

# **CENTRAL ASIA: BUILDING CAPACITIES**

*1 September 2000*

*appeal no. 01/63/00*

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*period covered: April-June 2000*

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*After a long period primarily focused on relief assistance to the region, the Federation's support is now more concentrated on capacity building activities. During this transition period, it is critical that institutional development initiatives are fully supported by donors. Despite the difficulties facing countries in the region, a very constructive atmosphere exists, and donors are encouraged to support the Federation and respective National Societies to maintain the current momentum.*

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## ***The context***

The Federation made a fundamental shift in strategy at the start of 1999 for Central Asia. Recognising the problem of donor fatigue in the face of overwhelming relief needs and the drawbacks inherent in maintaining pan-regional programmes in a diverse part of the world, there was a strategic move towards decentralising Federation operations and personnel and a greater focus on capacity building activities. With the decentralisation process completed in 1999, some programmes carry forward into early 2000 with a regional approach. An example of this is the Information Officer support programme. However, during the course of 2000-2001, such programmes will refocus into individual country programmes, allowing a greater local focus to suit the specific needs of individual communities and operating environments.

Formulated in concert with the respective National Societies, the Federation's Regional Assistance Strategy (RAS) for 2000-2001 aims to build capacity in the four core areas of disaster response, disaster preparedness, health, and humanitarian values, carried out in conjunction with institutional and resource development programmes. It is planned that in the

latter half of 2000 the RAS will be revised into a document integrating all national Societies assistance to this region.

While providing relief goods continues to be a key assistance activity, it is being scaled back to allow greater focus upon the other core areas, leaving the National Societies freer to develop bilateral relief programmes. Within these core areas, population movement programmes, information and advocacy, youth activities, fund-raising and volunteer management are all being emphasised. These programmes are vital, not only because they will eventually benefit thousands of people, but because they will also help the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of Central Asia carry out their humanitarian mandate in a sustainable manner.

The Regional Delegation continues supporting the five National Societies as they increasingly take full responsibility for all aspects of relief provision including budgeting and reporting elements. Training provision for the National Societies in financial management and accountability and logistic support is complemented by continuing encouragement to seek local fund raising opportunities and media exposure. This is in line with the Federation Development Policy, the Code of Conduct, and the Almaty and Copenhagen Declarations.

The assistance programme is targeted to the most vulnerable: children, especially those in institutions, isolated elderly, and multi-children families. Much of this help is concentrated on the Aral Sea area which, in addition to economic dislocation, is the scene of ecological devastation. The Regional Delegation is committed to supporting the Tajikistan Country Delegation, as required, in providing much needed relief to Tajikistan.

## ***Latest events***

Responding to the perceived threat of religious extremism, terrorism and drug trafficking, strengthening border security became a major political focus in the region. Agreements have been signed; visa regulations introduced; and regional forums held to increase control over border areas.

Although respective GDP's have increased and prosperous oil fields discovered, social and living conditions have not improved. The situation of Kazakh repatriates (from Mongolia, Afghanistan, and Iran) is dire, with many lacking adequate housing, jobs, and access to health and education services.

Central Asian leaders concluded a two-day summit in the Uzbek capital, with an agreement on combatting organised crime and terrorism as well as coordinating the activities of regional security agencies.

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

The Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies in the region have continued to play an active role in strengthening their capacities and assisting the most vulnerable people by implementing a number of planned activities.

### **Disaster Preparedness (DP) •**

*Objective 1: to provide continuous and broad-based training in Disaster Preparedness.*

The DP program has progressed according to plan and most of the essential components have been completed according to the agreements with the National Societies. The third round of workshops has been conducted on the basis of the previously developed DP Training Package. A total of 1,300 participants attended these workshops during this quarter, including National Society staff and volunteers as well as NGO and Government representatives.

A six-month Pilot Project on Community-Based Disaster Preparedness (CBDP) has been started in Uzbekistan, aiming to develop a curriculum and methodology for CBDP training workshops which can be applied throughout Uzbekistan and, with appropriate modification, throughout the other countries of Central Asia. It is also intended to reduce the vulnerabilities and increase the capacities of the participating community.

*Objective 2: to ensure minimum relief stocks at Disaster Preparedness centres to enable National Societies to respond to the most common localised disasters.*

Procurement of emergency stocks have been completed and items distributed to the four National Societies' warehouses. The items include blankets, kitchen sets, chlorine tablets, jerry cans and sleeping bags.

*Objective 3: to increase public awareness of disasters and the need for individuals to prepare for them.*

Public education, an important component of the DP program, is in place in all four countries. In Turkmenistan, DP cartoons both for adults and children are shown on TV, providing practical recommendations for better preparedness in disasters. Elsewhere, video materials are being distributed to Red Cross branches and to nurses who provide First Aid training. An additional 100,000 brochures on 9 types of disasters were reprinted regionally for distribution in Turkmenistan, as well as 120,000 for Uzbekistan; 5,000 calendars on DP issues were prepared in Kyrgyzstan. All brochures are printed both in Russian and national languages.

*Objective 4: to improve the operations of the existing communications network.*

An HF radio base station has been procured for the Bukhara oblast (Uzbekistan) Red Cross committee's newly formed DP Centre. It will be installed in Bukhara in the next month.

### **Regional - Population Movement •**

*Objective 1: to assist 5 National Societies of Central Asia to use their improved information capacities to promote understanding and acceptance of unstable populations and their needs.*

Two seminars were organised in Uzbekistan on refugee rights. A Disaster response exercise was conducted in Bukhara (in cooperation with UNHCR) with the main objective to set up tents for displaced people in disaster situations. Text books have been printed in the Dari and Pushtu languages and other educational material purchased locally for Afghan refugee children, who were not allowed to attend regular schools.

The provision of *water filters* for refugees, to provide them with safe water, is continuing in Turkmenistan. The filters are ready for use, awaiting permission from Health authorities.

Following consultations with the local agronomist, seeds, tools, fertilisers and pesticides have been distributed by the Mary branch in Turkmenistan.

### **Health •**

*Objective 1: to enable National Societies in Central Asia to improve the health status of the most vulnerable through staffing and operation of socio-medical centres which focus on the promotion of healthy lifestyles and preventive health care.*

A regional workshop for National Societies Health Coordinators was held in Bishkek. The purpose of the meeting was to look into the health needs in the region and find a common strategy and to further improve coordination within the region. Preventive health was adopted as a result of the meeting as a common strategy for the National Society plans. Preventive health includes health information dissemination and, wherever appropriate, preventive intervention. The National Societies decided to focus on preventive health action specific to the country or to a region within the country. Tuberculosis is a common, rising, problem in the region, and therefore has been considered as the current focus of the regional programme. It was decided to jointly produce education material with a focus on tuberculosis.

First Aid is seen as a tool for preventive health, and therefore a focus will be placed on first aid at the community level. An idea to have a common community-level handbook incorporating the First Aid, information on common health, and disaster preparedness was put forward.

The negative impact on the population's health, nutrition and quality of life caused by radioactive contamination of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test ground was the issue for a preliminary assessment conducted by the Regional Health Delegate. A thorough needs assessment was carried out together with relevant consultant experts.

With a view to increasing the use of the traditional Red Cross visiting nurses service, consensus was reached to engage the visiting nurses in extended roles such as the dissemination of health messages in the community.

The socio-medical centres function is to be revitalised in new roles specific to the programme of a country, such as health information dissemination and training centres.

#### **Relief •**

Serious flooding occurred in the Kustanai region of northern Kazakhstan in May. The Kazakh National Society responded immediately with what DP stocks it had and was subsequently assisted by the Delegation to launch an Emergency Appeal for assistance to 3,000 displaced persons. Donor response was limited, and the operation could not be completed according to planned activities, leaving many people in a precarious situation. This has been reported upon in separate Situation Reports.

#### **Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan - Public canteens**

*Objective: Public Canteens to provide vulnerable people in urban areas with one hot meal a day.*

The soup kitchen programme is coming to an end after 10 months functioning. The Federation is seeking more funds to continue the programme which is vital in urban areas, in particular during autumn - winter time.

In Kazakhstan, 1,500 people have been served during the reporting period in 10 canteens throughout the country. In Kyrgyzstan, 300 beneficiaries received hot meals in two soup kitchens. In Uzbekistan, two soup kitchens served 100 beneficiaries each, 5 days a week. On the occasion of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Day (8 May), another soup kitchen was opened in Tashkent for 60 beneficiaries among poor elderly people.

**Clothes Distribution**

*Objective: provide poor elderly people living alone and pensioners, invalids, orphans, refugees, people affected by disasters and specialised institutions (orphanages and prisons) with second hand clothing to survive during the cold winter months.*

The Finnish Red Cross has donated a total of 80 MT of used clothing to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Each country received 20 MT of used clothing. The distribution of Swedish Red Cross clothes and shoes has been completed. 326 beneficiaries in 7 oblasts of Kazakhstan received 109,662 kg of used clothing and 5,828 kg of shoes. 20 institutions in Kyrgyzstan received 36,504 kg of used clothing. In Uzbekistan, a total of 1,980 bales of clothing, and 24 bales of shoes have been distributed. 24,328 beneficiaries from 5 oblasts, plus Ashgabad, city received second hand clothing in Turkmenistan. The Swedish Red Cross as a major donor for used clothing, visited the National Society and monitored the distribution.

**Food Distribution (funded by Danish Red Cross/DANIDA) •**

*Objective: provide beneficiaries (multi-children families, elderly, orphans, invalids) from rural areas with supplementary food to their meagre diet.*

The Danish Red Cross donation total of 1.5 million DKR was allocated to procure 510 tons of wheat flour, rice and pasta, and 21,000 litres of vegetable oil. Food assistance was also rendered through public canteens, medical centres and mercy houses of three National Societies: Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Uzbek. The programme was completed this quarter.

**Assistance to National Societies •****Capacity Building**

*Institutional Development (ID) review:* started in April after being postponed in all four countries. The purpose of the programme is to identify the impact of the Federation support on the National Societies in the region, determine its strengths and weaknesses, and to look into the possibilities to improve the assistance in future. The ID team interviewed Headquarters staff, visited branches, and met Red Cross staff, volunteers, government and NGOs. The team conducted one workshop to introduce the review, and plans a final workshop to give its feedback and observations.

*Development plans:* are being revised and updated in all four National Societies

*Management and Governance* - an ad hoc group was established at the Kazakh National Society to revise the Statutes and legal issues. The Uzbek Red Cross Statutes are now available to all branches, an initiative which will increase and enhance the knowledge of the society's office bearers on the legal and organisational aspect of their Society.

*Finance development:* The Regional Delegation initiated payment for long distance telephone calls for the Kazakh Red Crescent and Red Cross. This will facilitate communications between the Headquarters, branches and neighbouring National Society. The Regional Finance Delegate visited the Turkmen National Society to assist in their financial operations. Close communications between the Regional Delegation and the National Society's Finance Departments are important to improve reporting and accountability standards.

*English language* - The first phase of the English language course in Uzbekistan is coming to an end. The British Red Cross has kindly agreed to extend the support to bring the course to a logical conclusion.

#### *Institutional and Resource Development*

*Objective: to assist the National Society to successfully implement fund raising programs, through public appeals and the development of small enterprise.*

*Revolving fund projects* - two small loan projects in Uzbekistan are expected to return an investment by the end of the year. The income of the Red Cross training centre allows for reinvestment of funds for the improvement of the National Society infrastructure. Red Cross membership stamps bring income and increase Red Cross membership. In Turkmenistan, a project proposal for a computer training centre and a photocopying service as a small business was submitted to the Federation office in Ashgabad. This will raise funds to reduce financial dependence.

#### *Regional - Information, Media, Fund Raising*

*Objective: to train information officers, National Society staff and volunteers in public relations activities, image support and fund-raising*

The National Societies information officers participated in ICRC's workshop to discuss strong and weak points in dissemination. The meeting was useful in terms of information and experience exchange. The May 8 Red Cross Day celebration was widely covered by the local media in the region. The National Societies held press conferences and organised public events with the help of Federation staff and volunteers.

*Objective: To help National Societies promote and improve their image*

A nine-minute video was produced to demonstrate the program implementation by the Kazakh Red Crescent and Red Cross for Kazakh repatriates in Taldy-Korgan. This film was part of the Kazakh Red Crescent and Red Cross presentation during the International Population Movement Conference in Georgia in May.

A story on the Kazakh Red Crescent and Red Cross/Federation response to floods in Kazakhstan was produced and posted on the Federation web site.

The seventh issue of the regional magazine "Compass" was produced, for the first time in two languages - Russian and English. It was distributed among the National Societies in the region, Regional Delegation's counterparts, diplomatic missions and the Secretariat in Geneva.

#### **Youth •**

*Objectives: to increase the number of volunteers and to strengthen the capacity of the volunteer management system within the National Societies for the recruitment, screening and assignment, training and retention of volunteers*

The youth clubs in all four National Societies have great volunteer potential. Their core activities cover the promotion of healthy life styles (anti-drug, Aids education), fund-raising, and social activities.

In Kazakhstan, the Almaty Youth centre Internet cafe provided training for 34 children including 22 from poor families. The youth centre attracted 230 members, who contribute membership fees. Volunteer psychologists answer the Youth Centre telephone hot line. In Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan, youth departments are preparing for youth camps. The Uzbekistan youth centre organised five fund-raising events to sustain their activities.

In Turkmenistan, the Youth Department. organised a variety of activities and competitions, and in Balkanabad the Red Cross youth club building was repaired and they started English/French/Russian language classes to raise more funds. The Turkmen youth department applied to the Federation's Shoken Fund for support of a TB education project and has already received USD 16,000. MSF has shown interest in cooperating on this project.

#### **Aral Sea Programme**

The programme aimed to procure and distribute 1,000 Mt. of foodstuffs to 10,000 children in various types of institutions. The first Aral Sea Project, run in three countries affected by the Aral Sea ecological disaster, is now officially closed and the final statistics are currently being verified and survey documentation completed.

In Kazakhstan preliminary results of the surveys indicate that all the goods were distributed to needy families: disabled and elderly living alone, and to TB and children's institutions. The main programme constraint has been that there were far more needy families, elderly and disabled people, than there was food available. 14,500 families (including the elderly and disabled) received food. However, the Oblast Social Protection Department estimates that some 27,000 families (160,000 people) live in extreme poverty. Single mothers or lonely elderly people with pensions less than \$20/month are possible secondary categories for assistance, additional to TB patients and their families. TB and other institutions with TB wards are intended to be the primary beneficiary groups of phase 2 of the programme.

In Turkmenistan, the National Society decided to distribute the remaining food to a women's prison, Velayat hospital, Maternal and Child hospital, and a drug rehabilitation centre. All damaged goods will be used by the National Society soup kitchen in Dashoguz. The National Society expects the beneficiary categories for the next program to be narrowed and focused to make the programme better managed and maximise its impact.

### ***Outstanding needs***

The lack of funding for Institutional Development in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan as well as for the Regional Disaster Preparedness and Information programmes remains a serious constraint.

### ***External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media***

The Regional Delegation works closely with the ICRC Delegation in Tashkent; UN agencies and NGOs; the British Embassy and Counterpart International in Ashgabad; the Spanish Red Cross in Kazakhstan (to improve social activities for elderly people in seven oblasts); and the Netherlands Red Cross in Bishkek; all with the view to improve coordination and information exchange.

The Kazakh National Society, supported by the Delegation, has been closely involved with the Government and UNDP in the development of a Government National Disaster Preparedness Plan for Kazakhstan. The Plan is now completed and has resulted in a deservedly high profile for the National Society which is clearly recognised as a major contributor to the formulation of the Plan. National Society roles and responsibilities are clearly defined in the Plan.

### ***Contributions***

See Annex 1 for details.

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

Central Asia						ANNEX 1
APPEAL No. 01.63/2000		PLEDGES RECEIVED				01/09/00
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
<b>CASH</b>						
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				<b>8,507,000</b>		<b>TOTAL COVERAGE 62.4%</b>
Balance carried forward from 1999				<b>1,998,696</b>		
BRITISH - RC		41,335	GBP	107,058	29/03/00	INS. DEV. DELEGATE
BRITISH - RC		9,853	GBP	25,322	14.06.00	ID DELEGATE (2ND QUARTER)
DENMARK - RC		500,000	DKK	108,250	30/12/99	FOOD ASSISTANCE
DENMARK - RC		99,926	DKK	21,634	30.12.1999	FOOD ASSISTANCE - KAZAKHSTAN
FEDERATION BUDGET				663,409	01/01/00	
FINLAND - RC		3,111	EUR	5,013	01/05/00	OPER. COSTS
FINLAND - RC		3,111	EUR	5,013	27/03/00	OPER. COSTS
FINLAND - RC		6,895	EUR	10,730	12.06.00	KAZAKHSTAN
FINLAND - RC		6,895	EUR	10,730	12.06.00	KYRGYZSTAN
FINLAND - GOVT/RC		63,911	EUR	99,458	13.06.00	ID/YOUTH
JAPANESE - RC		10,000,000	JPY	155,720	26.06.00	TRAINING
KAZAKHSTAN - PRIVATE				32,227	10/04/00	
KOREA, REPUBLIC - RC		25,000	USD	42,500	20.06.00	3 YOUTH CENTERS
KOREA, REPUBLIC - RC		50,000	USD	85,000	20.06.00	ASSISTANCE NS ON DEVELOPMENT PROGR.
NEW ZEALAND - RC		20	NZD	15	30.06.00	
NORWAY - RC				56,200	09/03/00	MISS. EXPENSES MR ZULUGA
SWEDISH - GOVT/RC		800,000	SEK	150,640	29.05.00	ID/RD SUPPORT
SWEDISH - GOVT/RC		3,505,337	SEK	660,055	29.05.00	ID/RD REGIONAL REVIEW
<b>SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH</b>				<b>4,237,670</b>	<b>CHF</b>	<b>49.8%</b>
<b>KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)</b>						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
FINLAND - RC		663,642	FIN	179,913	27/03/00	18151KG OF SEC.HAND CLOTHES AND TRANSP. & INSURANCE.
FINLAND - RC		686,751	FIN	186,178	27/03/00	18966.6KG OF SEC. HAND CLOTHES AND TRANSPORTATION
FINLAND - RC		423,494		110,828	12.06.00	2034.7 KGS SEC. HAND CLOTHES AND TRANSP. & INSURANCE
FINLAND - RC		427,288	FIN	111,821	12.06.00	20'189.4 KGS SECOND HAND CLOTHES AND TRANSP. & INSURANCE
Japan	Delegate(s)			40,082		
New Zealand	Delegate(s)			90,000		Deleg 01 to 07 + deleg 01 to 11 as per em AW 21/8
Norway	Delegate(s)			48,460		
Sweden	Delegate(s)			106,776		
Great Britain	Delegate(s)			110,061		
USA	Delegate(s)			84,435		
<b>SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES</b>				<b>1,068,554</b>	<b>CHF</b>	<b>12.6%</b>
<b>ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET</b>						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
<b>SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED</b>				<b>0</b>	<b>CHF</b>	
<b>THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS ARE LINKED TO THIS APPEAL:</b>						
P70001,P70002, P70003, P70160,P70161,P70162,P70902,P70503,P70504,P70505,P70506,P70520,P70521,P70530,PTM002,PTM003,PTM004,PTM005,PTM504,PTM530,PKZ003,PKZ502,PKZ504,PKZ505,PKZ506,PKZ511						
PKG506,PUZ001,PUZ502,PUZ003,PKG003.						