

# NICARAGUA

**CHF 3,521,000**

**Programme No. 01.20/2000**

## *National Context*

Although Nicaragua's civil war ended several years ago, its direct and indirect legacy, coupled with the region's economic difficulties and, most recently, the Hurricane Mitch disaster, have reduced the country to abject poverty. With 60% unemployment and 1.7 million living in extreme poverty, out of a total population of 4.35 million, Nicaragua is the second poorest country in the Americas.

## *Country Assistance Strategy*

Although the Nicaraguan Red Cross (NRC) is currently implementing a five year (1997 - 2001) National Development Plan, designed to renew its structures, increase its volunteer base and extend its services throughout the country, many of its initiatives have been brought to a halt by the Hurricane Mitch relief operation. In the reassessment of priorities forced on it by the disaster, the Society has given precedence to human resource training, modernising administration, setting up planning systems and assuring its financial recovery.

In its role as co-ordinator of Hurricane Mitch assistance within the Movement, the Federation is stressing the strengthening of the National Society's response capacity and its institutional development, particularly through the implementation of its National Development Plan.

In keeping with the National Society's priorities the Federation will support the participation of all levels and all branches of the Society in shaping and implementing the National Plan. It will encourage the development of the Society's financial self sufficiency and its administrative services and promote community-based programmes.

## *Programme Objectives*

### *Disaster Response*

The country and the National Society are engaged in a vast rehabilitation operation after Hurricane Mitch. With the support of the Federation and the National Societies participating in the post-relief operation, the Society will seek to build up its Country Plan for Rehabilitation, including housing reconstruction, water and sanitation, logistics, communications and training.

### *Disaster Preparedness*

Hurricane Mitch pointed up the need for the NRC to be better prepared for disasters and to reinforce its response capacity. Warehouses and logistics need to be improved, particularly at branch level, operational procedures

should be standardised and training of relief managers and first aiders initiated in 1999 must continue. The Federation will help the NRC to move ahead with its Community Based Disaster Preparedness Programme, begun three years ago. It will be enlarged to new communities, as it has been confirmed that communities involved in the programme were better prepared to face Hurricane Mitch. Training in temporary shelter management, evacuation and relief organisation will be shared by communities and Red Cross volunteers.

### ***Health***

Community based health programmes will be maintained, in particular the three-country “Golfo de Fonseca” project in which Nicaragua is a participant. The NRC will also be given support for the technical development of its blood bank, the country’s main source of blood and blood products.

### ***Humanitarian Values***

The NRC will be given assistance in starting a volunteer recruitment and training programme, one facet of which will focus on motivation, in order to build unity of purpose within the Society and win back former volunteers who had drifted away. The Federation will collaborate closely with ICRC in reinforcing the dissemination activities of the National Society which are crucial in a country which was ravaged by international confrontation in the recent past.

### ***Capacity Building***

The Federation will focus its support on reinforcing the NRC’s financial and administrative systems, through reviews of statutes, regulations and administrative procedures, staff training, improvement of fund-raising systems and project management.