

PACIFIC: REGIONAL PROGRAMMES: CAPACITY BUILDING

11 September 2000

appeal no. 01.60/2000

situation report no. 1

period covered: 1 January - 31 July 2000

Much progress was experienced in the Pacific region over the first semester of the year. The National Societies of Fiji and the Solomon Islands rose to the challenge posed by the political crises in their countries, and provided exemplary, impartial assistance to both hostages and those affected by displacement, thereby raising their profile. National Societies in the region have moved forward in the preparation of plans for disaster preparedness and response and have worked in collaboration with the Regional Delegation on the preparation of programme plans. Much remains to be achieved, particularly in the field of capacity-building, and in those National Societies in which governance issues continue to pose problems.

The context

There are ten National Societies in the Pacific Region: Australia, Fiji, Kiribati, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Palau, the Solomon Islands, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu, and four National Societies in formation – the Cook Islands, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia and Tuvalu. With the exception of the National Societies of Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and PNG, the other ten National Societies have fewer than five employees each.

These Societies cover an exceptionally large geographic region from high snow-covered mountains, jungle and flood plains to coral atolls - an area which is prone to many different types of disasters. These disasters range from flooding, cyclones, tsunamis, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, landslides, and there is also the menace of the greenhouse effect which could impact on the low lying coral atolls. Furthermore, in the last year, the region has experienced droughts of longer duration and in areas which are not usually affected.

The majority of the National Societies run disaster preparedness (DP) and relief services, and blood donor, youth and first aid activities. Others have started programmes in community health, HIV/AIDS education and work with the disabled. The Hanoi regional meeting and the sub regional Nadi meeting in 1998 established a background against which they have determined their own medium term objectives.

The three priorities set by the National Societies reflect their state of development and the country and regional contexts. Their first priority is to address their internal weaknesses and develop their organisational capacity. This will include the development of improved systems and structures, but also the skills and capacity to tap into new sources of funding.

The second priority is to develop more effective Disaster Preparedness and Response capacity, because of the region's vulnerability to natural disasters and the importance of establishing the Red Cross as a key player in this area.

The third priority is for National Societies to provide more effective health services to communities and to the most vulnerable. The development of new community-based health programmes with a focus on health education is seen as a way forward to this goal.

The Federation has built its assistance strategy around these three main priority needs. Since all require external funding, the Regional Delegation, besides providing technical advice and assistance, is concentrating on developing long term partnerships and obtaining funding for the benefit of National Societies in the region through advocacy and networking with other organisations. In the long term, this should lead to a closer regional identity amongst National Societies and create an environment in which Societies are able to cover their core costs from local or regional sources.

Latest events

Ethnic violence, which until recently had occurred in Papua New Guinea only, also broke out in the Solomon Islands in April 1999 and is still on-going in spite of a ceasefire agreement. During the reporting period there have been political changes in a number of countries in the region. On 19 May 2000, the elected Government of Fiji was overthrown by members of the Counter Revolutionary Warfare Unit, of Fiji Military Forces and civilians. The entire Coalition Government led by the Prime Minister, an Indo-Fijian, were taken hostage. Most of them were held hostage for 56 days before they were released. During this period of intense political crisis in Fiji, the President stepped aside for the military to take over on 29 May 2000, when law and order had totally broken down in Suva.

After a period of almost 2 months, the Muanikau Agreement was signed, according to which the military relinquished executive power in the country and the Great Council of Chiefs appointed a New President and Vice President, both of whom were acceptable to the rebels.

Eventually the President and interim Government, which will run the country for 3 years with the mandate to prepare a new Constitution which is more acceptable to Fijians, were appointed. The coup leaders and hostage takers were arrested and are presently being charged with treason.

During the hostage crisis, the Fiji Red Cross played a key role since, on a daily basis, its Director General was the only person allowed to deliver humanitarian assistance to the hostages. This included Red Cross family messages, medicines, mattresses, blankets, changes of clothes and other personal items. The Society reinforced its image and credibility

as a strong, neutral and independent Society. The ICRC maintained a presence in the country throughout the crisis and is in the process of establishing a permanent Delegation in the country.

Two weeks after the coup in Fiji, similar events took place in Honiara in Solomon Islands, where the elected Prime Minister was put under house arrest and forced to resign by the Malaitan Eagle Force. This led to open fighting between the Malaitan Eagle Force and Guadalcanal Resistance Army. Several people from both sides were killed in the fighting, and although a number of ceasefire agreements have been signed, these have not been respected. The Solomon Islands Red Cross continues to provide assistance to both warring parties. ICRC has re-established its presence in the country with the placing of four Delegates and is working with the National Society to address the needs of the most vulnerable.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

Regional Programmes

Disaster Preparedness Programme •

The objectives of this programme are to assist National Societies in their efforts to respond more effectively when emergencies occur, as well as to help them to draw up disaster plans which should form part of their Governments' national disaster plans, and to train their volunteers.

During the reporting period, there were no serious natural disasters in the region. On the other hand, coups took place in Fiji and the Solomon Islands. The two National Societies succeeded in providing a response that was both prompt and impartial which has enhanced the image and credibility of the Red Cross.

The Delegation recruited a Delegate in disaster preparedness from the Japanese Red Cross in early April. The Delegate is presently assisting the Fiji and Samoa Red Cross to update their DP Plans, and is working with the Tonga and Tuvalu Red Cross to develop DP Plans. In addition the Delegate is working to adapt and reprint the Fiji Red Cross "DP Snakes and Ladders" game for the region.

Disaster Preparedness Container Programme •

This programme which seeks to provide containers of DP stocks which may easily be transported to the site of a disaster, has been funded by the Japanese Red Cross (JRC) since 1987. To date, a total of 37 containers have been bought and given to Societies in this region. In March 1999, a review of the programme was undertaken by the JRC and the Regional Delegation Suva, and conclusions showed that this programme has enhanced the capacities of National Societies to respond and has also raised their profile.

As a result, the Japanese Red Cross extended the programme for 3 years, 1999-2001, whereby JRC funds the procurement of new containers, the repair and maintenance of old containers, the procurement of relief supplies, a training course on the DP Containers, together with a computer for each Society in the region. In 2000, the Tonga Red Cross received 2 full containers, Micronesia 1 full container, the Solomon Islands and Fiji Red Cross were each provided with relief supplies for one container, whilst Samoa, Micronesia and Kiribati were provided with funds to repair and maintain their containers.

Health Programme •

During the reporting period, the Regional Health Delegate drafted the proposal for a Community Based Self Reliance Workshop for Fiji and Vanuatu Red Cross funded by New

Zealand Red Cross, and assisted with the planning of the First Aid Instructors' course for the Tonga Red Cross.

The Health Delegate also undertook technical visits to the Kiribati Red Cross which in May started the puppet theatre which functions as a dissemination tool in the field of community-based health. She also visited the National Societies of Palau, Micronesia and Vanuatu and worked as a team member for the review of the Red Cross programme in Bougainville, PNG.

In addition, the Health Delegate wrote the terms of reference for the psychologist who visited the Solomon Islands Red Cross to debrief with the National Headquarters staff. She also arranged debriefings for the Fiji Red Cross staff. The Health Delegate has been working on the printing of the Pacific Region First Aid Manual and has finalised the text for the manual on first aid in the community for Red Cross volunteer trainees in the Pacific.

Institutional and Resource Development Programme •

The Institutional Development Delegate seconded by the Australian Red Cross started her mission at the end of March, while the Resource Development Delegate began her mission in early May 2000. Unfortunately, the Resource Development Delegate was recalled by her National Society after being in her position for just 5 weeks, due to the coup and political crisis in Fiji. Prior to her departure, the Resource Development Delegate, with the support of the Institutional Development Delegate, developed an assessment questionnaire sent to all National Societies based on the characteristics of a well-functioning National Society. The assessment questionnaire sent out in May 2000 has been completed by all National Societies and is currently being analysed to identify in which areas each Society needs help from the Regional Delegation.

Both Delegates participated in the Communications and Fund-raising Workshop for Pacific National Societies organised by the Regional Delegation between 25 and 29 March 2000, and this provided them with the opportunity to meet the leadership in all Pacific National Societies. The workshop benefited from the technical support of the Regional Information Delegate, the Information Officer based in Kuala Lumpur and Directors of Public Affairs and First Aid, Health and Safety Services of the Australian Red Cross. Two members from each National Society and Regional Delegation staff participated in the workshop.

The Institutional Development Delegate undertook technical missions to Tonga and Tuvalu Red Cross during the period under review. In Tuvalu she assisted the National Society to write its programme and country assistance strategy for 2001.

A significant development over the semester has been the collaboration between the Regional Delegation and the National Societies in the drawing up of country profiles and the preparation of detailed programme proposals for the year 2001.

National Society Activities •

Cook Islands •

The Cook Islands Red Cross continued to run its First Aid training activities for the general public and schools through out the period under review. The Society held its Annual General Meeting in March, where its audited accounts for 1999 were presented. The Society hosted the Communications and Fund-raising workshop organised by the Regional Delegation.

The Society revised its National Disaster Plan in March 2000 with the involvement of all relevant Government Ministries. The issue of recognition of the National Society remains

unresolved, although the ICRC has achieved a breakthrough with the New Zealand government towards the signature of the additional protocols by the government of the Cook Islands. Presently, the ICRC is working with the legal department of both the New Zealand and Cook Islands governments, and it is expected that this issue will be finalised before the end of 2000.

Since January the National Society has been fully engaged in preparing for the Pacific Programme and Planning Meeting, prior to it being relocated to Fiji and eventually postponed.

Finally, the Society has been allocated a small piece of land by the government to build its new Headquarters. The Cook Islands Red Cross is now in the process of developing plans before seeking financial help to build the new Headquarters.

Fiji •

During the period under review, the Fiji Red Cross faced the biggest challenge in its history, through which it reinforced its profile and brought credit to the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement as a whole, as a result of the key role it played during the hostage crisis. The Fiji Red Cross had a 24 hour standby team composed of its staff and volunteers and were called upon several times to respond to victims of the clashes between the hostage takers and the Fiji military forces outside the Parliamentary complex. The Society was respected by both the government and hostage takers. On several occasions, the Fiji Red Cross First Aid team was called upon by both parties to take wounded persons to the hospital. When the hostage takers were arrested and detained at an island, the Fiji Red Cross was again the first humanitarian organisations allowed to visit the detainees. At a later stage, the ICRC took over the visiting of the detainees from Fiji Red Cross.

The political crises in Fiji saw a number of houses in the rural areas being set on fire. As a result, hundreds of Indo-Fijian people were forced out of their homes and became displaced. The Fiji Red Cross was called upon to assist some of the most affected families. The Society was able to carry out an assessment and is now providing family packs to numerous displaced families in and around Suva.

During the three months of the political crisis in Fiji, the Fiji Red Cross allocated almost all its human, material and financial resources to respond to the situation, at the expense of other programmes of the Society. Major fund-raising activities like the door knock appeal and the Red Cross Ball had to be postponed. Nevertheless, as a result of its prominent role, the Society has gained tremendous publicity and credit, together with the respect of Fijian citizens and foreign residents living in the country.

Between 7th and 15th February, the Society organised a Community Based Self Reliance workshop, which was followed by 20 participants, of whom 13 were women, from both Headquarters and the branches. Participants included members of youth groups, mothers' groups, village heads and other community representatives. The contents of the workshop included disaster preparedness, community health and the role of the communities and Red Cross branches.

In March, the Society participated in the Regional Communications and Fund-raising workshop. In early April, the Society signed a co-operation agreement with Courts Ltd, a company with its Headquarters in the United Kingdom, celebrating its 150th anniversary. Courts have a chain of retail shops all over Fiji and the agreement includes the sales of Fiji Red Cross first aid bags at all Courts shops, the funding of a swimming pool in Lautoka, the funding of a water safety programme and promotion of the blood programmes.

During the week prior to the World Health Day, the Fiji Red Cross organised various media campaigns throughout the country, and on the day itself the Society organised a blood collection, where a record 240 pints of blood were collected. Publicity materials such as T-shirts, pamphlets, posters and stickers were produced. These were funded through the Federation Regional Delegation and Courts Ltd.

On 10th June, the National Society held its Annual General meeting and the Council elected the former Vice President as its President.

Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) •

The reporting period has seen remarkable progress by the National Society. From January 2000 to date, the Society has established Red Cross Chapters in Kosrae, Pohnpei and Yap States. Chuuck remains the only State without an affiliated chapter. Chapters have elected interim Chapter Executive Committees. Thanks to the financial support of Kanagawa Chapter of the Japanese Red Cross, the National Society Chapters in FSM have fully functional offices, with furniture, computers, fax machines, air-conditions, telephones and other equipment.

Since the outbreak of cholera in mid April 2000 and the subsequent launch of a Federation Appeal, the National Society has produced two magazines which highlight the Society's activities countrywide. There is no local official newspaper printed in FSM, so the Red Cross magazine is widely read and the Society uses it not only to publicise its activities, but also for fund raising. It is the intention of the Society to allow companies to advertise in the magazine and to pay for the subscriber space.

A second hand vehicle was donated to the Society by the Kanagawa Chapter of the Japanese Red Cross during the reporting period. Furthermore, the National Society was officially recognised by the Federal Congress as an auxiliary to the public authorities.

Kiribati •

The National Society has not yet recruited a new Secretary General and the Vice Chairperson continues to be Acting Secretary General. The Society has not overcome its financial difficulties of 1999, and had it not been for the partial funding of their core-costs by the Australian Red Cross, would not have been in a position to pay their two field officers and the Acting Secretary General.

The Society's main activities remain the Handicap School and first aid. The Handicap School has continued to receive financial support from Canada, through the Canadian High Commission in New Zealand. The Japanese International Co-operation Agency (JICA) has also funded the Society to procure equipment for the handicapped to be lent to those who are unable to pay and to be hired out for income generation. The Society has, for the first time, been able to open its own bank account for these funds. The Society was also successful with its application to the Empress Shoken fund for a vehicle for the Handicap School.

In April, with funding from the New Zealand Red Cross, the Regional Delegation supported the First Aid Instructors' course in Kiribati and a total of 11 participants were trained.

Finally, the Society had its accounts for 1999 audited by early February 2000 which was the first audit of the Society's accounts for several years.

Palau •

During the second quarter of the year, the Society started implementing the first aid programmes for which it received funding of US\$ 16,500 from the Hiroshima Chapter of the Japanese Red Cross in 1999. The Society had its Annual General Meeting for 1999 and had to move from its offices provided by the Palau government and has been donated a piece of land by one of Palau's high chiefs elsewhere.

The National Society continues to print its magazine on a regular basis. The Society is able to cover its core funding, although seeks external contributions in order to run its programmes.

Papua New Guinea •

Papua New Guinea benefits from a country Delegation and has a separate Appeal. However, as part of the regional programmes, the Society and Country Delegation take part in meetings and training sessions organised in the region.

The Regional Health Delegate took part in the review of Red Cross operations in Bougainville.

Solomon Islands •

The armed internal conflict and eviction of thousands of civilian Malaitans from Guadalcanal Province in 1999, took everyone in the country by surprise including the staff and volunteers of the Solomon Islands Red Cross. The National Society's only other previous experiences in emergencies was working with a very small population of Bougainville refugees. There were 5,807 families or 31,341 displaced people that the Society was called upon to assist. Many of the volunteers and staff of the Society living in Honiara who assisted the displaced population were also victims of the unrest, and were displaced in addition to their houses being looted. These circumstances did not, however, deter them from performing their Red Cross work as the displaced Malaitans were forced to return to their ancestral home in Malaita. Staff and volunteers assisted in registration and distribution of food and relief items to the displaced and worked long and stressful hours. Whilst the staff and volunteers took care of their displaced compatriots, there was the realisation that they lacked experience in this type of activity.

The Regional Delegation witnessed the stress levels experienced by the staff of the National Society during the Community Based Self Reliance (CBSR) workshop in December 1999, where a psychologist was present who undertook debriefings with the staff.

In April, a letter of intent was signed in Honiara, between the Solomon Islands Red Cross (SIRC), the Australian Red Cross (ARC), the Federation and the ICRC on support to SIRC. At the same time, an agreement was signed between SIRC and ICRC on specific areas related to IHL and Dissemination.

ARC is planning to send a new Delegate under the overall co-ordination of the ICRC once the situation is more stable.

Samoa •

First Aid continues to be the major activity of the National Society, with regular courses being organised for the general public, schools and businesses. The Society now has two field officers in addition to the Secretary General, with funding from Australian and Spanish Red Cross.

The Society participated in the World Health Day activities on 7th April, and distributed blood posters.

Disaster preparedness and response is another major activity of the National Society. The Regional Delegation will continue to work with the National Society to update its national disaster plan.

Tonga •

Much has happened in the Tonga Red Cross (TRC) over the last 7 months. A new Executive Committee was elected in December 1999 and the Executive Director left in January 2000. The Head of the Regional Delegation visited Tonga in February 2000, and carried out a half day training session on good governance for the new Executive Committee, held discussions with the Queen who is the patron of the National Society, the Executive Committee and staff, and also visited the Australian and New Zealand High Commissions.

The Tonga Red Cross Executive Committee requested technical assistance and in turn, the Regional Delegation asked Australian Red Cross (ARC) to provide a staff on loan Development Delegate for 3 months. ARC agreed to the request and in April, a Delegate took up an assignment in Tonga for 3 months, during which time he helped to train the TRC Executive Committee, and worked on the setting up of subcommittees and their terms of reference. He also assisted the Society in writing programme proposals for 2001, helped to write the job description for the Secretary General's position and was a member of the panel recruiting the Secretary General. Once the Secretary General was recruited, the Delegate helped with on-the-job training. The Society was also visited by the Institutional Development Delegate from Regional Delegation Suva.

With funding from the Regional Health Programme and technical assistance from Australian Red Cross, the National Society organised a First Aid Instructors' Course. With technical support from the Regional Disaster Preparedness Delegate, the Society is developing its first national disaster plan and, at the same time, the Society will receive two new DP containers in 2000.

Tuvalu •

Given the constraints linked to management and funding, the Regional Delegation staff have undertaken several missions to Tuvalu during the reporting period and held discussions with the leadership of the Society and the Tuvalu government. These discussions, though difficult, have been carried out in an open and frank manner. The Regional Delegation emphasised the need for the Society's leadership to address the difficult issues that the National Society is facing, making clear that failure to make progress would result in the Federation being obliged to withdraw co-operation.

The leadership of the Society agreed to take essential steps, firstly by auditing its accounts for the last 3 years. Following technical visits to Tuvalu by the Head of the Regional Delegation, the Institutional Development Delegate and the Finance Manager, the Society was able to have its accounts for 1997, 1998 and 1999 audited in Fiji by KPMG. Funding for the audit of the Society was provided by the Australian Red Cross.

The Society staff were able to write 3 development programme proposals to be included in their 2001 Plans.

The Government of Tuvalu has, through its Cabinet, approved a grant of AUD 20,000 to the National Society.

Vanuatu •

The Society organised a Community Based Self Reliance (CBSR) Workshop in February and March 2000 with the attendance of a First Aid instructor from New Zealand Red Cross and a DP/R trainer from Fiji Red Cross. Whilst the workshop was planned and organised by the Regional Delegation, the New Zealand Red Cross granted funding.

In collaboration with the ICRC, the Society organised two IHL workshops for the police and law students from the University of South Pacific. The Society has had two technical visits from the Regional Delegation. The Society has regular board meetings and continues to do its own in-country fund-raising. The Society plans to have its Annual General Meeting in November 2000.

The Delegation •

The period under review has seen over 100% growth in the Delegation staffing, four new Delegates for ID, RD, DP and Logistics arrived in March, April and May 2000. A new Finance Manager was hired.

Outstanding needs

The Appeal for the Regional Programmes in the Pacific has received full funding support for the year 2000. However, it is important that funding commitment is maintained for the region in order that the Regional Delegation and the National Societies in the Pacific may continue the momentum of progress in capacity-building.

External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

Relations with the Australian, New Zealand and Japanese Embassies, as well as with the UN and other aid agencies, the British government DFID, and the EU, have been maintained through visits to profile the work of the National Society and the Regional Delegation. At the same time, technical contacts are regularly maintained with UNDP, OCHA, UNICEF, UNAIDS and regional organisations such as the South Pacific Forum and SOPAC.

The Delegation has continuously worked with National Societies to highlight their activities through media coverage, and whilst some Societies are very good at this, others still lag behind and need further support.

Contributions

See Annex 1 for details.

Conclusion

The National Societies in the Pacific developed programme proposals for submission to donors for the first time, thanks to training and support on logical framework techniques from the Regional Delegation. This represents significant progress for the National Societies in the region.

Having overcome funding constraints since 1999, sustained donor support to the country specific programmes, regional programmes and the Regional Delegation is essential to maintain the positive momentum which has been achieved this year. Continued funding is also vital in view of the fact that several National Societies in the region are in formation or are experiencing management and governance challenges.

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>

Pacific						ANNEX 1
APPEAL No. 01.60/2000		PLEDGES RECEIVED				09/14/00
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
CASH						
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				1,408,000		TOTAL COVERAGE 117.0%
Balance carried forward from 1999				155,537		
AUSTRALIAN - RC		9,525	AUD	9,321	12.06.00	COSTS F.A. INSTRUCTOR /TONGA
AUSTRALIAN - RC		28,037	AUD	27,437	12.06.00	COSTS DEVELOPMENT DEL. TONGA
AUSTRALIAN - RC		19,802	AUD	19,378	12.06.00	COSTS DELEGATE DPP&R
AUSTRALIAN - RC		12,435	AUD	12,169	12.06.00	EXPENSES DEL. DEVELOPMENT
AUSTRALIAN - RC		3,683	AUD	3,604	07/14/00	EXTENSION MISSION OF LOG.DEL
DANISH - GOVT/RC		300,000	DKK	62,580	14.06.00	30% OF DKK 1'000'000
FINNISH - RC		33,637	EUR	52,346	12.06.00	REGIONAL HEALTH
JAPAN - RC				148,000	01/11/00	
JAPAN - RC		154,500	USD	254,538	04/28/00	REG. DEL SUVA
JAPAN - RC		20,000,000	JPY	311,440	04/28/00	REG. DEL SUVA
NEW ZEALAND - RC		51,735	NZD	42,397	03/02/00	CBSR WORKSHOPS IN FIJI AND VANUATU
UNAIDS		2,000	USD	3,148	03/03/00	SUVA, FOR PRINTING OF BLOOD POSTERS
AMERICAN - RC		221,911	USD	365,598	26.05.00	IDRDP
WHO		1,680	USD	2,768	04/07/00	WHDAY CELEBRATION IN FIJI
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				1,470,261	CHF	104.4%
KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
Australia	Delegate(s)			46,488		
Finland	Delegate(s)			60,123		
Japan	Delegate(s)			29,897		
USA	Delegate(s)			40,246		
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				176,754	CHF	12.6%
ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT