kg) and Swiss Red Cross (7,595 kg) were distributed to 7,857 beneficiaries. The activities included compliance monitoring by visiting nurses, distribution of 18 equipment sets for medical and social centres, procurement and distribution of 33,000 food parcels, 18,000 hygiene kits and 271 bicycles for visiting nurses, maintenance and repair works of 13 medical and social rooms (MSR) in Gomel and Mogilev pilot areas. Starting from January, 630 monthly public transportation tickets have been provided to patients receiving directly observed treatment in MSR and to nurses in rural areas. In their work with TB patients, the Red Cross visiting nurses have used various psycho-social support tools.

Media coverage has been effective with a series of articles focusing on information dissemination, the Red Cross role in combating TB/AIDS and in promoting a healthy generation. The number of people reached is estimated at approximately 1,500,000 (through TV and radio) and 300,000 leaflets and press publications. Some 20,000 leaflets for TB patients and members of their families and 30,000 leaflets for the general public were published and distributed. Three TB video-clips have been

aired on central television and 13 sets of video-clips were produced for local TV stations. A TB manual for visiting nurses has been published.

Two workshops were held, a one day workshop for journalists, highlighting the educational campaign on TB/HIV/AIDS and a two-day seminar for the programme activists from the Belarusian Red Cross Youth department. A competition on production of the best bulletin on TB/AIDS prevention was also organised by the Belarusian Red Cross.

Humanitarian Values

From 28 January - 4 February, a youth Red Cross camp-seminar "Together – to the New Millennium" was organised with support from the ICRC and the Federation. Volunteer students discussed the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross Movement, the International Humanitarian Law (IHL), voluntarism, Youth Red Cross structure. In May, the Belarusian Red Cross organised a seminar for district and oblast Red Cross committees and school teachers involved in promoting the Red Cross programmes. The Belarusian Red Cross continues running courses for students of law faculties, making them acquainted with the activities of the Movement. A booklet entitled "the Belarusian Red Cross" with the information on the National Society's activities, the Fundamental Principles and IHL was published.

Capacity Building

The National Society's capacities were increased significantly through the implementation of the ECHO-funded project "Strengthening of the VNS and educational, material and social support to TB and HIV/AIDS patients and other vulnerable groups in Belarus". This projects was implemented in the period September 1999 - May 2000 and included staff training, procurement of medical equipment and materials, repairs of premises, development of working relationships with relevant state authorities and partner organisations. This project was also implemented in Ukraine and Moldova.

On 12 May, the law on Usage and Protection of the Emblem of Red Cross and Red Crescent was signed by the President. It was registered in the National Legal Acts Register (2/157) on 15 May and came into force ten days after on 25 May. On 30 June, the Draft Red Cross Law was approved by the Parliament in the first reading. However, some important amendments and changes still need to be included. A special meeting will be organised with the ICRC representative and external legal consultant regarding this issue.

The Belarusian Red Cross has conducted two follow up seminars on Almaty Conference Almaty Follow-up) and on Seville Agreement. In March, the Youth Department of the Belarusian Red Cross started to draft a national Youth Policy.

Moldova •

Disaster Response

Emergency assistance to people in need during winter (Winter Emergency Appeals launched by the Federation) has continued as the number of vulnerable has been on the rise. The Moldovan Red Cross procured 6,000 hygiene kits (British and Canadian Red Cross donations) and distributed them to TB-infected people, large families, people with low income, the elderly and pensioners in 38 districts throughout the country. The Swedish Red Cross supplied 3 trucks of second hand cloths/footwear distributed by the local Red Cross branches. Relief items (e.g. soap) were received from the French RC. The Netherlands Red Cross co-operated in a relief programme on bilateral basis.

As the Population Movement (PM) is quite a new programme for the National Society, one of its main objectives is to disseminate knowledge to the Red Cross branches to prepare them to respond to emergencies in their own right. A PM grass-root workshop for all regions of the country, including Trans-Dniestria, was held in Chisinau in March. The PM programme is run jointly with the UNHCR.

At the end of June, a Summer Camp Project was launched for more than 90 children of refugees, asylum seekers and IDPs, with a Red Cross visiting nurse providing children with moral support and promoting the basic principles, values and ideas of the Red Cross Movement.

Disaster Preparedness

The Moldovan Red Cross failed to complete the editing of the First Aid Manual as specified by the contract between the ONS and the Federation, therefore about 25,000 USD were transferred back to the Federation from the National Society in March, 2000. These funds are to be shared between the Belarusian and Ukrainian Red Cross Societies for further First Aid activities (procurement of training mannequins).

The agreement with the Moldovan Red Cross is to re-address the issue of the Community Based First Aid (CBFA) after the re-organisation of the National Society, when a well-functioning structure is more in place. The Belgian Red Cross (Flemish section) has indicated its interest to support this process.

Health

Some 10,000 TB/HIV/AIDS patients and elderly benefit from the TB programme. In total, 27,497 food parcels, 20,000 hygienic parcels, 2,000 bed linen sets and 851 bottles of vitamins were procured and distributed.

A two-day seminar was organised for 42 visiting nurses and representatives of state health care institutions in order to increase their level of knowledge about TB/HIV/AIDS prevention, prophylactics and identification. In order to intensify the collaboration and co-ordination between the Moldovan Red Cross and local health care representatives, two seminars were organised with the participation of vice-presidents of the local Red Cross committees, physicians from the Southern and Northern parts of Moldova and the Ministry of Health. Forty two nursing kits, 45 wheelchairs, 90 standing chairs and 90 crutches were procured and distributed among 10 medical and social centres.

Information on TB/HIV/AIDS was disseminated locally among the general public and media. National and local media printed and broadcast information about the ECHO programme and its objectives. Information material on TB/HIV/AIDS was printed and distributed among the beneficiaries and general public. A total of 47,200 TB booklets and 60,000 TB pamphlets were printed out and distributed as well as 16,662 AIDS booklets and 20,000 AIDS pamphlets. Some 12,000 calendars and 10,000 bookmarks for students were produced to disseminate TB/HIV/AIDS prevention information and ensure visibility for donors.

Humanitarian Values

In the first half of 2000, the Moldovan Red Cross, together with the ICRC, held two seminars promoting the IHL and the Fundamental Principles of the Movement. During the joint meetings (Moldovan Red Cross/ICRC/Federation), the mission of the Red Cross, the principles and relevance of humanitarian law were elaborated.

Capacity Building

In May-June, three joint Federation/ICRC information seminars for the authorities and Red Cross units at regional and national level were organised in Chisinau. The main issues were the new National Society structure, elections, relations with the government, preparations for the Assembly, governance, management and voluntarism.

The National Society prepared a draft of new Statutes. On 30 June, the 16th Moldovan Red Cross Assembly took place. Larysa Byrka, former vice-President, was elected a President and a new vice-President came in. The new Statutes were approved on the condition, that the Federation/ICRC have an opportunity to amend. Final approval should be given by newly elected Presidium.

Ukraine •

Disaster Response

Having in mind the critical economic situation in the country, many people need continued support from the Ukrainian Red Cross. In the Winter Assistance programme, the Visiting Nurses are used as skilled manpower. The British Red Cross, through the Federation, provided funds to procure 103,000 food parcels and hot meals for 3,900 destitute people. The Canadian Red Cross/CIDA financed provision of 20,440 food parcels, 3,600 sandwiches for street children and hot meals for 6,000 beneficiaries. About 2,160 food parcels were procured by the Canadian Red Cross for Volyn Oblast. The Swedish Red Cross supplied 11 trucks (170,5 tons) of used clothes and shoes. Another part of the Winter programme was implemented by the funds allocated by the Netherlands Red Cross (bilateral programme).

Refugees and asylum seekers are among the most vulnerable population groups. Unemployment, housing problem, social isolation, language barrier, police persecution and other constraints cause inhuman suffering for this group. In February and March, two grass-root PM seminars for Vinnytsa and Odessa Oblast branches were held and attended by ICRC representatives, competent local authorities and some NGOs. The seminars focused on establishing more solid working relations with respective partners and on strengthening Red Cross capacities to assist the vulnerable population, with special emphasis on legal issues and other protection-related activities.

In the year 2000, the programme of the Red Cross Mobile technical teams (MTTs) continued according to the operational contract between the Federation and the Ukrainian Red Cross. Being developed to assist Formerly Deported People (FDP) in Crimea region, the programme includes roof and floor repairs, restoration of furnaces and cutting firewood for house heating. MTTs are closely linked with the Visiting Nurses Service. From the beginning of this year, more than 1,300 beneficiaries were provided assistance by the three MTTs. The teams' work has received good coverage in local radio/television as well as in printed media.

In the framework of the Hot Meal Programme, 80 refugees have been receiving hot meals in two canteens in Kiev.

Disaster Preparedness

In a country facing a growing number of natural and technological disasters (e.g. Chernobyl incident, mine accidents), the National Society disaster preparedness programme is an essential activity. A Co-operation Agreement exists between the Ukrainian Red Cross and the Ministry of Emergencies. The National Society has approved a Plan of Actions at Emergencies (at national, oblast, district and grass-root level) and identified a List of Relief Items for emergency situations.

The Volunteer Disaster Preparedness units have been formed in the oblast Red Cross organisations in Lugansk, Lviv, Zakarpattya, Volyn and Chernigov.

Five thousand First Aid manuals for general public and 1,000 instructor manuals have been published and distributed at the oblast level. The trained instructors have provided training to school children, RC volunteers, road militia, firemen, social workers and enterprises.

Health

In Ukraine, the Visiting Nurses Service employs 3,200 nurses providing medical and social assistance and psychological support to the elderly and disabled. The Ukrainian Red Cross runs 406 medical and social centres and rooms and 525 banks of clothes. Together with the state health

authorities, the Red Cross has established 4 hospitals, 3 medical departments and 2 daytime wards at the RC medical and social centres. Annually, visiting nurses provide services to over 249 thousand patients. The state supports the Red Cross VNS by funding nurses' salaries and by providing premises free of charge.

In the first half of 2000, the VNS was actively involved in the TB/HIV-AIDS/STDs project funded by ECHO and run in co-operation with the German Red Cross. At present, some 30,000 recipients benefit from food parcel distribution. Some 30,000 hygiene kits were procured and delivered to distribution sites and 1,400 medical kits for nurses were distributed. One thousand three hundred bicycles for visiting nurses were procured and 300 were distributed so far. International procurement of 10 equipment sets for medical and social rooms has not been completed yet because of continuous difficulties with customs clearances. The procurement of 90,000 vitamin boxes has been completed. In Kiev, hot meals have been organised for 630 TB patients receiving drugs according to DOTS system. In total, 789 rehabilitation items (Stoik sets) were procured for the beneficiaries with locomotive disabilities. Within this programme, 14 seminars with 555 participants were held for chairpersons, media representatives, Red Cross activists, programme instructors and visiting nurses. Regional Red Cross branches (Kiev and Sevastopol City Red Cross committees) held 50 training seminars for 1,500 Ukrainian Red Cross staff members and volunteers.

Some regional Red Cross committees issued TB/HIV/AIDS leaflets with their own funds. Mass youth-oriented campaigns against AIDS were organised in Zhytomir, Transkarpatia, Chernovtsy and other regional Red Cross committees.

The media campaign has continued and thematic TV and radio programmes have been prepared. Press conferences on TB/AIDS prevention and prophylactics were held in the majority of regions. On 17 February, the Ukrainian Red Cross organised a press-conference on this Ukrainian Red Cross/Federation project. Visiting nurses in medical and social assistance rooms are disseminating information on prevention, care, early identification and prophylactics of TB and HIV/AIDS.

Humanitarian Values

Two oblast seminars on dissemination of humanitarian values and IHL were held. A manual on dissemination of knowledge about the Movement in Ukraine was issued (1,000 copies), with 50 sets of slides. A number of articles on IHL and protection of the emblem were prepared for newspapers. All major TV companies were familiarised with the protection of the emblem.

Capacity Building

Fund-raising campaigns were organised by regional and city Red Cross branches in Donetsk, Dnepropetrovsk, Transkarpatia, Kirovograd, Kharkiv, Kherson, Cherkassy and Chernovtsy. The local Red Cross branches also organised the collection of food and winter clothes for the vulnerable and TB-patients. The total value of the collected cash and in-kind donations is UAH 130,000 (around USD 23,500).

In February, the Ukrainian Red Cross Working Plan 2000-2002 was discussed and adopted at the Board meeting. The Minsk Delegation participated in this meeting and took the opportunity to elaborate on the Federation's Strategy 2010.

The Draft Red Cross Law is under consideration in the Supreme Council Commissions. The Statutes of the Ukrainian Red Cross are being amended in consultations with the Federation/ICRC.

Feasibility Study has been conducted for the Ukrainian Red Cross by an external consultant. Recommendations were formulated for several one to two year projects in the field of Institutional Development. The report was translated into Russian and approved by the National Society. It was also forwarded to several PNS (British, Dutch, Finnish, Swedish, Swiss Red Cross Societies) for

their possible support to this programme. In June, the agenda for the Ukrainian Red Cross Board meeting included the issue of the Red Cross Emblem.

Outstanding needs

The response of donors has been very poor thus far. In order to be able to continue with the implementation of these important programmes, the donors are kindly invited to contribute to this Appeal.

External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

On 17 to 21 January, a seminar on the International Humanitarian Law was held by the ICRC in Minsk. On 20 January, there was a special presentation on the Federation's structure and its activities in the region. The participants were university teachers from Minsk universities, ICRC representatives and Belarusian Red Cross dissemination department.

In the period from January to June, several joint meetings between the representatives of the Federation, ICRC and Ukrainian Red Cross were held to discuss the Statutes of the National Society, progress in the implementation of the Ukrainian Red Cross/Federation programmes, feasibility study, International Tracing Service and the PNS assistance to local administrations in Ukraine.

On 8 February, the Federation participated in the seminar for mass media representatives organised by the Belarusian Red Cross. The objective of the seminar was to inform the media of the Belarusian Red Cross programmes in the year 2000 as well as on the Federation and its activities in Belarus.

On 16 February, the ECHO-funded TB project "Educational, medical and social support to strengthen VNS and to counter the spread of TB/HIV/AIDS and STDs in Ukraine" was represented at a press conference to the media in Kiev while an interview was given to the TV.

On 23 February, a meeting with UN Theme group on HIV took place in the UN Office in Kiev. The following main items were discussed: the adoption of the UN Integrated Plan of Activities on HIV/AIDS and the Theme Group agenda for 2000; recent events; establishment of an Information Group under the Theme Group to co-ordinate work with mass media and the Governmental Co-ordinating Council on HIV/AIDS issues; final report on the project "Assessment of accessibility of information on HIV, Drug abuse and STD in the Ukrainian educational system".

On 23 to 25 February, an ICRC Dissemination Delegate, visited Moldova. Joint ICRC/Federation discussions were held with the acting President of the Moldovan Red Cross. It was agreed to continue with the improvements in the Moldovan Red Cross legal base. In May (10-11 and 12-13), the Federation and ICRC participated in two seminars for new Regional and National Board members in order to familiarise them with the Movement and to discuss the role and the future of their National Society. Presentations were made on the Characteristics of a Well-Functioning National Society and Strategy 2010. The objectives and relevance for a National Society were elaborated. Governance and management, as well as voluntarism, were two other main topics. The other issues on the agenda included the National Society legal base, IHL, the new Moldovan Red Cross structure, elections, relations with government and preparation for the Assembly. The third seminar was conducted from 30 May to 2 June for the Judet Red Cross leadership as well as for the high level government representatives. The Red Cross mission, strategic directions and expected results of planning in the context of a National Society were discussed. General facts on the Federation's role were given, too. The Vice Minister of Justice participated in this seminar and

expressed his hopes that the Moldovan Red Cross will be recognised soon. This would be a matter of prestige for Moldova.

On 15 March, the Federation participated in the media briefing organised on the occasion of the World TB Day by the Belarusian Red Cross in Minsk. On 20 March, a TV interview on the Red Cross TB programme was given and included in the TV programme "Health". It was broadcast on the Belarusian national TV channel on the occasion of the World TB Day.

On 21 March, the Federation participated in Kiev in the round table entitled "TB as a national problem: the role of the Society in fighting the epidemic in Ukraine". It was organised jointly by the Ministry of Health of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Red Cross. It was attended by the Vice Prime Minister, legislators and representatives from all Ukrainian ministries. The purpose of this event was to draw attention of local authorities and the public to the problems related to the vast epidemic of TB/HIV/AIDS in Ukraine. The round table was held in the framework of the International Humanitarian Programme "Red Cross against TB and AIDS". The event was well covered by local media.

In March, the Federation programmes (TB/ECHO programme, Winter Assistance programme) run in the three countries were mentioned in the main national News Agencies bulletins: BelaPAN, Intelnews, Interlic as well as in other local press.

All major donor countries have been regularly briefed through their Embassies in Kiev on the progress of the programmes funded by the funds received through their respective National Societies.

Effective working relations have been maintained with the relevant governmental and non-governmental entities as well as with international agencies such as UNHCR, IOM and OSCE.

Quarterly newsletters on Chernobyl and Population Movement have been produced regularly and distributed to the Governmental institutions, Embassies and Representations of the International organisations based in the countries as well as to the donor community.

Contributions

See Annex 1 for details.

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