

COHERENT COMMUNICATIONS: EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

*22 December,
2000*

*appeal no. 01.77/2000
situation report no. 1
period covered: January - December, 2000*

The context

In order to achieve a greater impact on the lives of the vulnerable, this global programme was intended to develop cohesion and clarity in the Federation's advocacy and communications initiatives on key humanitarian issues, as well as widen partnerships with organisations in the public and private sector. The programme was also planned to help coordinate the process of identifying organisations in the public and private sector with whom the Federation can develop working relationships based on complementary strengths, particularly in the four core areas. This global programme is closely related and complementary to all the other global programmes presented in the Federation's 2000-2001 Appeal.

The following objectives were established:

- Based on Federation policies and field experience, a coherent advocacy approach will seek to influence the policy and action of governments, international organisations, and the business community in favour of vulnerable people.
- By increasing the communications capacity and advocacy of the Federation and National Societies, Federation actions, policies and positions will be more effectively directed and applied.
- In order to maintain humanitarian objectives either through direct financial support or through their own promotion of humanitarian values, relations with international businesses and organisations, as well as with governments, will also be explored, developed and strengthened.

Latest events and Red Cross/Red Crescent action

During a year marked by the emergence of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Emblem as a serious issue and challenge to the communications and advocacy abilities of the Secretariat, and by a fundamental realignment of the organization, work has continued to focus on building the capacity to effectively communicate the Federation's messages, influence decision-making processes in the

external world, raise the profile of national societies and their Federation, and build partnerships with intergovernmental institutions and corporations.

Achievements against objectives

- **Using coherent advocacy, based on Federation policy and field experience and the Plan of Action of the International Conference, to influence the policy and action of governments, international organizations, and the private sector.**

The emblem issue came to the fore at the beginning of the year 2000, and has dominated Federation advocacy activities during the year. The federation has worked in close co-operation with the ICRC and national societies to facilitate the discussion, and while this issue absorbed a considerable amount of the capacity to undertake systematic and sustained advocacy at the cost of placing less emphasis on the follow-up of the Plan of Action from the International Conference, an interesting side effect has been that the profile of the organization, particularly among permanent missions in Geneva and governments elsewhere, has become higher. Consequently, the Federation is seen as an even more attractive partner in non-operational discussions and debates.

Corporate social responsibility and the private sector's interest in sustainable development continues to be incorporated into Federation strategies for stewarding and acquiring relationships within the private and corporate sector. Through a global research process and the identification of private sector partners who have similar humanitarian values, the Federation has developed and cultivated alliances with multi-national corporations. Several pilot programs benefiting national societies and the Federation are currently underway that include cause-related marketing, direct contribution, and public campaign components. A common element for these private and corporate sector alliances is the capacity to expand current multi-national programs to include additional National Societies.

- **Increasing the capacity and coherence of the Federation and national societies to communicate Federation actions and positions.**

Communications training tool •

The development of a web-based training tool in communications for national societies is proceeding well following the initial phase of consultation and research. The first of twelve modules planned has been completed and is currently being concept-tested off-line, pending development of a full extranet service at the secretariat. In addition, specialist contributors, who will provide 'box articles' on various aspects of communications strategy and practice, have been identified and briefed, and these contributions will be incorporated into the final package.

The next phase of the project includes field trips to regional delegations in Budapest and Guatemala to review content and to research communications capacity-building case studies. The visit to Guatemala City will also focus on the work the delegation has been doing to provide local societies with an Internet presence under the umbrella of www.cruzrojahumanidad.org. Similar visits to gather additional material will be undertaken to national societies in Asia and Africa within the coming months. Continuing support for the project is being provided by the British Red Cross, and a second production meeting is due to be held in October.

The training tool will be at least 25 per cent complete by the end of 2000 (three chapters in first draft form for comment) and the entire package will be presented at the 2001 meeting of the Council of Delegates.

Development of core communications material •

This activity focuses on developing core texts reflecting action and advocacy positions which can be distributed and included in materials produced primarily by regional delegations - be they printed or on-line. Limited progress has been achieved in this area within the reporting period, due in part to the availability of staff at a time of resource restraint. Once staff have been recruited for the advocacy

department within the secretariat's new structure, this activity will be re-examined with a view to developing core materials which profile the Federation's work in the four core areas outlined in *Strategy 2010*.

Development of the electronic newsroom •

In June 2000, the Federation launched a new web site, restructured to more clearly reflect the directions of *Strategy 2010* and to provide a broader range of information about the Federation. Core material was posted on the four core areas, key publications were prepared for the web, and the site was developed to show all operations-related material in a structured format for donors, the media, National Societies and "the public".

Following the launch, the communications department has built on the initial base of the site with further material relating to Federation and national society activities. The web database has been improved and when completed - later this year - will show all assistance strategies and operations-related material, by region, country and chronologically.

The electronic newsroom has been developed, with news stories added to the web site every working day. Press releases and information relating to key conferences are also posted on the web, and work began on using the web site as the main means for distributing appeals and situation reports.

National Society communications networking •

This activity is designed to strengthen links between information staff in national societies by increasing their capacity to communicate. One of the key elements within this activity is the development of regional web sites. Work has begun on examining the role of regional web sites and developing a style and template for these, along with guidelines for National Societies developing a site with Federation support.

Clarify and strengthen relations with international organizations and governments through effective follow-up of the Plan of Action of the International Conference; Develop and enhance relations with the private sector that focuses on the multinational and international levels •

Building relations with international organizations, predominantly but not exclusively in the UN system, takes place at several levels. National societies and Federation delegations work with counterparts among UN agencies in the field, developing practical co-operation in responding to emergency situations or to longer term development challenges. At another level, co-operation between technical experts in the Federation secretariat and their counterparts in other organizations have existed for a long time, and are gradually being institutionalized. Similarly, the participation of the Federation in one of the main UN humanitarian co-ordination mechanisms - the InterAgency Standing Committee - and co-operation with OCHA has developed and become more systematic, as exemplified in the close co-ordination of appeal launches in the Consolidated Appeals Process. At the global level, the Federation has continued to develop its capacity to participate in and influence the outcome of, major events and process within and outside the UN system, based on its observer status at the UN General Assembly.

As a result of a more focussed approach to bodies such as ECOSOC and the UN General Assembly, the Federation was able to achieve better results of its efforts than in the past, including such outcomes as having the PanAfrican Conference's Ougadougou Declaration incorporated into a UNGA Resolution on the forthcoming Special Session on HIV / AIDS, which forms a basis for sustained advocacy work and related matters during the first half of 2001.

The Federation continues to create a strong momentum that focuses on sustainable relationships resulting in committed partnerships and direct financial support. In an effort to further expand private and corporate sector relations, the Federation's Foundation Board has created a Working Group consisting of several national societies, the Federation, and multinational corporate partners. Its mandate is to develop a strategy to establish a more powerful co-operation with the corporate sector.

Through the interactions of the Working Group, there is increased understanding and clarity about how this sector thinks in reference to philanthropy and what the Federation must do in order to effectively gain access to this sector's resources and expertise.

Outstanding needs

The programme has received less than 50% of the needed funds, and further support is needed to reinforce the initiatives already in place.

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>

Coherent communications							ANNEX 1
APPEAL No. 01.77/2000		PLEDGES RECEIVED				12/22/00	
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT	
CASH							
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				1,272,000		TOTAL COVERAGE 46.3%	
Balance carried forward from 1999				88,861			
BRITISH - GOVT				500,000	19.01.2000	DFID 2.3	
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				588,861	CHF	46.3%	
KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)							
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT	
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				0	CHF	0.0%	
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:							
G37000, G37100,G37200.							