

# NEPAL

**CHF 1,723,000**

**Programme No. 01.56/2000**

## *National Context*

Because of Nepal's rugged geography and altitude variance – from 200 m to the 8,848 m of Mount Everest – over 90% of its 23.4 million population live in the hills and lowland areas. Settlements are linked by only 8,900 kms of roads. Of the total population, less than 10% is urban, although there is a growing urban migration from the under serviced rural areas. In these conditions, Nepal has one of the world's least developed economies and ranks as one of the poorest countries in the world.

The economy has not been helped by the political difficulties that arose in the last decade as the country moved from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy and a multi-party democracy, a process that has been accompanied by growing violence in some parts of the country.

Nepal's disaster proneness varies with the topography and altitude, but it is regarded as one of the most disaster-prone countries in the region. The terrain and generally low level of development make many districts in remote areas with difficult access particularly vulnerable. Such areas may be cut off from the outside world for days or weeks, forcing the communities to cope on their own. The South (terai) is frequently the scene of flooding during the monsoon (June-September), while the hilly areas as well as the high mountain districts regularly experience earthquakes which often set off devastating landslides that cause high losses of life, livestock, and property. In addition, high areas are prone to violent flash floods causing similar damage. The lowlands are often exposed to drought, particularly outside the main rainy season.

## *Country Assistance Strategy*

The Nepal Red Cross Society is well-known for its activities in times of emergency and disaster and for its impact on community development, an area in which it has virtually 30 years of experience. It has been through a steady process of capacity building and in the past five years underwent a major restructuring. The Society has a National Development Policy and its work since 1989 has been based on five year Development Plans. The third such Plan, extending until mid-2002, is currently in operation. It focuses on developing Disaster Preparedness and Response capacity; extending the CBDP/CBFA programme, HIV/AIDS activities and Institutional and Resource Development.

The Federation's strategy of support to the Nepal Red Cross recognises that although its assistance was scaled down and its country delegation closed in 1998 as the organisational capacity of the National Society grew, regular support and advice is still needed if the development momentum is to be maintained. The Federation will concentrate its efforts on maintaining and further developing the Society's institutional and organisational capacity, leading to better managed programmes. It will also help develop the Society's financial management capacity and its skills in programme identification and planning.

## ***Programme Objectives***

### ***Disaster Response***

At present there is no Federation-supported disaster response programme.

### ***Disaster Preparedness***

In this area, which is one of the Society's priorities, the Federation will provide occasional technical assistance. More general support will be given through the building of institutional capacity (described below).

### ***Health***

The Federation will provide occasional technical assistance through its health delegate in Islamabad to the National Society's efforts to expand its CBDP/CBFA programmes.

### ***Humanitarian Values***

The promotion of humanitarian values, although not the object of a specific programme, will be part of all Federation support.

## ***Capacity Building***

As outlined above the ongoing process of building the National Society's capacity to respond to the population's health and post-disaster needs will be maintained through technical support and a particular emphasis on institutional and resource development. Its objectives will be to assist the Society in the development of new systems and skills for the improvement of financial management; in exploring new ways of developing local resources and marketing itself; and in building management capacity, with particular emphasis on project identification and planning.

The Regional Finance Delegate will be the main provider of the support services. They will include technical support, training, workshops and the development of links with outside organisations.