

# PALESTINE RED CRESCENT SOCIETY

**CHF 2,078,000**

**Programme No. 01.41/2000**

## *Context*

The Autonomous and Occupied Territories (A/OT) in the West Bank and Gaza have their political and legal origins in the Middle East conflict which dates back to the creation of the state of Israel in 1947, the ensuing Israel-Arab war from 1948-1950, and subsequent hostilities. The signing of a declaration of principles between the Israeli Government and the PLO in Oslo in 1993 outlined a framework for a peace-for-land deal which was intended to culminate in a final status agreement. However, neither the Oslo Accords nor the more recent 1998 Wye Plantation agreement has so far produced the anticipated results.

Of the 2.9 million Palestinians living in the A/OT, 65% reside in the West Bank, and 35% live in Gaza, one of the world's most densely populated areas.

Three decades of occupation and Israel's continuous direct and indirect control over life in the West Bank and Gaza have hampered the development of a social and economic fabric that could address important humanitarian needs. The limited independence enjoyed by the Palestine Authority in areas scattered across the West Bank and Gaza makes it very difficult to create the institutions and infrastructure needed to alleviate the wide range of hardships facing Palestinians. The fragmented health care system is one example.

Diseases resulting from poverty are prevalent throughout the A/OT, but especially in Gaza where some 40% of the population are living in poverty. Preventable respiratory infections and diarrhoeal diseases, largely caused by poor sanitation and living conditions, are widespread and represent important causes of child mortality and morbidity. Maternal welfare services reach only a minority of women. On an individual level, the psychological stress generated by a sense of oppression and humiliation, plus the difficulties associated with unemployment, affect health and wellbeing.

The A/OTs receive considerable outside assistance, from the UN system, governments and NGOs, but donor choices maintain, rather than address the problem of fragmentation. Few attempts are made at firmly mapping out needs and services in core areas so as to provide consolidated support to the development of capacity and sustainability.

## *Assistance Strategy*

The overall objective of Federation support to the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) is to encourage the development of a community based Society providing services that respond to local priorities and needs. To achieve this aim, it will encourage the building of a clear organisational structure and a performance-oriented approach to service delivery. Progress should keep pace with the political process to reach a final status agreement, so that when this is achieved, a unified National Society is in existence and better prepared for recognition by the Movement.

The Federation's approach to its institutional development assistance will be to support management and planning, branch development and communications and information. Through training and workshops it will focus on the development of integrated, community services in core programme areas. These priorities will reinforce PRCS efforts to meet its principal challenge: to develop, maintain and consolidate the services expected of it by the Palestine Authority and the Palestinian people in its role as the most important humanitarian organisation in the A/OT.

## ***Programme Objectives***

### ***Disaster Response***

Any action required will be dealt with on an ad hoc basis.

### ***Disaster Preparedness***

While urgent needs stemming from clashes or a protracted emergency will be dealt with by the ICRC, the Federation will assist the PRCS in developing a disaster response capacity by drawing up a Disaster Preparedness plan.

### ***Health***

The Federation will continue to support the development of PRCS's Community Outreach Programme which links the Primary Health Care services with the priorities of each community and catchment area. A Public Health Assessment is a key component in this area.

### ***Physical and Mental Rehabilitation***

The Federation will continue to co-ordinate support for the PRCS Community Based Special Education programme and its Speech Therapy Units.

### ***Blood Transfusion Service***

The Federation will help the PRCS to publicise the service and act as a liaison point for external assistance.

### ***Humanitarian Values***

The Federation will encourage PRCS to begin advocacy support and the promotion of a humanitarian values programme, especially connected to the "Bethlehem 2000" celebrations and to an International Youth Camp to be organised by the PRCS.

## ***Capacity Building***

Reinforcing the capacity of the PRCS to respond to the varied and complex needs in the A/OTs is the underlying thread running through the Federation's programme of support to the Society. The importance of a cohesive structure for the Society, managerial ability to determine needs and carry out programmes and relationships with the communities being served will remain long-term capacity building themes.

Support will focus on the development of a community-based Society, through planning input, training and workshops on programme and organisational development; branch development; planning and budgeting and other subjects. The development of a Communications/Information Department is scheduled, as is a special development package for PRCS branches in Gaza. In 2001/2002 a shift of emphasis is envisaged towards action supporting sustainability: a broadening of the membership base, expansion of the youth and volunteers programme and enhanced resource generation.