

UGANDA

CHF 2,596,000

Programme No. 01.13/2000

National Context

Uganda is among the ten poorest countries in the world, with an economy dominated by agriculture which accounts for almost all export earnings, half of the Gross Domestic Product, and employing 88% of its labour force. In recent years the country has benefited from relative stability, and a rigorous economic reform programme with IMF and World Bank support. The economic achievements however have not benefited all the population and there have been significant regional variations in economic development, mostly due to conflict, insecurity and ongoing rebellion by two rebel groups in the west and north of the country.

The regional conflict in the Great Lakes region and the long standing civil war in southern Sudan have also led to massive population movements in the region, resulting in Uganda hosting some 185,000 refugees and almost 400,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). While the situation in the north of the country appears to have stabilised, rebel activities have led to new displacements and emergency humanitarian needs in the west.

Uganda continues to be seriously affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, in spite of recent reports of the rate of infection leveling off. Outbreaks of malaria and cholera epidemics are frequent. The country is also prone to natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, and droughts.

Country Assistance Strategy

The Federation strategy is formulated on the assessment that the Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) is capable of mounting an effective disaster response operation virtually in any part of the country or to respond to different types of disaster with the effective use of volunteers from the branches; but what is less clear is the Society's capacity to carry out regular Red Cross programmes across the country. For this reason, the Federation and the National Society will make efforts to ensure that all programme and institutional development support is consistent, complementary, and within the strategic parameters of the Federation and URCS.

With Federation support, the URCS has radically changed its institutional development strategy following the restructuring exercise carried out in 1998 - 1999, resulting in a professional, manageable and cost effective organisation focusing on strengthening the governance and management through human resource development, membership recruitment, fund-raising, and revenue generation, decentralisation and branch development. Programmes will focus on emergency preparedness and response, and health, with a special emphasis on first aid, blood donor recruitment, and community based health care. Lastly, Red Cross youth and gender awareness and sensitisation activities will also form strong cross cutting elements to be integrated in each programme.

The URCS, with Federation support, will emphasise support to the refugee operations as well as strengthening disaster preparedness capabilities. In the Institutional Development and Programme Areas, the Federation

through its country and regional delegations provides technical support as required. It is anticipated that the Federation will continue to play a supportive role in resource mobilisation and external relations as well as continued support to improving the Society's human and financial resource management.

Programme Objectives

Disaster Response

The primary objective of the Federation programme will continue to be provision of adequate multi-sectoral assistance to a caseload of over 11,000 primarily Rwandan and Congolese refugees in the two camps of southwestern Uganda. The Federation will continue to provide material and technical support to the refugee operation in southwest of the country. The Federation support will be limited to resource mobilisation and provision of technical advice in sectors (water and sanitation, and health, including reproductive health) where the Society does not have adequate capacity.

Disaster Preparedness

The objectives of the programme are to strengthen preparedness programmes and structures at the national and selected branch levels and prepare a contingency plan for URCS disaster response. Stocks will be pre-positioned for 30,000 persons, and effectively and efficiently managed. URCS staff, volunteers, and the public will be trained on disaster prevention and mitigation. The URCS will identify coping mechanisms, develop appropriate training and programmes to address small scale emergencies and disasters, as well as form or re-activate Red Cross Action Teams in the strategic branches to effectively respond to larger scale disasters in a professional and timely manner. The URCS will also finalise its role in the national disaster preparedness framework and continue active participation in the Government and UN disaster preparedness committees at national and branch levels. Effective relations will be established with all the stakeholders, in particular concerned government institutions.

Health

The URCS health activities are aimed at reducing morbidity and mortality from prevailing diseases and periodic epidemics, using a community health care approach and based on the African Red Cross /Red Crescent Health Initiative (ARCHI). A focus will be placed on the first aid programme in the communities as well as in the commercial sectors, blood donor recruitment, and a community based health care programme focusing on health education, reproductive health, water, sanitation, food, nutrition and drug use. The proposed programme will follow the objectives outlined in the Comprehensive Health Programme 2000-2002.

Humanitarian Values

Key Federation and URCS activities under this sector include tracing (with ICRC support), publicity and dissemination of URCS activities, a dissemination programme with the Government (Armed Forces, prison staff, and the Uganda Police Force), training sessions on promotion of humanitarian values with URCS staff, governance, branches and volunteers, and workshops on dissemination with local media.

Capacity Building

The Federation will provide technical advice and expertise to support the strengthening of governance and management, improving financial systems, resource development, revenue generation, human resource development, membership recruitment, decentralisation, and branch development.