

SOUTH EAST ASIA: BUILDING CAPACITIES

24 October 2000

*appeal no. 01.58/00
situation report no. 1
period covered: 1 January - 30 June 2000*

During the first half of the year, efforts were devoted to the relocation of the Regional Delegation to Bangkok which has been successfully achieved. Negotiations on a full status agreement with the Thai authorities have commenced and relations with other organisations promoted. A partnership meeting was held in May 2000 for all National Societies in the region which has resulted in fruitful exchanges of expertise and visits between Societies. There was also substantial progress in the health and capacity building programmes.

The context

South East Asia continues to recover slowly from the financial crisis of 1997 - 98. Political change in Indonesia has led to sporadic violence in a number of different locations in the country. The taking of hostages, involving separatist forces on the Philippine island of Mindanao, has also pulled Malaysia into this crisis, following the abduction of tourists by Mindanao separatists.

In East Timor, peace but by no means prosperity, has been restored and the Movement now faces the challenge of helping to build a new independent National Society.

Natural disasters continue to plague the region. Earthquakes in Indonesia, flooding in Vietnam and landslides in the Philippines have struck with the onset of the monsoon season.

The Regional Delegation which has recently moved to Bangkok, seeks to provide services and technical support to the ten National Societies in the region as well as to delegations in South East Asia.

Latest events

In May and June 2000, there were two large earthquakes in Indonesia. The first occurred in central Sulawesi province and the second in Bengkulu province on the island of Sumatra. In each case, the Federation launched an appeal to assist those affected. In May, a partnership meeting for National Societies in the region was held in Bangkok. Most key donor Societies also attended this meeting which focused on the implementation of Strategy 2010 in the region.

During the first six months of the year, efforts were concentrated on the move of the Regional Delegation from Kuala Lumpur to Bangkok. At the end of June the Regional Delegation opened in Bangkok and a head of delegation was appointed. The regional finance unit will, however, continue to operate out of Kuala Lumpur.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

Disaster Response

In June, the Regional Delegation participated in the emergency assessment which took place in Sumatra to assess damage and needs following the earthquake in Indonesia.

Disaster Preparedness

This programme has been on hold in view of the need to identify a disaster preparedness delegate. A delegate has now been selected and will be placed as of November 2000 which will facilitate the development of a more integrated approach to disaster preparedness in the region.

Health

Human Capacity Building Programme

The programme, the goal of which is assist to National Societies in the region (Southeast and East Asia) to develop competent health managers, finalised the curriculum for a tailor-made health management course with AusAID and the Australian Red Cross. The course will cover public health issues at regional and national levels, programme development and management concepts and tools, as well as humanitarian values. This will be organised in partnership with the ASEAN Institute for Health Development (Mahidol University), with the participation of resource persons from the Movement, the UN system and other partner institutions.

Over the period, the programme published a compilation of 100 short health courses available in the region and other parts of the world. The "Training Opportunities" brochure also includes a section providing basic information on obtaining scholarships with a directory of organisations and foundations supporting post graduate studies, as well as a directory of 50 learning institutions offering short, certificate and degree courses in different health disciplines. The second issue of the Regional Health Newsletter was published, covering first aid, water and sanitation, blood, capacity building and health trends. These publications were shared with all National Societies in the region, key partners of the UN system, international organisations, universities and NGOs operating in the field of health.

The programme, in collaboration with the regional health unit, updated implementation guidelines for the scholarship, on-the-job training, and human resource database support. These guidelines will be finalised jointly with National Societies through a regional meeting in October 2000 in Singapore.

Community-Based First Aid

During the period, a preliminary report on the 4th Asian first aid workshop held in Myanmar in December 1999 was prepared and circulated to all National Societies in Southeast, East and South Asia to begin implementation of key recommendations, which include the development of guidelines and key indicators for monitoring and evaluation. The regional working committee for the standardisation of first aid programmes was tasked with the drafting of a progress report on the harmonisation process.

Regional Health Information System and Disease Surveillance

The regional health unit has systematically gathered relevant information on outbreaks of disease, disasters and key humanitarian issues, such as migration and population movements, ageing populations, from WHO, UNAIDS, UNDP, IOM, UNHCR from the world-wide web. This information was analysed and shared with National Societies concerned to assist them in making better decisions and developing initiatives on the basis of sound information. During the reporting period, no major outbreaks of disease were recorded, other than the permanent health threats in the region - HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis.

Migration Seminar

In March, the Federation and the Thai Red Cross organised a regional seminar on population movements and migration for National Societies in Southeast and East Asia in response to calls for joint, thorough discussions and concerted action. Through inputs of 12 resource persons from the IOM, UNHCR, ICRC, the United Nations' Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), ILO, the Asian Research Center for Migration, World Vision, Care and Family Health International, the seminar covered migration trends, existing conventions and treaties, undocumented migration, human trafficking, health and welfare problems of migrants and displaced populations. The seminar also identified actions which could be undertaken at national, bilateral or regional levels, ranging from expansion of existing programmes in health and social welfare, tracing, first aid to life skills training.

Mongolia

At the request of the Society, an assessment of the Mongolian Red Cross Society's (MRCS) health programmes was carried out in March by the regional health delegate and a resource person from Hong Kong Red Cross. Federation policy papers dealing with health, blood, first aid, social welfare, and essential drugs were reviewed, and draft documents were prepared with the involvement of heads of MRCS departments for discussions with the governing board. These policies will be the basis for the strategic planning process in health.

HIV/AIDS and Reproductive Health

The Asian Red Cross/Red Crescent Task Force on AIDS (ART) met in Myanmar in April 2000 where 14 representatives of member National Societies, the regional health unit, and the regional manager of the Australian Red Cross's sub-regional AIDS network (ARCSAN) discussed updates of country programmes. Other topics of discussion were the potential partnership with UNDCP for the incorporation of a drug-abuse prevention education component in the National Societies' youth peer education programmes (YPEPs), as well as skills mapping and use of regional expertise. The ART meeting also covered gender, discrimination and transnational border issues and drafted principles governing RC/RC interventions on HIV/AIDS in the region.

The programme also conducted an internal evaluation of the 'Anti-Discrimination Images' regional poster competition which was held in conjunction with the 5th International Conference on AIDS in

Asia Pacific (ICAAP) in Malaysia, October 1999. The evaluation indicated that the initiative was “very useful in encouraging discussion on discrimination within the National Societies, with government agencies, NGOs, among people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHAs) and the general public”. The results of the evaluation will be basis for the development of guidelines for the regional comic competition and another advocacy campaign addressing discrimination issues which will be conducted in 2001.

Promotion of Humanitarian Values

The year’s first issue of the Asia Pacific Focus was published and distributed. The theme for this issue was migration in Asia. Various aspects of migration and Red Cross/Red Crescent involvement were extensively covered.

An issue of Insight, dealing with the floods in China, was produced and distributed to donors, governments, NGOs and National Societies. This publication was produced in co-operation with the regional office in Beijing and has been translated into mandarin for Chinese audiences.

The regional information delegate travelled to the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) towards the end of February to collect material for an Insight edition on the Federation operation in the DPRK. It is expected that this issue of Insight will form part of an extensive communications project designed to assist with raising funds for the operation in the DPRK.

The regional website was re-designed during the reporting period and is now on line; the site is more user-friendly and easier to navigate.

Pacific Regional Communications and Fund-raising Training Workshop

The information unit organised and provided extensive technical support to the communications and fund-raising training workshop for the National Societies in the Pacific, held in Nadi, Fiji, 25-29 March.

The main outcome of the workshop was the creation of a two-year regional plan of action for communications and fund-raising. Implementation of the plan between April and June was examined during the Pacific partnership meeting in Rarotonga, Cook Islands, in July.

Capacity Building

The regional partnership meeting held in Bangkok in May allowed all National Societies in the region to present their programmes and review their planning for the next few years. The meeting was also used to promote an exchange of expertise between regional National Societies. This has resulted in a number of staff exchanges and visits. In addition, the meeting resulted in substantial progress in assisting the Lao Red Cross to develop a coherent assistance strategy, inclusive of all major donors, for the year 2001. Further work on this strategy will continue throughout the latter half of the year.

Cambodian Red Cross Society

A strategic planning workshop for Cambodian Red Cross Society (CRC) staff was facilitated by the regional ID delegate between 15 and 17 February for 48 participants, including representation from each provincial branch. A Cambodian ICRC staff member also took part and all the donor National Societies were represented. The participants’ evaluations rated the workshop highly. There was a sense of ownership of this planning process which is seen as an improvement over previous planning methods.

Lao Red Cross

The regional ID delegate visited Lao PDR in early May to assist the Lao Red Cross (LRC) prepare its presentation for the partnership meeting in Bangkok later in the month, and also to support the Federation liaison officer.

After lengthy discussion, it was proposed to continue the LRC strategic planning process begun in February 1999 which had been abandoned in favour an integrated annual plan which was not achieved. A workshop was scheduled for late August with the participation of all branches and selected headquarters staff. The workshop is to be conducted in Lao PDR, using facilitators from within the National Society. The PNS are to be invited as observers.

The purpose is to identify goals and priority objectives to guide the LRC for the next 5 years. After the workshop, a small working group is to produce a full document according to a structure to be agreed. Once finalised and approved by LRC, this document will be produced in Lao and widely disseminated. It will then be translated into English for distribution to the international community.

Myanmar Red Cross Society

The regional ID delegate and a Swedish Red Cross representative participated in a review in January supported by the Japanese Red Cross to establish areas where assistance could be prioritised. It was ascertained that the impact of the Federation supported workshops since 1996 was questionable. However, the results of CBFA training were positive.

The new leadership of MRCS expressed an interest in addressing some identified priority issues and making some changes/improvements in three areas: resource development (to create the means to cover administrative costs and service activities), a reorganised structure (increased independence and differentiation between governance and management), and revision of the MRCS Constitution.

Philippines National Red Cross

The institutional development delegate represented the Federation at a two day co-operation workshop organised in June by the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC) and the ICRC, the purpose of which was “to develop an open and enduring dialogue among all partners of the Movement interested in co-operating with PNRC and to identify a framework to which all partners can refer when establishing co-operation ventures with PNRC within the general guidelines of the Seville Agreement and the Federation’s Strategy 2010”. Overall, the workshop was considered successful, particularly because of the exchanges of view and the clear desire of participants to make co-operation and partnership work better in the Philippines, with the PNRC leading the process.

The ID delegate conducted an institutional development workshop for the board and senior executives in June and also assisted with PNRC’s strategic planning process. Participants’ final evaluations showed that their expectations of the workshop had generally been met. The clear delineation of governance and management roles and functions had been the most useful learning point.

Regional delegate recruitment programme

Since the first Red Cross Basic Training Course organised by the regional delegation in November 1999 in Singapore, a number of potential delegates recommended during the course took up positions as Federation delegates.

Outstanding needs

The move from Kuala Lumpur to Bangkok has resulted in some regionally hired staff leaving the delegation. Several posts need to be filled in Bangkok. It is hoped that by the end of the third quarter all staff will be in place to bring the delegation to full strength.

External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

In Bangkok, much time as been spent negotiating with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on an agreement to define the Federation's status in Thailand. An agreement was finalised in July 2000 which grants international organisation status to the Regional Delegation. However, discussions have commenced with a view to establishing a full status agreement. The Federation was represented at the annual meeting of the Asia Development Bank (ADB), held this year in Thailand. Stemming from the contacts made at this meeting, plans are now in hand to develop links between the Federation and the ADB in the region. Contacts with the World Bank in Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam have been reinforced with a view to developing a more coherent regional strategy.

Finally, contact has been made with the Ericsson communications company in the region to seek practical ways of following up on a global agreement for co-operation recently drawn up between Ericsson and the Federation.

Contributions

See Annex 1 for details.

Conclusion

Slow economic recovery, continued, sporadic political uncertainty and high exposure to natural disasters will continue to dominate the aid environment of South East Asia. With the relocation of the Regional Delegation from Kuala Lumpur to Bangkok successfully achieved, the second half of 2000 will see a substantial increase in activity, particularly since the delegation seeks to pilot new initiatives associated with the reshaping of the Federation in order to seek improved implementation of Strategy 2010.

Peter Rees-Gildea
Director
Operations Funding and
Reporting Department

Hiroshi Higashiura
Director
Asia & Pacific Department

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

South East Asia						ANNEX 1
APPEAL No. 01.58/2000		PLEDGES RECEIVED			10/24/00	
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
CASH						
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				2,530,000		TOTAL COVERAGE 98.7%
Balance carried forward from 1999				522,541		
FEDERATION BUDGET				617,727	01/01/00	
AUSTRALIA GOVT		124,731	AUD	122,062	20.06.00	HEALTH MGT COURSE
AUSTRALIAN GOVT/RC		12,200	AUD	11,804	04.07.00	PROGRAMME ASSISTANT SUPPORT TO ART
AUSTRALIAN GOVT/RC		1,482	AUD	1,434	30.04.00	AIR TICKET FOR REPR. OF CHINA RC
BRITISH - RC		40,000	GBP	100,000	09/12/99	SOUTH EAST ASIAN COUNTRIES
HONG KONG - RC		16,083	USD	25,572	19.01.00	WEBSITE OPERATING COSTS 99
JAPANESE - RC				324,625	29.08.00	HEALTH, INFORMATION PROGRAM
NORWAY - RC		500,000	NOK	96,599	03/27/00	ART AIDS
SWEDISH - GOVT/RC		250,000	SEK	47,400	30.05.00	INFORMATION
SWEDISH - GOVT/RC		1,400,000	SEK	265,440	30.05.00	HEALTH
SWEDISH - GOVT/RC		400,000	SEK	75,840	30.05.00	INSTITUTIONAL DEPARTMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				2,211,044	CHF	87.4%
KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SWEDISH - GOVT/RC		350,000	SEK	66,360	30.05.00	HOD (3 MONTHS)
Austria	Delegate(s)			60,123		
Iceland	Delegate(s)			60,123		
Great Britain	Delegate(s)			100,205		
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				286,811	CHF	11.3%
ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				0	CHF	
THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS ARE LINKED TO THIS APPEAL:						
P51900, P51901, P51902, P51905, P51160						