

# ***KENYA: BUILDING CAPACITIES TO SERVE THE COMMUNITY***

*7 August 2000*

*appeal no. 01.46/2000*

*situation report no. 1/2000*

*period covered: 1 January - 30 June 2000*

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*Although serious institutional problems in the Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) resulted in poor response of donors, the Federation is determined to continue with the activities identified in the Country Assistance Strategy since further improvements in that respect are regarded as one of the most important tools needed for re-kindling the interest of donors.*

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## ***The context***

In 1998, the Kenya Red Cross Society made a bold decision to go through a self evaluation exercise after many years of what the National Society itself called a declining performance and inevitable and corresponding decline in donor interest. At the end of this introspection exercise involving all stakeholders, the National Society came up with a three year Strategic Plan (1999 - 2001) to transform itself into a "well functioning society". The target areas were :

- The National Society's statutes in order to allow for regular changes in the leadership;
- Management, in which a complete overhaul thereof was agreed upon and complimented by the development of administrative systems for the effective management of the National Society and in particular, financial management;
- Programme development, in which a decision was taken to decentralise programme management by establishing Regional Co-ordination centres as well as adopting a more integrated approach in respect of programme design to facilitate greater impact on target communities;
- Resource development, in which a commitment was made to increase the National Society's own local resource base thereby decreasing dependency on external assistance.

**Country Assistance Strategy**

To this effect, a country assistance strategy for the KRCS was developed in 1999 in which the main thrust of the assistance would be the facilitation of the change process to make the National Society able to address the needs of the most vulnerable in the four of the five core areas as outlined in the Federation's Strategy 2010.

### **Appeal 2000**

Sequel to the development of the country assistance strategy, an appeal was launched for the necessary financial and material support. However, as at the end of the period under review, the response to the appeal is not very strong. Notwithstanding the present level of response, the Federation continued to support the National Society to overcome some of its problems which in part have contributed to a lack of response by the donors.

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

### **Capacity building •**

The main broad goal of the National Society as spelt out its Strategic Plan 1999 - 2001 is to transform itself into a well functioning National Society. It will be recalled from the appeal that the main focus for both the KRCS and the Federation would be on leadership, organisation, programme and resource development. Indeed, the National Society has a long way to go before the realisation of its goal. However, with support from the Federation, some strides have been made in this direction.

#### *Leadership*

The Constitutional Review process was successfully completed, it resulted in the adoption of a revised Constitution at the National Society's Annual General Assembly at the end of May. The new Constitution immediately ushered in a new leadership. Federation focus for the latter half of the year is to coach and strengthen the new leadership.

#### *Organisation*

In the area of organisational development, the focus is on the development of administrative systems for the effective management of the National Society. Having successfully persuaded the National Society to establish a Management Committee during the fourth quarter of 1999, the Federation went onto to lobby for the establishment of the "Tender Committee", again to facilitate collective decision making in the sensitive area of procurement. Both Committees have since been functioning well.

The initial step towards computerisation of the KRCS Accounts Department was launched at the beginning of the year. It took the form of training in computers for the staff whereby a number of the departmental staff were enrolled and have since been attending a computer course specifically designed for accounting staff. This was made possible with financial support from the ICRC. At the administrative level, the process of developing the first draft of what will become the National Society's Financial Regulations was going satisfactorily until it was disrupted by pressure to get the USAID funded programme books in order in preparation for the closure of their programmes by 30 June. Later, the tensions and upheavals that the Society went through in the run up to the Annual General Assembly simply meant that many a routine chore had to be deferred to a later stage.

By the beginning of the year, the Regional Offices of the KRCS were fully operational. However, as a result of the tensions within the National Society during the greater part of the period under review, there was little follow up of the incumbents in their respective offices. As the "dust slowly settles down" the follow up of the incumbents is a top priority for the Federation support.

#### *Programme Development*

The idea of a more integrated approach to programme development had been accepted in principle, as far back as the last quarter of 1999. However, due to pressure to successfully close down the USAID funded programmes by the end of June as well as the tensions within the National Society in the run up

to the Annual General Assembly, there was little progress in this respect. However, the decision to close down the Community Counselling Centre was part of the move towards the streamlining of activities. This is going to be followed up during the latter half of the year.

#### *Resource Development*

The only activity was the dinner gala organised to coincide with the World Red Cross Day. While the National Society is at the best going to break even, this was the first time they had ever organised such an event and the experience was all worthwhile. An annual Golf Tournament was cancelled at the last minute because of lack of support. This is not surprising given that the image of the National Society vis-a-vis the public was fairly low during the period under review. Unfortunately for the National Society, over the years, fund-raising had always been done almost single-handedly, by one of the Board members who resigned in protest against the disruptions during the Annual General Assembly. The gap left is clearly worrying and this is an area in which the National Society is going to need a lot of support in the months ahead and especially, given the near state of bankruptcy.

#### **Disaster response •**

In response to the enormous food security problems plaguing Kenya after successive years of drought, the Federation and KRCS were asked by the Kenya Office of the President to provide emergency assistance to approximately 93,750 beneficiaries in Machakos district through WFP-supported food and seed distribution. Negotiations on the modalities of the anticipated disaster response operation are well underway with both the Government of Kenya and World Food Programme.

#### **Disaster Preparedness •**

Due to the lack of funding there were no activities at all in this area.

#### **Health •**

There were no activities in this area under the National Society's mainstream Primary Health Care programme (PHC). The lack of funding for this programme resulted in closing down the PHC co-ordination office at national headquarters at the end of April.

At the same time, a decision was made to close down the (HIV/AIDS) Community Counselling Centre. This is a non-funded programme and against its results and the workload, the Federation advised the National Society to close down this centre. However, this decision was not implemented by the new leadership.

The Kisumu (HIV/AIDS) Home Based Care project continued albeit, on a very small scale. The level of activities is the direct result of a temporary suspension of funding by the Norwegian Red Cross due to the KRCS headquarters management practices. However, they would like to see the project continue and would resume funding it, provided the funds go directly to Kisumu.

Water and sanitation projects continue in Lockichokio and Laikipia with funding from the ICRC. They are implemented by the Swedish and American Red Cross Societies under a project delegation arrangement. The ICRC directly manages these projects hence there were no problems characterising most of the National Society's externally funded activities.

#### **Promotion of Humanitarian Values •**

The National Society continues with activities funded by the ICRC. The Federation facilitates the implementation of the programme through efficient and effective programme officers.

#### **The Bomb Blast Programme •**

The Federation reluctantly took the decision to hand back to USAID the post bomb blast rehabilitation programmes, namely, Crisis Mental Health and Educational Support. This decision is based on the fact that despite management and technical support, there were no results coming from the National Society. In order not to tarnish the image of the Federation vis-a-vis USAID, it was best to pull out

before the relationship with the donor was damaged beyond repair. The closure of the programmes was scheduled for the end of June. However, the agencies supposed to take over were not ready to do so as at the end of June. Therefore, both programmes will go on until the end of August.

## *Outstanding needs*

In view of the fact that the causes of donor fatigue against the National Society have yet to be addressed and due to recent problems and changes within the National Society, it is unlikely that most of the planned activities will be carried out. It is of the utmost importance, however, that the National Society rehabilitation work started by the Federation continues as it would open a door for the support to other outstanding needs. The priority now lies in the area of Management Support and Co-ordination Programme (PKE520), the Finance Development Programme (PKE004) as well as in the Governance training workshops within the Institutional Development Programme (PKE001).

## *Contributions*

See Annex 1 for details.

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