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FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA: HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE FOR ENDURING EMERGENCIES

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period covered: January - March, 2000

Despite a number of significant constraints caused by a lack of funding in 2000 and the ongoing difficult and fluid environment, including international sanctions, isolation, and internal trade blockades, a rapidly deteriorating socio-economic and political situation, tension between Serbia and Montenegro, and continued violence in Kosovo, the extensive relief and longer-term development programmes continue to be implemented. Full support and strengthening of the Yugoslav Red Cross (YRC) remains a priority for the International Federation, to ensure that the National Society continues to meet the needs of the ever growing number of beneficiaries. The YRC, with the International Federation's support, will seek to flexibly respond to the humanitarian needs as planned and as the internal and external situation allows.

The context

For nearly a decade the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FR Yugoslavia) has witnessed a succession of conflicts and natural disasters. While fighting in the former Yugoslavia concluded in 1995 with the Dayton Peace Agreement, over half a million refugees from Bosnia Herzegovina and Croatia and many socially vulnerable people were left to cope in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Meanwhile the willingness of the donor community to fund humanitarian relief operations in FR Yugoslavia declined. The International Federation and the Yugoslav Red Cross (YRC) were among the few providers of international humanitarian assistance between 1995 and the beginning of 1999.

Last year was marked by further turmoil in the region: the ongoing situation in Kosovo deteriorated with no agreement reached at the Rambouillet and Paris talks regarding an interim settlement on the status of Kosovo; the expulsion and fleeing of some 800,000 Kosovo Albanians to neighbouring countries and launch of NATO's air campaign on 24 March on the FR Yugoslavia, which concluded on 12 June,

1999 with the signing of the UN Security Council Resolution 1244 and the related military technical agreement. This led to the withdrawal of Serbian troops from the province and the establishment of international UN administration and peacekeeping troops in Kosovo. The majority of Kosovo-Albanians quickly returned to Kosovo, resulting in turn in the expulsion and fleeing of non-ethnic Albanians, who either fled Kosovo altogether or moved into non-Albanian enclaves. Over 200,000 IDPs took refuge in Serbia proper and Montenegro from Kosovo, of which the majority were Serb.

The situation in the whole of the FR Yugoslavia, one year after the conflict, remains fragile and volatile. The ever deepening socio-economic and political crisis in FR Yugoslavia is resulting in an increased number of socially vulnerable people.

Responding to the humanitarian situation, the main thrust of the Federation's 2000 - 2001 strategy for FR Yugoslavia is twofold. First, to assist, in cooperation and coordination with the Yugoslav Red Cross and the ICRC, the most vulnerable refugees, IDPs and Social Cases, with the Federation primarily responsible for relief assistance to the old case-load of refugees in Serbia and Montenegro (not including Kosovo). Second, to assist the Yugoslav Red Cross through programmes of long-term capacity building. This second objective involves:

- support for the institutional and resource development of the YRC network in order for the National Society to increase its effectiveness and efficiency as the prime channel of domestic and international assistance to vulnerable people in FRY.
- support to the YRC's traditional health programmes, such as health education and preventive health, first aid and voluntary blood donations, to meet the needs of vulnerable individuals.
- strengthening the Red Cross Youth Programme through support to youth training programmes and international exchanges.
- support the Yugoslav Red Cross' Social Welfare Programme to ensure that psycho-social projects continue to meet the needs of the most vulnerable people in the FR Yugoslavia.
- Support the establishment of a Disaster Preparedness Programme, which will make available resources and mechanisms to be activated when a natural or man-made disaster strikes, initially focusing on the province of Vojvodina, which is prone to flooding.
- support in the development of Red Cross structures and programmes in Kosovo which will enjoy the support of all groups in the province and position the local Red Cross as an important contributor to the development of civil society.
- extensive psycho-social support programme in Kosovo.

Latest events

The first quarter of 2000 has been marked by ongoing tension and instability. In Kosovo, the non-Kosovo-Albanian community has suffered from continued acts of intimidation and violence, with the ethnically divided northern city of Mitrovica being a particular focal point. In addition, tension increased in the ethnic-Albanian majority area of southern Serbia, along the Kosovo administrative border, which led to thousands of ethnic Albanians leaving the area for Kosovo. Meanwhile, Montenegro has shown signs of drifting away from the Federal system, with a trade blockage between Serbia and Montenegro resulting in humanitarian organisations encountering difficulties in transporting relief items to the Republic. In Serbia itself, people suffer from the deteriorating socio-economic and political situation, with the UN Food and Agricultural Organisation recently ranking the FR Yugoslavia as the country with the most difficult food situation in Europe, estimating that food aid is needed for approximately 2 million people (representing around 20% of the population). In addition, two floods struck the agricultural region of Vojvodina during the reporting period, resulting in many of the crops being destroyed, bringing further anxiety regarding anticipated food shortages during 2000. Added to this situation, a cyanide environmental catastrophe, which destroyed an estimated 15 million tonnes of fish and polluted Serbia's rivers, caused further hardship for the citizens of FR Yugoslavia.

While the YRC and Federation continued implementing large relief and non-relief operations and programmes, due to the enormous expansion of the YRC relief activities, many programmes were behind schedule. Transporting items to Montenegro was also problematic, however positive discussions took place in March, with the Federation feeling confident that a solution would be found which would enable the resumption of Federation convoy deliveries to Montenegro during the first week of April. Discussions were held regarding the Federation's role in the overall 2000 food assistance programme (with the World Food Programme and ECHO), with the aim of ensuring that those most in need continue to receive regular humanitarian support. The Disaster Preparedness Assessment in Vojvodina was completed with assistance from the German Red Cross, and action is already being taken regarding the procurement of some recommended DP relief items and equipment. The field work for the Vulnerability Assessment was completed to schedule during March, with the Executive Summary expected in April. Positive discussions were held with counterparts regarding the planned expansion of the Red Cross Repatriation Programme for refugees returning to Croatia. Initial research was also completed regarding the proposed Homecare Project. The Federation supported YRC Social Welfare Programme made over 200,000 contacts with beneficiaries over the three month period and ran an extensive seminar for 300 Red Cross staff involved in social welfare activities, while the Kosovo psycho-social programme's five Centres and Mobile Outreach Teams (MOTs) were fully operational, giving additional emergency support to the recently arrived IDPs from southern Serbia into Kosovo. The Kosovo Sub-delegation, while supporting the development of the Local Red Cross, also ran five Red Cross Assessment Seminars. The Montenegrin Sub-delegation's joint relief monitoring system was running well, while the team also took over more responsibility for the Social Welfare and Health/Blood programmes in the Republic.

Economically, the average salary decreased by 8.8% in January 2000 in both Serbia and Montenegro, when compared to the December figures (source: OCHA, Humanitarian Risk Analysis). The average salary in Serbia was 1,599 dinars (80DEM), and a similar decrease in the average pension was recorded, with the gap widening between the cost of living and the average salary. Comparing OCHA's shopping basket survey against the average salary, in March it required 2.2 times the average salary to purchase a shopping basket at grey market prices, and 1.7 times the average salary at state market prices. These figures represent a decrease in real purchasing power of 69% on the grey market and 30% on the state market, when compared with August figures. Shortages of basic commodities are common place, including fresh milk, cooking oil, sugar and even bread in some regions. A measure of the increase in vulnerability is the number of Yugoslav citizens requesting humanitarian assistance from their local Red Cross Branch. In many areas the economic situation was described as alarming. Unemployment continues to be high, with many factories either not functioning at all, or at a low level. Citizens requesting assistance included the elderly with low pensions and the chronically sick, who could not afford medicines, which were either too expensive or not available at all.

The impact of the economic blockade of goods from Serbia to Montenegro continues to be a critical issue for humanitarian organisations.

In the meantime, in the Gjilan/Gnjilane and Kamenica areas of Kosovo, contingency stocks and shelter preparations have been built-up for the newly arrived IDPs. Both UNHCR and ICRC have contingency plans for up to 30,000 IDPs, including temporary shelter and food/non-food stocks, should a massive influx occur. The preparations include health, water/sanitation, protection, and psycho-social support.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

General Operations

During February and March one of the key issues for the Delegation was the delivery of relief items from the Belgrade Central warehouse to Montenegro. Due to the trade blockade between Serbia and Montenegro, as of 2 February no YRC or Federation trucks gained access into Montenegro.

The YRC was in the process of collecting data from the Branch Beneficiary Questionnaire, which was dispatched to all branches during the month to ascertain the exact number of current beneficiaries under the three categories (refugees, IDPs and Social Cases), with results expected in early May. This will contribute to the YRC and Federation's 2000 planning process.

Relief Programmes

The Federation has placed a priority on supporting and strengthening the YRC's distribution system to enable the smooth delivery and distribution of humanitarian assistance to those most in need. Despite the socio-economic and political crisis in the country, the YRC is the main vehicle for humanitarian assistance, with its extensive distribution system being shared by the majority of agencies operating in the region. By the end of March 2000, the YRC was assisting over one million beneficiaries (representing around one tenth of the population) and handling an average of 20,000 metric tonnes of food and non food items per month for refugees, IDPs and Social Cases. Items are channelled from the Central, Regional and Municipal levels, through its extensive distribution system, consisting of 181 Branches and over 500 distribution points (not including Kosovo). The rate in which the YRC expanded its pipeline system, which in January 1999 handled 2,775 metric tonnes of aid per month, is very impressive, representing a sevenfold increase. While Federation assistance has proved invaluable in supporting the YRC's distribution network with the provision of equipment (vehicles, trucks, forklifts, computers/printers/faxes). Regional and Branch offices and warehouses are still in need of considerable support to manage the warehouses efficiently and ease distributions at the beneficiary level.

The Federation funded relief programmes, aimed at the refugee population, were in full implementation during the period under review. Eight Field Delegates, working out of six Field Offices in Serbia and Montenegro, supported the YRC's extensive distribution system, while monitoring Federation funded relief items.

Relief to Refugee Beneficiaries •

The FR Yugoslavia hosts the highest number of refugees of any country in Europe, and some recent statistical evidence suggest that it is now the poorest nation in Europe. During the reporting period, over half a million refugees were still living in the country. They have little means of supporting themselves and find it difficult to integrate into society, with very low numbers managing to return to their homes in Croatia, or Bosnia and Herzegovina. Many still live in Collective Centres or with friends or relatives in often desperate conditions, with the most vulnerable being reliant on humanitarian aid. Over the past eight years, the YRC and Federation has been one of the few consistent providers of humanitarian assistance for this largely forgotten sector of society.

Breakdown of relief items distributed to beneficiaries in five regions of Serbia: January and February 2000 (Note: due to the trade blockade, no items were distributed in Montenegro).

Items & Monthly Ration	No. of Beneficiaries	Novi Sad	Kraljevo	Kragujevac	Nis	Belgrade	Planned monthly distribution	Total distribution (Jan-Feb)
Oil 1L/mth	125,000	43,254	10,638	16,180	10,408	126,164	125,000 Litres	206,644
Sugar 1kg/mth	125,000	56,714	11,534	19,363	15,604	91,885	125,000 Kgs	195,100
Beans 1 kg/mth	125,000	48,223	12,690	16,444	14,389	88,536	125,000 Kgs	180,282
Meat 550gr/mth	350,000	149,084	64,722	43,744	27,054	245,073	350,000 Packs	529,677
Yeast 77gr/mth	350,000	28,468	0	0	0	89,692	350,000 Packs	118,160
Milk 500gr/mth	350,000	147,331	48,785	34,448	24,406	108,999	350,000 Packs	363,969
Hygiene Parcel 1HP/3mth	225,500	24,817	13,664	10,310	7,167	24,724	77,167 Parcels	80,682
Shoes 1/winter	82,141	10,231	557	2,073	626	2,367	27,380 Pairs	15,854
Jackets 1/winter	81,626	9,695	573	711	417	668	27,208 items	12,064

Food Programmes

Basic Food Programme •

The ongoing ECHO-funded 1999 Basic Food Programme of cooking oil, beans and sugar is aimed at 125,000 most vulnerable refugees and complements the WFP items distributed under the overall basic food assistance programme. During January and February a total of 206,644 metric litres of oil, 195,100 kgs of sugar and 180,282 kgs of beans were distributed to beneficiaries.

Supplementary Food Programme •

The jointly funded and ongoing ECHO and Swedish Red Cross Supplementary Food Programme of canned meat, yeast and milk powder is aimed at 350,000 vulnerable refugees. By the end of February, the following had been distributed: 118,160 packs of yeast, 363,969 packs of milk power, and 529,677 cans of meat.

Hygiene Programmes

Essential Hygiene Parcels •

The ongoing and jointly funded-ECHO, Swedish and German Red Cross Hygiene Parcel Programme is aimed at 225,500 most vulnerable refugees . Under this programme, beneficiaries are entitled to one hygiene parcel every three months. During January and February, a total of 80,682 parcels were distributed at the beneficiary level. Ten Belgrade Branches, however, which were involved in distributing hygiene parcels to Social Cases rather than refugees, were not involved in the distribution of these items during this period.

Baby Parcels and baths •

The German Red Cross funded baby parcel programme, aimed at 8,100 vulnerable refugee mothers with babies of one year old or under) arrived in Belgrade during January, but were pending custom

clearance at the end of February. During March, 2,772 of the parcels were delivered from the Central to Regional level, with the remainder to be delivered in early April.

Winter Programmes

Jackets and Shoes for child refugees •

The British Red Cross funded winter jackets and shoes programme, aimed at vulnerable child refugees of up to 14 years old, has encountered delays due to delivery, custom clearance and distribution constraints. As this is a winterisation programme, every effort is being made to ensure that all items are swiftly delivered down the pipeline system to the beneficiary level. Indeed, the Federation fleet has been used to ensure the fastest possible delivery to the Municipal level, and the Federation Field Offices were ensuring that distributions at the beneficiary level take a high priority.

Underclothes for elderly refugees •

The jointly funded ECHO, Norwegian and German Red Cross underclothes programme is designed to provide 55,369 refugees of 65 years or older, living in private accommodation with no means of support with thermal underwear for the winter. In total, 61,173 sets arrived in FR Yugoslavia, with the final consignment of items being custom cleared by mid-February, with deliveries to the Regional and Municipal levels occurring as quickly as possible, again, with the assistance of the Federation fleet and field offices.

Montenegro Relief •

While the Montenegro Sub-delegation received Federation hygiene parcels and food items in January, between the 2 February and the end of March, no YRC or Federation convoys managed to gain access into Montenegro. However, the Federation, due to diplomatic dialogue, was hopeful that relief deliveries would resume during the first week of April.

Non-relief Programmes

The YRC's Branches are still very much focused on the emergency relief operations in their respective areas of operation. The priority on emergency programmes have resulted in a lack of capacity to run additional programmes (such as non-relief programmes) which are often behind schedule, and several 1999 programmes still being implemented at the Branch level. The Federation has requested extensions on the implementation of some 1999 and 2000 programmes.

Social Welfare Programme (SWP) •

This programme will continue to expand psycho-social support projects designed to meet the needs of vulnerable people and strengthen the YRC's capacity to cope with disasters, by organising a larger network of trained professionals, volunteers and co-workers. It will also strengthen vulnerable persons own coping mechanism, thereby preserving mental health, by running Help Lines, community-based youth, elderly and family clubs, SWP Mobile Teams, Libraries and Cinemas. Psychological support will also be given to Red Cross staff and volunteers to reinforce their own coping mechanisms.

In March, 100,177 social welfare contacts were made with beneficiaries, bringing total contacts made in 2000 to 223,093, almost a 50% achievement rate of the total 2000 contact goals in just a three month period. The need for such assistance has been demonstrated, as well as the YRC's and Federation's ability to meet the growing needs. During March, 11 more YRC Branches, for the first time, formally started implementing SWPs for the most vulnerable, resulting in 135 YRC Branches in total being involved in Social Welfare activities. Furthermore, 1,120 SWP workshops were held for beneficiaries during the month in Serbia and Montenegro.

Kosovo Psycho-Social Programme •

The Kosovo Psycho-Social Programme (PSP) aims to strengthen individual, family and community development by reducing the likelihood of debilitating psychological disorders through the provision of traumatic stress interventions, psychological support and therapeutic social activities. The programme will also be used as a vehicle to develop the Local Red Cross (LRC), with Centres and MOTs integrated

into the branch structures. By the end of 1999 five Centres and four MOTs were established to give psychological support to people most in need.

The PSP programme, supported by the American, Belgian, Japanese and Swedish Red Cross, run just under 2000 PSP sessions to over 1,000 beneficiaries in March alone. The beneficiary ages ranged from 1 to 80 years, with no significant difference in the division of genders receiving the service.

All five MOTs and PSP Centres are fully operational, and planning is underway to expand the PSP to three additional Red Cross Branches in Kosovo, with Branch staff already submitting requests for the PSP MOTs and Centres to operate in their area. The expansion of the operation will involve one more mental health professional and approximately 15 additional staff. During March the MOTs also gave special assistance to the newly arrived IDPs from Serbia.

While the first anniversary of the start of the aerial campaign passed in Kosovo with few incidents, from a PSP perspective the anniversary held mixed emotions for many people. The number of chronically mentally ill and mentally disabled being seen by the PSP continues to increase, which corresponds to the lack of a community based system for mental and disability health services. This issue is being addressed by WHO and the local administration. The PSP teams supplied arts and crafts for the Zvecan Branch's Social Welfare Programme. While clothing was earmarked for distribution in Leposavic, due to the security situation in northern Mitrovica, no items were delivered during March, but it is hoped that distributions will be successful in April.

PSB Beneficiaries (March only)

Region	No. of centre sessions	Total Benef.	Beneficiaries and general comments
Glogovac	477	157	In addition to the MOTs caseload of beneficiaries, they performed case management services and transported several people to Pristina Hospital for neurological testing or psychiatric care. PSP beneficiaries were also encouraged to get involved in the Glogovac Branches' April community clean-up campaign. The ICRC tracing team also made several referrals to the PSP.
Gjakova	303	243	High numbers of people are still missing/unaccounted for in this region. Due to 2 MOT staff members being ill, PSP Centre staff visited beneficiaries in the field. The Centre also needs to expand to another room and gain longer public access hours.
Peja	314	120	The community was nervous during March, with the disappearance & death of 2 people crossing the Kosovo/Montenegro border and the discovery of newly laid mines. More ex-detainees living in villages are in need of assistance by the MOTs, who are also referred to the PSP Centre. The Centre staff are designing sewing groups, which will be implemented with the arrival of sewing machines, while children's art groups are ongoing.
Podujevo	248	181	The PSP Centre during its first month of operation had 40 people coming per day, with very few other providers of PSP assistance in the area. Further sessions for children maybe established soon
Pristina	278	105	Attendance at the Centre has increased, with many beneficiaries becoming regulars, while others come for specific help. The children are especially benefiting from activities. The MOT now receives regular referrals from ICRC and KFOR.
Kamenica/ Giljan	280	280	Due to the new IDP arrivals, 3 MOTs were urgently called to assist people in the area. They provided psycho-social support for 280 people, while also providing childrens' games for those living in the Transit Camp.

			management services and transported several people to Pristina Hospital for neurological testing or psychiatric care. PSP beneficiaries were also encouraged to get involved in the Glogovac Branches' April community clean-up campaign. The ICRC tracing team also made several referrals to the PSP.
Total	1,900	1,086	Beneficiary contacts increased compared to March, with all 5 Centres and MOTs fully active, the PSP programme also responded to needs in the Kamenica/Gijan area, to the recently arrived IDPs from Southern Serbia, and to those in special need remember events a year ago.

Health Education and Preventive Health Programme •

This programme aims to provide support to the YRC's Health Education and Preventative Health Programme, by training Red Cross volunteers, professionals, Branch Secretaries and staff involved in running Red Cross health actions in Serbia. An Aids and Drugs Campaign will also be supported during 2000. In Montenegro, volunteers will be trained in First Aid, the prevention of addictive and contaminated diseases, the preservation of the environment and VBD. Health camps and mass health education campaigns will also target 20,000 people living in Montenegro and support will be given to all health-related branch activities, with a particular focus on first aid training for young people. The YRC, with Federation support, produced promotional materials for World Health Day (7 April) with a focus on blood safety. A campaign for World Health Day/Blood Safety ran from 7 April through to 11 May, with the latter day marking Volunteer Blood Day (VBD). The YRC promoted its Line of Life School for blood donation. During March the YRC prepared posters, brochures, leaflets, mouse pads, balloons, along with other national materials produced with the WHO and Federation's logo/emblem which were distributed during street performances and other activities during the World Health day. Other materials were also directly produced by the Federation and WHO, including posters, leaflets, pens, TV clips and news distributed through WHO and Federation Delegations and Sub-delegations. In Montenegro preparations were made with representatives from WHO, the Public Health Institute and the MRC concerning organising the joint World's Health Day. The Federation's Sub-delegation and WHO produced 500 posters and 1,000 stickers, 2,000 pencils and 200 folders, using the slogan "Safe Blood Starts with Me", for distribution to participants, with the remainder of pens being donated to volunteers when they give blood. In addition, a Health Campaign Seminar on Prevention of Addiction Diseases was held in Pljevlja Municipality on March 4 in a secondary school. The programme included lectures on alcoholism, drug addiction and smoking.

School Projects

The Kragujevac Red Cross Branch produced 1,000 posters and 25,000 leaflets for children and pre-school children in Kragujevac region focusing on basic dental hygiene messages. The posters and leaflets will be distributed to schools along with 18,000 tooth brushes, donated by the Spanish Red Cross. During March, the YRC also designed the content for the AIDS campaign training and promotional materials aimed at school children and Red Cross volunteers.

Following the first successful "Hand Hygiene" seminar held in February by the Serbian Red Cross, with Federation support, participants disseminated their newly learnt knowledge to elementary school children (between 6 and 11 years old) with basic hand hygiene preventative messages. During March the Serbian Red Cross prepared dissemination materials to be distributed to schools, and planned their second seminar, to be held in the Belgrade Region. The YRC has highlighted this innovative project as a priority for Federation funding, underlying the importance of basic hand hygiene in order to reverse the growing trend in the number of elementary children being infected with hand and mouth generated diseases, including hepatitis A and intestinal diseases.

First Aid

Under the 1999 First Aid Programme, 250 Dressing material kits for Red Cross First Aid Teams were customs cleared, with the YRC distribution list almost finalised. Once the distribution list is approved, the kits will be distributed. In addition, 320 First Aid training mannequins, with other training assortments, are due to arrive in Belgrade shortly, and will be distributed to First Aid Training Teams and the YRC's DDP.

Homecare

The Federation Health, Social Welfare and Youth departments in Belgrade worked closely with the Vojvodina Red Cross Branch with the needs assessment for the proposed Home Care project. During March, the Vojvodina Red Cross Branch assessed the numbers of most vulnerable in the region, and the type of assistance a Home Care project could offer, while the various departments in the Federation Delegation held discussions the social welfare, health, youth and relief emphasis for the programme. A draft project proposal should be finalised during April.

Voluntary Blood Donation Programme •

The YRC Voluntary Blood Donation (VBD) Programme aims to introduce additional initiatives during 2000 to attract new VBD and retain existing VBD. It will achieve this aim by using a range of communication methods, targeted towards health workers, mass media representatives and Red Cross volunteers. During March the YRC finalised the promotional and training materials for the Line of Life School of Communication participants and field workers. The materials consist of posters, leaflets, brochures, pens, cups, T-shirts, badges, and key rings aimed at attracting and retaining VBD. Short video clips are also being prepared.

Disaster Preparedness Programme (DPP) •

This programme aims at implementing the YRC's DPP by putting in place resources and mechanisms to be activated when a natural or man-made disaster strikes the country. It will initially focus on the Vojvodina region, which has previously suffered from extensive flooding and is currently at high risk of further flooding, aggravated by the remains of destroyed bridges blocking the normal flow of Danube river's water. In addition, in late 1999 and early 2000, seven municipalities in Vojvodina were affected by underground flooding as a result of heavy rain fall and the lack of a properly maintained drainage system. According to preliminary assessments, the underground water flooding may reduce the harvest by some 70% this year in Vojvodina, which is the main agricultural production area for the FR Yugoslavia.

A DP assessment was also carried out by a German Red Cross Delegate in the Northern Serbian Province of Vojvodina, whereby extensive field visits and meetings with all relevant institutions involved in both disaster prevention and disaster response were held. This proved to be extremely useful, with an outline Contingency Plan for Emergency Response being produced during the mission. Based on the suggestions from the Outline of a Contingency Plan for Emergency response, the Federation, supported by the Swedish Red Cross, is in the process of procuring equipment for field teams. The next step will involve extensive training programmes to ensure that all team members can respond to emergency situations in a co-ordinated, fast and effective manner. In addition, with the ICRC's support, the YRC is expanding its radio-communication network, an essential DPP component. Victims of January's underground floods in 5 municipalities in Vojvodina) received a total of 1,044 blankets, 570 mattresses and 284 cooking sets from the Federation's newly acquired Federation DP emergency stocks. However further supplies are required and it is hoped that they will be transferred from the Federation stocks in Albania during April.

Youth Development Programme •

The YRC's Youth Development Programme aims at strengthening the position of the Youth Department to enable it to become one of the National Society's priority programmes. It envisages the creation of a Youth Strategy, recruitment policy and development of core youth programme activities.

While Red Cross Youth activities (play schools, dissemination quiz competition, gathering of youth field units) were ongoing during March at the Branch level, a more structured YRC approach to this activity remains to be put in place. The YRC has accepted the Federation Budapest Regional Delegation's offer to run a Youth Self-assessment Workshop (tentatively scheduled for the spring period).

Institutional Development and Implementation of Plan of Action •

This programme aims to support the YRC in implementing an Institutional Development Plan of Action, with the ultimate challenge of adapting the structures of the National Society in order to strengthen its capacity to respond to needs. This will be provided through training, technical expertise and material inputs particularly in the areas identified by the ID self-analysis conducted by the YRC in 1997.

During the period under review, ongoing office equipment distributions (covered under the Integrated Appeal) were carried out. The majority of equipment was delivered, with the exception of Vojvodina and Montenegro. To date, out of a total quantity of 80 computers with printers and modems, 30 photocopiers, 102 fax machines and 14 scanners, 56 computers, 22 photocopiers, 48 fax machines and 4 scanners were distributed according to the YRC's distribution plan. Furthermore, 15 additional computers and a central server, designated for the YRC Intranet system, were tested by the newly established "National Agency for Computer equipment standardisation" based in Nis during March.

The YRC, with Federation support, is also introducing an upgraded version of the LCRS software in each YRC Municipal Branch. The YRC Computer Teams, consisting of YRC staff members and an external computer specialist, are visiting each Branch and Distribution Centre in order to check the technical details. The first training seminar for 25 participants was held for Computer Operators in Regional Distribution Centres and Red Cross Branch Operators for the Belgrade Region, while the process of branch visits is ongoing in Vojvodina. The whole project is planned to be completed by the end of 2000. Within the computerisation programme, the Federation Sub-Delegation in Montenegro has completed a very comprehensive analysis of all MRC branches (21) computing capacities.

Twelve Red Cross Branches (2 in Montenegro and 10 in Serbia) have been selected by the YRC to benefit from the Swedish Red Cross/SIDA funding to reconstruct and build Red Cross Offices and Warehouses.

Income Generating Projects •

The Income Generating Projects (IGP) aims to bridge the branch funding gap by assisting local Red Cross branches to establish small-scale businesses, which will enable them to increase their independence, provide employment opportunities for refugees and social cases and generate income to fund Red Cross traditional activities.

A new Agreement on IGPs has been annexed to the revised operational Memorandum of Understanding between the YRC and Federation. When the revision process for the MoU is completed, the implementation process for the 19 new projects (from the Integrated Appeal) will commence. The 12 branches which applied for photocopiers within the IGP programme, previously selected as priority projects, received photocopying machines and the first quantities of paper and spare toners as a part of the equipment purchase from the Integrated Appeal. These projects will be further monitored and evaluated.

Promotion of Humanitarian Values\Information and Public Relations (PR) Programme •

This project seeks to support the promotion of Humanitarian Values and the rebuilding of trust within the FR Yugoslavia, the promotion of Red Cross Principles and values and a positive change in the YRC's image in the country, through assistance to the YRC's Information Department and the Humanitarian Bureau. The planning process for the 2000 programmes continued in March. The YRC has expressed an interest to the Federation in running a campaign to improve their image. During March, the Information Delegate and his YRC counterpart attended the Regional Delegation Marketing and Communication Workshop in Sofia where the YRC gave a comprehensive overview of their communication work and exchanged experiences and knowledge with other Societies from the region. The April Information Workshop in Budapest should enable the Federation's Information Department to develop more concrete plans regarding PR training for YRC staff, which is tentatively planned for the September/October period.

Repatriation/Reintegration Support Programme •

The Federation will continue to advocate for voluntary and gradual repatriation and reintegration based on well-informed decision-making by individual refugees during 2000. This will be achieved through the provision of pre-departure information and a counselling service to those refugees planning to repatriate to their country of origin, and to those still considering their options to allow them to make an informed choice about their future.

Political developments in Croatia provide the basis for improved conditions for refugee returns from the FR Yugoslavia to their homes in Croatia. While over half a million refugees remain in the FR Yugoslavia, according to UNHCR as of 13 March, 22,600 refugees in FR Yugoslavia have applied for repatriation to Croatia altogether, of which 8,400 have already returned (4,500 assisted returns, 3,900 spontaneous returns). Of the remaining 14,200, 3,600 have had their applications approved. During the April/May period, the Federation will be conducting an assessment regarding the expansion of the Repatriation Programme, giving additional assistance to refugees returning to Croatia, in both the FR Yugoslavia and Croatia.

A total of 10,000 booklets were produced on *How to Preserve Mental Health*. The 5 booklets were written by psychologists and psychiatrists from the YRC's SWP, with 2,000 of a total of 10,000 sets being distributed through SWP Co-ordinators and active SWP Red Cross Branches at the SWP conference in Kapaonik at the end of March. The booklets will be used as educational materials for SWP workers in their everyday work in clubs for elderly, youth, families, mobile libraries and teams. They will also be distributed to NGOs working in the field of social welfare. In addition, the two Refugee Guidebooks, (20,000 copies each) were being printed during March, for distribution in April, through the Red Cross network, UNHCR and SDR offices. Regular monthly support was also given to the refugee information publications *Odgovor*, *Vrela*, *Sunflower* and *Return*.

Kosovo Institutional Development Programme •

The long-term aim of this programme is to promote a strong and sustainable Red Cross structure within the political realities of Kosovo. It also aims to strengthen the Red Cross' operations capacity, which will enable the Local Red Cross (LRC) to provide humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable people.

In March the Kosovo Sub-delegation held five assessment workshops for the Red Cross of Kosova (RCKA) with a total of 98 participants attending from 24 staff. Three of the workshops were run in Pristina, with the two others being held in Gjilan and Gjakova respectively. The workshops focused on a variety of different topics, primarily serving to form the basis of an Institutional Development Plan and a Plan of Action for 2000 and 2001. A Terms of Reference and possible dates for the proposed Kosovo Methokija Red Cross (KMRC) Assessment Workshops were also discussed with the Secretary General of the KMRC in March. Ten Finnish Red Cross donated vehicles were handed over to the LRC during the same month, and discussions took place regarding a proposed First Aid Programme. Preparations were also made for the LRC's April health and environmental campaigns and clean-up programmes.

Outstanding Needs

Planned programme activities have been carried out this year largely with the availability of carryover funds from 1999. But with the low level of donor support experienced in 2000, the programme will encounter critical funding difficulties unless further cash as well as in-kind support is forthcoming.

External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

During the first quarter the Delegation, Sub-delegations and Field Office staff actively participated in regular interagency co-ordination, sector, and regional co-ordination meetings. A full range of media contacts were maintained, including print, radio, and TV journalists.

Contributions

See Annex 1 for details

Peter Rees-Gildea
Director
Operations Funding and Reporting Department

Bjorn Eder
Director
Europe Department