

ETHIOPIA: BUILDING CAPACITIES TO SERVE THE COMMUNITY

10 August, 2000

appeal no. 01.45/2000

situation report no. 1

period covered: January to June 2000

The Federation has been mainly involved in supporting the ERCS in running the disaster response programme in South Wollo and North Borena. Focus on the emergency programme has reduced the efforts in the Appeal priority areas. Nevertheless, the Federation has supported the capacity building of the National Society particularly in the areas of financial and reporting systems. Strengthening of disaster preparedness capacity has also been a priority and further training in this area will be provided over the next few months

The context

Over the last twenty years, drought and civil war have left Ethiopia with considerable number of economic and social problems. Over half the population live on less than a dollar a day and GNP per capita in 1997 was 110 USD. Eighty percent of the population depend on agriculture but land degradation is causing fuel wood shortage, low agricultural production and declining income in the rural areas. The health situation of women and children has deteriorated markedly over the last decade as a result of lack of funding in the health care system. Only 55% of the new born reach the age of 5. Life expectancy at birth is 43. Between 1990 and 1996, primary school enrolment ratio had fallen to 23% and total adult literacy rate is now 33%.

The success of the government's attempts to improve the general socio-economic situation through its policies of transforming the political and economic system depends, to a great extent, on a conducive external trade environment, economic stability and the sustained support of the international community. However, the recent war with Eritrea has resulted in channelling of scarce resources away from productive sector and services into military spending and a partial freezing of overseas

development aid to the country. Ethiopia has also borne the brunt of successive droughts through the 90s and is again suffering from a serious shortage of rainfall. The Government Disaster Preparedness

and Prevention Commission is soon to release a revised international appeal calling for emergency assistance to 10.5 million people.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

Through its 31 branches, the Ethiopian Red Cross Society (ERCS) runs a number of programmes and provides services to communities around the country. It focuses on health and water and sanitation activities but its Comprehensive Development Programme has a wider remit and is designed around an ambitious range of interventions that aim to tackle a variety of community needs. It also runs an effective Essential Drugs Programme, a number of blood banks and branch ambulance services. The ERCS supported by the Federation is also implementing an emergency relief programme in South Wollo and North Borena. The Federation's main tasks as outlined in its Country Assistance Strategy are to build capacity, support the ERCS in developing more effective programmes and support the ERCS management of emergency relief programmes.

Disaster response (DR) •

Following the failure of rains for the fourth successive season and the resulting drought, the Federation issued a preliminary appeal on 8 April and a full-fledged appeal No. 08/2000 on 4 May. The appeal sought CHF 10.3 million for two operations, one in *South Wollo* to support 77,000 people and one in *North Borena* to support 50,000 people, with a combination of bulk and supplementary food and a range of agricultural, health and water inputs. For details, please refer to the situation report no. 1 to the above-mentioned appeal which was released on 19 June.

The Federation will continue to monitor the drought situation in the country and the impact of the main seasonal rains.

Disaster preparedness (DP) •

The ERCS is planning a series of DP training workshops in the next two months aimed at building the capacity of branches to respond more effectively to disasters. On the job training in relief management has been carried out during the ongoing relief operation.

Health •

The ERCS is active in the areas of community based health, blood, first aid training and HIV/AIDS. The Federation support has been aimed at capacity building at both headquarters and branch level as well as at programme development. The Federation supported the ERCS in identifying their needs particularly in the area of water and sanitation and in monitoring the ongoing programmes within the Comprehensive Development Programme (CDP) and other projects.

Humanitarian values •

In co-operation with the ERCS and the ICRC, the Federation has promoted and reinforced a positive image of the Red Cross through information and dissemination particularly about its ongoing emergency programme. The Federation has introduced the "Local Capacities for Peace" project and is now testing new practices in the field.

Outstanding needs

Additional support is required for the ERCS Comprehensive Development Programme. Contributions may be made directly to the ERCS or through the Federation.

External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

The delegation is maintaining good contacts with the UN and both national and international NGOs. A regular liaison is also established with the Headquarters of the Organisation for African Unity in Addis Ababa.

Contributions

See Annex 1 for details.

Peter Rees-Gildea
Director
Operations Funding and Reporting Department

Bekele Geleta
Director
Africa Department

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