

PROGRAMME UPDATE



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

THE CAUCASUS: ARMENIA, AZERBAIJAN, GEORGIA

30 May, 2001

This Programme Update is intended for reporting on Annual Appeals.

Appeal No. 01.58/2001

Appeal Target CHF 16,851,009

Programme Update No. 1; Period covered: January - March 2001

“At a Glance”

Appeal coverage: 20.3%

Related Appeals: 31/00; Georgia: Drought, launched on 10 October, 2000 for 10 months

Outstanding needs: CHF 13,430,770

Update: Despite limited funding, the Federation has made strides in implementing the planned programme, together with the respective national societies. Further funding and support are needed to maintain the momentum achieved to date.

Context:

The break up of the Soviet Union, the ensuing independence for the three countries of the South Caucasus and the collapse of the Russian economy have ushered in a period of continuing economic and social decline. These changes have led to a reduction in the capacities of the people of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia to meet basic human needs such as food, shelter, clothing and health care. The outbreak of hostilities in a number of areas has exacerbated this situation by adding the problem associated with large population migrations, resulting in many thousands of IDPs and refugees. Inequitable distribution of wealth and access to health and social care have led to increasing number of vulnerable people and the inevitable consequences of a poor state of health and well-being. With a chronic shortage of funds for a health sector (the proportion of GDP spent on health by the governments varies between 0.7% and 3.1%), which is in desperate need for restructuring, the situation for the poor in the region is not likely to change in the short to medium term. Add to these the changing demography with increasing numbers of elderly people and the decreasing fertility rate leading to a decrease in the proportion of youth and the economically active age groups, and the situation becomes even more bleak. Natural disasters add to the difficulties faced by the people in the region.

The huge economic decline in early years of transition has not yet been reversed. Vulnerable groups remain marginalised and with a continuing fiscal shortfall, little is being done to assist them. The UNDP Human Development Report 2000 ranks Georgia 70th, Azerbaijan 90th and Armenia 93rd out of 174 countries. Were it not widespread (but poor) state education, the figures would be worse. The situation in the region is dominated by crushing poverty, very high unemployment rates, rising prices

and the collapse of the health and social services. A prolonged and severe drought since the winter of 2000 has compounded the situation in Armenia and Georgia.

The most recent assessments of the situation with the most vulnerable conducted by the Federation in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia clearly confirmed that the plight of the Federation's 'traditional' groups of beneficiaries (elderly living alone, IDPs, refugees, handicapped, patients with chronic diseases, female headed households) has not improved and, in many instances, has become even worse. All this dramatically increases the role of Red Cross/Red Crescent in the region.

Each country in the region has similar, but not identical, priorities and varying degrees of experience of trying to solve the problems. Thus, detail of Federation programmes in 2001 may vary but the general direction will be similar, given the similarities between the needs identified. To support the three National Societies in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, the Federation's major objectives in 2001 will be directed towards health and social care initiatives, the continuation of population movement activities, co-ordination and direct support for vulnerable communities in the aftermath of catastrophe and the development of disaster preparedness structures supported by legal framework and regional cooperation mechanisms.

Operational Developments:

Armenia

Armenia became the 42nd member of the Council of Europe. It also became one of the 12 countries that have been removed from the list of trouble spots in the world according to the results of the studies conducted by the National Defence Council Foundation of the United States. Despite these facts, the situation in the country remains unstable due to growing socio-economic problems compounded by the last year's severe drought.

European leaders are urging Armenia to shut down its aging nuclear power station (NPS), identified as one of the six most dangerous reactors in the world. However, the government is loathe to sacrifice the only nuclear plant in the south Caucasus which currently produces around 40 per cent of the nation's electricity. Government ministers, still haunted by the energy crisis of 1992-1995, are refusing to decommission the station until alternative energy sources have been established. However, the Europeans have continued to keep up pressure. In September 1999, representatives from Armenia and the European Union signed a preliminary agreement to close the NPS over the next five years. And the issue was raised by Sweden's foreign minister, Anna Lindh, during a recent European Union visit to Yerevan. The Armenian Green party has joined the calls for the NPS to be closed, with the party leader claiming that the reactor is located on a seismic fault and, given its proximity to Yerevan, a possible earthquake could have tragic consequences.

The US secretary of state, Colin Powell, invited the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan to a four-day summit during the first week of April 2001 in Florida (USA), to discuss the prospects for reaching a peace deal between the two countries. The conference marked the 16th meeting between Kocharian and Aliev since a ceasefire was called in Nagorny Karabakh in 1994, suspending a six-year armed conflict which had claimed an estimated 30,000 lives. USA, Russia and France, all co-chairs of the OSCE's Minsk Group, have played an active role in brokering a peace deal but, despite their efforts, a signed agreement has remained elusive.

While the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan prepare for another round of Nagorny Karabakh peace talks, a new mood of pessimism is creeping over the south Caucasus. In the west, observers are hoping for the long awaited breakthrough, but in Armenia and Azerbaijan the scenario is much less optimistic.

Azerbaijan

Surveys of the Azeri population show that most people still believe the Nagorny Karabakh conflict can only be solved by military action. Most opposition politicians consider that any negotiations with Armenia should be "frozen" until Azerbaijan is in a stronger bargaining position. But others fear the authorities could use a war as an excuse for repression.

The two presidents met in Paris twice this year, with the third meeting taking place in the USA. All the political indicators point towards a follow-up meeting in Moscow. However, the past three months have seen significant developments. On the eve of the Paris meeting, several state newspapers in Azerbaijan published details of the three peace proposals currently being discussed by the Minsk Group. The proposals became the subject of fierce debate in the Azeri parliament. In fact, during one speech, President Aliev called on all political parties and social organisations to present their proposals for a peace settlement in Nagorny Karabakh. Experts pointed out that it was the first time in eight years that Aliev had sought a second opinion, prompting speculation that he was preparing the ground for a potentially unpopular decision. There is also widespread feeling that the peace process should go hand in hand with an anti-corruption campaign, economic reforms and increased defence spending.

In early January, Mr. Putin, the president of the Russian Federation, visited Azerbaijan. This was the first visit paid to Azerbaijan by any Russian leader after Azerbaijan received independence in 1990. Several agreements on bilateral cooperation including a joint statement on principal cooperation in the Caspian sea were signed during the visit. The visit indicated that Russia wants to revitalise its role in the region.

There have been demonstrations in various areas in response to the deteriorating conditions in the country. About 500 people who became disabled during the recent war with Armenia went on a hunger strike, demanding that the government raise their pensions and solve their social problems related to housing, provision with medicines and treatment. The protest action was dispersed by the police, with five people arrested.

On 25 January, Azerbaijan became the 43rd member of the Council of Europe, which puts enormous tasks on the country in building a democratic society meeting European requirements. Azerbaijan in turn expects that the Council of Europe will assist it in the solution of the major problem of the country - settlement of the Karabakh conflict and with the reforms leading to a free market economy.

Georgia

The abduction of two Spanish businessmen served to underscore the security concerns in the region, including Russian sentiments that the Georgian authorities are unable to control the rampant crime situation in Pankisi where 7,000 Chechen refugees have found refuge with their ethnic kin, the Kists. The Russians also claim that Chechen fighters are using Pankisi as a safe haven and an arms dump. The tense relations between Russia and Georgia continue.

Russia has also cut supplies of natural gas to Georgia which is currently locked in a crippling energy crisis. Georgia's worsening energy crisis sparked mass protests across the capital. During the winter months, most Tbilisi apartments had electricity for just four hours a day while many were completely without central heating. Families were resorting to kerosene-fueled stoves in a bid to combat sub-zero temperatures. Residents, forced to spend their meagre incomes on kerosene and firewood, became increasingly desperate.

Armenia

Disaster Response

Sixty ARCS volunteers continued providing individual counseling to 330 elderly refugees making 660 visits every week under the *Social-Psychological Services to Elderly Refugees* component. The services offered to the project beneficiaries include: social support (personal and domestic hygiene, cooking, shopping), nursing, distribution of medicines, medical supply, food and editorials. During the reported period, 45 beneficiaries were provided with medication according to doctor's prescriptions. Canned fish, buckwheat, electric light bulbs and hygiene items were distributed to 330 elderly. For the New Year, elderly in Yerevan and in two Marzes received small presents and fruit. A concert for 60 elderly was organized in Luckashin village on 1 February 2001, followed by a

distribution of winter socks, gloves, scarves and slippers. In Kotayak, an elderly couple celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. 90 elderly refugees participated in these celebrations organised by Red Cross volunteers.

Disaster Preparedness

The ARCS has continued to pursue the Disaster Preparedness (DP) initiatives with the financial support of the Norwegian and Finnish Red Cross Societies. During the first quarter, a number of general and technical DP training courses for the Red Cross staff and volunteers were carried out. The training was supplemented by simulation exercises in rescue and response operations in times of disasters. Such exercises were held in Abovjan City, Koptayak Region and in Charentsavan. The ARCS has started to respond to small-scale disasters, such as a gas explosion on 28 March 2001 in Gandzasar village. During the accident three persons had been killed and one had been badly injured. The ARCS regional response team was the only operational body providing assistance to the victims. This has been done with high efficiency and limited resources.

The ARCS has continued to develop its relationships with all members of the national DP community. A number of meetings took place between the ARCS and the Emergency Management Administration (EMA), the Nuclear Power Plant, the Ministry of Education and UNICEF on the further development of educational materials and joint activities. These activities include training for ARCS volunteers, community branches and the general public. In order to further develop the National Society's capacity to respond to disasters, additional funding is required.

Humanitarian Values

Thanks to the financial support of the Norwegian Red Cross, the ARSC continued to promote knowledge of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, its fundamental principles, and International Humanitarian Law (IHL) among the general public and other institutions. A number of training sessions were organised for community and regional branch offices in order to improve dissemination and communications skills of ARCS dissemination officers. Aside from publishing its monthly newsletter and press-releases highlighting regional/community branch events, activities and projects, the information department published a leaflet on TB, to be distributed to schools. The ARCS has been actively co-operating with media to deliver the Red Cross' message through TV, radio, newspapers and magazine reports. Full media coverage was provided on the public awareness activities organised by the ARCS on the international day of Tuberculosis. The National Society is also working on creation of the ARCS web page. An essay writing competition was organized among students throughout the country on the topic "Idea which I serve". A winner will be identified by a joint commission consisting of representatives from the Ministry of Education and the ARCS. As part of celebrations of the international year of volunteers, another competition on the best article, photo, TV and radio reportage has been announced among RC volunteers. Regular meetings between the headquarters and regional/community branch offices have ensured exchanges of knowledge and experience.

Health and Care

Currently, the Federation has no funded health projects. The Health Departments of the Federation and the ARCS have worked out a programme, which aims to reduce the risks and suffering of the most vulnerable by providing public information, education and training for the prevention and treatment of common diseases, and disseminating First Aid skills and knowledge throughout Armenia. Funding is currently being sought.

Institutional and Resource Development

The development of National Society capacities through the institutional development programme in 2000-2001 has been impressive, but the need to sustain and continue to strengthen them over the long-term presents even greater challenge. The goal and objective of the institutional development process in 2001 is to successfully extend the grassroots capacity building process down to sub-regional, community branch office levels throughout Armenia, to successfully complete the

financial restructuring process of the ARCS which began in 2000, and to enable the National Society to achieve operational and financial independence. With a limited budget, this effort has been executed through an integration of efforts and funds from the Norwegian Red Cross. During the reported period, much of these efforts were keyed to enhancing the management and operational systems and controls needed to sustaining the development initiatives. Community branch evaluation is ongoing. A seminar on Red Cross management was organised in cooperation with the German Red Cross for top management and governance.

The role of the Red Cross Youth has become the critical supporting element for the entire ARCS capacity building strategy. The goal of the *Youth Development* programme in 2001 is to develop and expand strong Red Cross youth programmes within the regional and community branch offices of the ARCS, to increase youth participation and influence in Red Cross activities, and to support efforts to assist vulnerable youth. With the financial support of the Norwegian Red Cross, a series of workshops were organised and conducted to introduce and plan this programme for regional and community branch youth leaders. Organisational management training was provided for youth volunteers in Yerevan, Vaiots Dzor and Jermuk branches in cooperation with the German Red Cross. Youth volunteers were involved in distribution of medicines and medical supplies to beneficiaries of the *Social-Psychological Services to Elderly Refugees* component of the Population Movement programme. The volunteers were very active in organising celebrations dedicated to the 81st anniversary of the ARCS. A project Clean Sevan has been initiated by the Youth RC. The German Red Cross and other donors have committed to support the project financially. The project intends to organize an international summer camp on the coast of lake Sevan and raise public awareness of ecological problems of the lake. Participants from USA, Germany, France, Hungary, Georgia and Azerbaijan will be invited.

Coordination and Management

In order to effectively execute its duties to help the most vulnerable and to assist the National Society in building its capacity, the Federation's Delegation in Armenia has been advising the ARCS in its relief operations, capacity building, institutional and resource development and other development programmes. Communication has been maintained with the Federation secretariat on the progress of relief operations, development programme and resource needs. Efforts were made to ensure that the Federation's human, material and financial resources are efficiently and properly managed. Relations were maintained with the other Red Cross and Red Crescent partners in-country, the UN, NGOs, as well as the embassies and missions of donor governments.

Azerbaijan

Disaster Response

With the financial support from the British Government through the British Red Cross, the Federation has continued to support kitchen garden holders under the *Southern Camps Agriculture* project, thus reducing their dependency on outside assistance. There are currently 307 families who together with their family members are cultivating approximately 133 ha. of land in and around the camps. The emphasis during this quarter was the preparation of land, the sowing of wheat and spring vegetables, the distribution of fertiliser and the cleaning of canals to assist irrigation when needed. Training and advice was provided on cultivation techniques to increase output. Assistance was also given to the commercial wheat growers cultivating 11,70 ha of land. Preliminary discussions were held with the refugee committees on expanding the agricultural project by including an additional 540 families and supporting them with seeds, tools, fertilizer and irrigation aids.

The *Credit Loan and Income Generation* component is continuing to monitor repayment of loans. Out of 265 loan takers, 54 have been fully repaid leaving 211 to be monitored.

The *Southern Camps Community Development* project has continued to put an emphasis on psycho-social activities aimed primarily at strengthening the self-support mechanisms and social

structures among IDPs. During the reporting period, training was provided to established *women's committees* in needs assessment, programme planning and implementation. The committees have been further encouraged and supported to play an active role in advocating issues important to displaced women. In the meeting with government representatives, the women's committees have raised their concerns such as sanitation, drainage and latrine problems in the camps. Information meetings in relations to the forthcoming committee elections were held in all the seven camps. 241 baby parcels donated by the Swedish Red Cross, were distributed to pregnant women and newly-born babies through the women's committees.

Within the *Children's Support* component, volunteers have been assisting the National Society in organising various activities, such as drama, folklore, and fine arts for children to help them learn healthy lifestyles such as hygiene, dental care, and anti-malaria measures. Novruz Bayram parties were organised for IDP children by volunteers in cooperation with the Regional Red Crescent Centre in Sabirabad. Within the framework of the project, training sessions were provided by a local NGO 'Buta' to National Society volunteers in psycho-social rehabilitation of children. 400 copies of the children's newspaper "Shakar Villasi" as well as textbooks donated by EXXON-Azerbaijan Operating Company LLC, were distributed to IDP children through the project centres.

The Federation has been also supporting the skills training centres. The centres were supplied with some furniture, game, heaters and kerosene for the winter season. Various children's activity groups were organised on the initiative of teachers and students. Skills training sessions continue in all IDP camps. An evaluation of the project is planned to be conducted by an NGO to make sure the project objectives were met and to identify future needs. Terms of reference have been drawn up. The evaluation will take place in April 2001.

Under the southern Camps project, the *Water Sanitation* component focused on the water supply and maintenance of the facilities in three camps in Sabirabad. The efforts of the sanitation team managed to bring to the beneficiaries in the camps the most consistent amount of water (approximately 63 litres per person per day). Vandalisation of the water supply system remains a problem. The Federation has been continuing education efforts to draw the IDP communities' attention to the use/abuse of treated water within the camps through its Community Development programme.

Under the Southern Camps *Food Relief to IDPs* project funded by ECHO through Finnish Red Cross, 22,844 beneficiaries were assisted with food including wheat flour, salt, chick peas and sunflower oil. The first round was finished by mid-April 2001. In addition, each of 160 IDP families living in the Southern Camps will receive pieces of corrugated iron, timber and nails to construct proper roof. Construction materials were procured with financial assistance of EXXON - Azerbaijan Operating Company LLC.

Construction work is proceeding according to plan in the Federation's innovative pilot project, the *Fizuli Repatriation Project (Shukurbeyli Pilot Project)*, which aims at repatriation of 160 families to areas lost and recaptured by Azeri forces during the fighting over Nagorno-Karabakh. In this quarter, 16 homes were built or rehabilitated with the co-operation and input of the homeowners. The Federation provided construction materials while government has committed to provide water, electricity and irrigation (where applicable), and the returnees were responsible for the actual construction work. The Federation has hired teams of professional builders that are overseeing the house reconstruction/rehabilitation. In order to ensure a safe environment for returnees, the Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA) carried out clearance of mines or any unexploded devices. Mine awareness information was also distributed before the project began.

A representative of the Azerbaijan Red Crescent Society (AzRCS) has been appointed to the project, ensuring the National Society is involved in the *Community Mobilisation* process. Encouragement has been given to establish special interest committees such as women's agricultural and small businesses committees. Monitoring of loans under the project's *Income Generation* component is ongoing, showing at this stage a very high percentage of repaid loans. A number of new applications have been received. Subject to approval of the project proposals by the Federation's Delegation and

the AzRCS, small loans of USD 1,000 will be provided to returning families. Eighty per cent of the loan will have to be repaid within one year of receiving the money in instalments as agreed with the Federation. The income generating projects will be closely monitored by a beneficiary committee to avoid misuse or failure. The returned loan money will be handed over for community based activities once a mechanism is established for handling the funds, either through a credit union or community fund. Local authorities have allocated five ha. of land for the *Green House* project. The structure of the house has been erected and prepared for planting pending arrival of procured seeds. Income from this project will be utilised for further community based initiatives.

The *Population Movement (PM)* programme has continued to develop a capacity within the AzRCS to implement projects aimed at providing assistance and social or legal counselling to the displaced. The AzRCS has been developing effective partnerships with other relevant agencies, such as UNHCR and IOM under the *Emergency Fund for Most Vulnerable Stranded Migrants* project. However, there were very few applications to the emergency fund this year. In 2000, only two migrants were provided with help within the framework of the project: assistance was provided to an Ethiopian citizen to return to his country and a refugee from Chechnya to depart to Kazakhstan. Therefore, following consultations with donor and counterpart agencies, a decision was made to reallocate the remaining funds in the project to the continuation of the *Skills Development Courses for IDP Women*, which was successfully implemented by the National Society last year. The project aims to provide and develop professional skills of refugee and IDP women accommodated in collective centres so that they may compete for jobs on an equal footing with the local population. With the present economic development, primarily focusing in the capital Baku, the prospects of fairly suitable employment should be feasible. All necessary teaching material has been purchased. Hardware was procured within the last year project and is available for the courses. The educational process, including computer, English language and business-marketing courses for 30 IDP women aged between 18-23 years old, started on 3 March 2001. So far, the courses have been successfully progressing. The AzRCS Project Manager has been controlling the study process and administrative issues. The educational process will continue till June 2001. Successful students will be awarded with certificates.

The project of *Psycho-Social Rehabilitation of IDPs* has continued to provide material assistance to the development of community activities such as knitting, sewing and art exhibitions in a refurbished community room in four collective centres located in the regions of Binagadi, Azizbekov, Yasamal and Nsimi. The community groups were also established in additional four collective centres located in the Zagulba district of Azizbekov region. Within the framework of the project, six IDPs were identified who agreed to apprentice young IDPs in knitting carpets and making clothes putting local techniques into practice. The IDPs were supplied with knitting equipment and materials. There are approximately 200 IDPs involved in this project. A psychologist was invited to provide training workshops for IDP volunteers on basic knowledge of child development, age-related symptoms and child psychology.

In March 2001, the AzRCS PM programme co-ordinator visited the Ukrainian Red Cross Society (UkRCS) in mid March 2001. The purpose of the visit was to see projects implemented by the UkRCS within the Population Movement programme, to exchange information and experience. During his stay in Ukraine, the AzRCS programme co-ordinator visited the UkRCS Social Centre for refugees in Vatutinski region. Further, the AzRCS programme manager attended the distribution of food parcels for refugees in Leningradski region. Consultations were held with the UkRCS PM programme co-ordinator on strategic directions in PM and on modalities of future cooperation.

Disaster Preparedness

Thanks to funding from EXXON and the Government of Norway through the Norwegian Red Cross, the AzRCS has been able to pursue the DP initiatives. Further efforts were made to support the National Society in the planning and implementation of a Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment, and in development of a regional risk, resource and response plan, as well as in building up a network of trained volunteers that are ready to act in time of disasters. Progress has been made in developing DP

educational materials. A leaflet and a TV programme have been prepared to increase public awareness on coping mechanisms for the most frequent disaster in Azerbaijan such as earthquake. The materials will be distributed to general public through National Society volunteers.

Humanitarian Values

The information department of the AzRCS has prepared a leaflet on the activities of the National Society. AzRCS operations were extensively covered by the local media. Articles were published in several national newspapers about the Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment carried out by the National Society as well as celebrations organised by the AzRCS on the 81st anniversary of the Red Crescent Society of Azerbaijan, including a charity concert in Sumgait. With the money collected from the concert, 50 lone elderly will be provided with food parcels through the National Society volunteers. A poster on Red Cross volunteers has been printed and distributed through the AzRCS regional centres.

Health and Care

The Federation's support for health activities in the camps has focused on strengthening the capacity of the AzRCS and on targeting those areas of public health, which are not addressed by the Government, namely that of health promotion and education focusing on endemic and seasonal illnesses. Under the ***Basic Health Care*** project, campaigns relating to water and sanitation, maternal and child health, family planning and immunisation, have been addressed. Efforts have been made to extend these activities to relevant repatriation/resettlement areas and also through regional areas targeted through the Community Development programme. Preparation has started for an anti-malaria spraying of camps, which will be completed by the Red Crescent health promoters with the assistance of volunteers. A competition is underway to develop a slogan or drawing on prevention of malaria that will be printed on Red Crescent T-shirts. These shirts will be distributed to volunteers who will be involved in a Malaria Clean Up Day in the camps, planned for early May 2001. The AzRCS health promoters are continuing to do surveillance, monitor sanitation condition in the camps and supervise treatment compliance for identified cases in the Southern Camps on a regular basis.

Institutional and Resource Development

The Federation has continued to pursue institutional and resource development initiatives under the ***Institutional Development*** programme. In order to develop understanding of a well-functioning National Society, consultations with the AzRCS leadership have continued on a regular basis. Discussions were held on division of roles and responsibilities between governance and management. Reviewing of the current organisational structure has continued. A workshop on the strategic work plan of the AzRCS was held for National Society programme/project co-ordinators. AzRCS branch development plan has been drafted, which is currently being reviewed by the AzRCS regional centres. Also, new guidelines on per diem and travel costs have been introduced. A number of agreements were signed between the Federation and AzRCS on current operations run by the National Society. The agreements define the roles and responsibilities of each party involved in project implementation. A plan on development of the National Society volunteer base has been drawn.

Based on evaluation of current income generation projects implemented in 2000, financially sustainable projects have been identified. New business plans and annual planning procedures for these projects were established. A management system for the income generating projects, with clear division of decision powers between headquarters and projects as well as clear rules regarding profit distribution were set up according to recommendations in the above-mentioned evaluation. Responsibility for the income generating projects has now been fully handed over to AzRCS.

Under the ***Financial Management*** project funded by the British Red Cross, assessment of the AzRCS financial system has been carried out as the first step of a major restructuring to be compliant with European standards. The assessment specifies needs for future systems, including needs for staff training, and computer software.

Coordination and Management

The Federation delegation in Azerbaijan has continued to assist and advise the National Society in its relief operations, capacity building, institutional and resource development programmes and other development programmes. Communication with the Federation secretariat on progress of the current programmes/projects and resource needs were maintained on a regular basis. Effective relations were ensured with other Red Cross/Red Crescent partners in-country, the UN, NGOs, as well as with the embassies and missions of donor countries.

Georgia

Disaster Response

Community Development for IDPs in Collective Accommodation project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has continued encouraging the IDP community of 30 collective centres (approximately 49,000 beneficiaries) to help itself by encouraging socialization within the collective centres, motivating the beneficiary IDPs to take a more active part in their future and become less dependent on humanitarian assistance via relevant, productive training and kitchen garden supplies. Under the *Kitchen Garden* component, procurement of seeds, pesticides/fertilizers and agricultural equipment for Spring planting is underway based on the results of the survey carried out among IDP families by the Federation and GRCS co-ordinators. 6,958 households have been identified as beneficiaries of this component. A standard agricultural package will be distributed to 4,985 kitchen garden holders; other beneficiaries (1,973) will be provided with irrigation pipes, metal fence and metal bucket according to their request. Applications for the *Skills Development Courses* are being collected. The Federation jointly with the Georgian Red Cross Society (GRCS) has continued monitoring of loans given to beneficiaries under the *Income Generation* component. Two loans were terminated due to non-payment and one project finished with a law default rate. The rest of the projects (9) are continuing with varying degrees of repayment.

Under the ***Emergency Rehabilitation of Collective Centres Accommodating Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)*** funded by USAID a construction assessment has been carried out covering all IDP centres allowing prioritisation of needs of all centres with 10 or more inhabitants. The project will allow rehabilitation of 27 medium or large collective centres accommodating approximately 6,800 IDPs, which are most urgently requiring repair in order to remedy significantly substandard living conditions as per the Sphere Project's minimum standards for shelter. Rehabilitation work will include: improving insulation through roofing repair; replacement of windows and doors; adequate and safe electrical installations; and improvement to hygiene and sanitation facilities. Basic tools will be provided to IDPs and community participation will be promoted in the project, both in terms of IDP labour during rehabilitation, and by developing and training community maintenance teams.

The Assistance to Chechen Refugees, other displaced and local population project funded by ECHO has continued the provision of humanitarian assistance to the Chechen refugees and local population of 12,500 in the Pankisi Valley. The activities include: the provision of essential medicines and medical supply, supporting the referral system and transport for patients to Akhmeta District Hospital, maintenance of health surveillance system, monitoring sanitary conditions, implementing a health education campaign and case management training for health personnel, improving the living conditions and prevention of risks by distributing winter clothes and hygiene items to refugees and the local vulnerable population.

The financial assistance of Government of Germany through the German Red Cross, in addition to other contributions from donors, have enabled the Federation to mount a quick and effective response to the severe ***Drought*** of 2000, which has compounded the situation of vulnerability in the country damaging 60 to 95 per cent of the cereal crops in southern and eastern Georgia. Within the framework of the emergency assistance, 31,000 urban-based vulnerable persons in the entire country, who are

considered by the Federation as particularly vulnerable due to the effects of both the drought as well as Georgia's deteriorating social welfare system were provided with food parcels. The beneficiaries were selected based on the following criteria: destitute urban households headed by elderly people, female headed households with young children, lone elderly and disabled people without family support, facing additional hardship due to drought.

In addition, the Federation is co-ordinating with World Food Programme (WFP) in the distribution of food (WFP-procured) to some 143,600 beneficiaries living in the rural southern regions of Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli and monitoring the distribution operation. To date, 313.9 Mt. of wheat flour and 15.7 Mt. of vegetable oil have been distributed. The distribution is carried out by Federation/GRCS distributors and volunteers identified by the local authorities.

The IDP social assistants continued the work with the IDP women and children under the *Psycho-social Rehabilitation to IDP Women and Children* component of the **Population Movement (PM)** programme supported by the US Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration (US BPRM). During the reported period, psycho-medical consultations were provided to 140 IDP children and 120 adults. Art therapy was one of the key methods applied. The consultations revealed the following psychological problems suffered by the children: the feeling of isolation, low self-esteem, the feeling of being a victim, as well as stressful emotions associated with their traumatic experience. After the work with the social assistants, an open relationship has been established between children and the assistants. The children have started to talk about their problems and share their experiences within the group. This is seen as a step towards overcoming the children's alienation from the rest of the society.

Training was also provided to the IDP social assistants by a local NGO "Ndoba" and "Foundation for Development of Human Rights". Working sessions focused on conflict management and legal issues. For the new year, 1,000 IDP children were invited to attend a theater performance. The project finished in February 2001. As international practice in psycho-social rehabilitation activities shows, it is impossible to have some sustainable results without a long-term intervention for at least another eight months, especially when dealing with the problems of children. Therefore, further funding is being sought to continue assistance to this vulnerable group of the population in Georgia.

The third *Grass-root PM Seminar* will take place in early April 2001 in Tbilisi. The purpose of the seminar is to train the GRCS network on issues pertinent to displacement as well as to forge concrete cooperation mechanisms with the local authorities. Participants of the seminar will include representatives of local authorities and GRCS branch organisations in Racha-Lechkhumi, Samegrelo and Imereti regions. Representatives of relevant national and international agencies will be also invited.

Under the *Public Awareness Campaign* 2,000 copies of a leaflet on the GRCS psycho-social activities within the Population Movement programme were printed and distributed. A documentary *Whatever You Give Away Is Yours*, describing Red Cross activities within the PM programme, has been produced. The film was shown on local TV channels. An English version of the film will be distributed to international counterpart agencies. A script for a short film on IDPs in Georgia has been drafted. The film is intended to raise public awareness of problems faced by IDPs today in Georgia. The GRCS has started negotiations with various agencies and private companies offering cooperation on this initiative.

Repair of the social rooms in Gldani (Tbilisi) and Akhaltsikhe district within the *Integration of Formerly Deported Meskhetians* component, was completed in late January 2001. The repair works included: repair of doors, windows, floor, roofing, electrical wires and glazing of interior spaces. Procurement of necessary equipment for the centres is underway. Georgian language courses for 20 deported Meskhetians in Tbilisi have started. The language courses are being provided by IDP teachers living in the same collective centre. The teachers had been trained in special language courses organised by the *Open Society - Georgia Foundation*.

With financial support available through the *Networking Fund*, the PM unit of the National Society has been participating in various seminars, conferences and meetings organised by international and local agencies on the issues pertinent to refugees, IDPs and other displaced.

The three *Mobile Technical Teams (MTTs)*, based in South Ossetia (Tskhinvali) and West Georgia (Zugdidi and Senaki) have continued assistance to IDPs in small collective centres and private accommodation, lone elderly, and other vulnerable groups in the form of minor construction and repairs. Making 3-4 interventions per day, the teams assisted 738 families in this quarter. Priority was given to destitute households headed by elderly people, female headed households with young children, lone elderly and disabled people without family support. In addition to BPRM, the British Red Cross provided funding to establish a fourth mobile team in Batumi which covers the Ajara region in West Georgia. 10,200 IDPs and 15,000 isolated elderly are located throughout Ajara. Among them 3,254 IDPs live in Batumi, 2,745 IDPs live in Kobuleti and 1,875 IDPs in Khelvachauri districts. The rest live in remote areas. They are located in the poorest living conditions, in dilapidated cottages and huts. A table 1 below shows the number of beneficiaries served during the reported period per beneficiary category.

The MTTs are filling a gap in the services provided by the other agencies in the country: the teams are assisting small-scale construction/technical needs while other agencies, including the Federation, are covering much larger scale rehabilitation. However, recently the MTTs have started to offer a much broader scope of work to their beneficiaries. Thus, the team based in Zugdidi repaired a collective centre in Kakhati, West Georgia, accommodating 55 IDP families. The centre had been badly damaged as a result of a fire last year. Leaking roof, non-functioning water supply and sewerage system, and unsafe electrical installations had created extremely difficult living conditions for the IDPs, especially in the winter. The assistance provided by the team included: water and sanitation, roof, and electrical installation/repair. As a result, the residents (approximately 220 people) now have watertight roofing. There is sufficient water supply and there are appropriate sanitation facilities on the site (available washing areas, toilets, functioning sewerage, no leakage). The team members proved to be sufficiently skilled and the quality of work inspected met with the high standard set. IDPs in the centre were involved in rehabilitation work as much as possible, thereby reinforcing community spirit and action among IDPs, which ultimately has a more positive effect on community socialisation as well as on further maintenance and preservation of the implemented work. Beneficiaries expressed gratitude for the attention and support. In light of recent surveys and following an analysis on the impact of the MTT operations, the Federation has developed a plan aiming to expand from four to seven MTTs to meet the needs among the estimated 280,000 existing IDPs and vulnerable local population. It is believed that this will also have the long-term effect of developing a disaster preparedness infrastructure.

Disaster Preparedness

During the reported period, further efforts were made to maintain the momentum of key elements of the *Disaster Preparedness (DP)* including formulation of policies, risk assessment, and establishing structures, systems and procedures. A number of training sessions were organised and delivered to the staff and volunteers at HQ, branch and sub-branch levels on DP-related disciplines: DP planning, rapid assessment, risk reduction, first aid, basic rescue, camp setup, water and sanitation, and relief/logistics. Over 150 disaster responders (RC staff/volunteers) were trained. Attention was directed towards improvement and strengthening of existing facilities (communications radios, e-mail, transport) and structures to maximise use of these resources as part of the planned programme. Further, the focus was put on improving disaster information collection, recording and timely reporting; National Society staff and volunteers of all levels were encouraged to collect past and present information on the history of disaster in their respective localities. Progress has been made on development of DP and Response training curriculum and materials to educate staff, volunteers and the public at large, in high risk areas, on coping strategies and preventive measures. In consultation with Seismological Observatory, Geological Department and Hydrometeorological Centre, posters and hazard specific leaflets were printed. The distribution is carried out through the GRCS branch organisations. These efforts will continue and will be expanded through DP programming on TV and radio, and through information/education programmes in schools and other institutions. Close

co-operation and co-ordination has been maintained with operational government agencies such as: National Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Commission (NDPPC), Ministry of Health, Agriculture, other operational line ministries and international organisations interested in DP, such as Save the Children, Academy of Educational Development, CARE and UNDP.

Humanitarian Values

The information departments of the Federation and the GRCS have continued provision of information coverage for the ongoing Red Cross operations in Georgia through local mass media. The departments were actively involved in the educational aspect of the Disaster Preparedness and Population Movement projects. A leaflet on the MTT operation was produced and distributed to the Georgia based donor and counterpart community. An extensive article about the RC current and planned activities was published in the state newspaper "Saqartvelos Respublika". The food distribution to the drought affected vulnerable communities was highlighted in three national newspapers ('*Dilis Gazeti*', '*Vecherni Tbilisi*', and the "*Georgian Times*") and agencies (*Caucasus Press*, *Inter-press* and *GEA*). An article about the situation of lone elderly in Georgia and Federation's operations assisting this vulnerable group, was placed on the Federation web page.

Health and Care

The project of *Basic Health Care for IDPs Accommodated in Collective Centres in Samegrelo* funded by the Netherlands Government through the Netherlands Red Cross, has continued to provide assistance to approximately 56,000 IDPs accommodated in collective centres in West Georgia by provision of medicines and medical supplies based on morbidity data and drug consumption; developing the current surveillance system so that there is a comprehensive registration system and a reliable record of the morbidity and mortality experienced by the population; conducting a series of technical workshops for the medical personnel (doctors, nurses, health educators) addressing rational drug use, prevalent health problems and ways of meeting the needs identified; providing health education and health promotion activities for the community at large; ensuring an appropriate Maternal and Child Health programme, and including reproductive health activities and antenatal care. The total number of consultations during the reported period was 17,482 including 4,231 for children aged 0-5 years, 2,616 for children aged 6-16 years and 9,915 for people aged over 16 years. The monthly tutorials for staff at polyclinics were attended by 90 doctors. The subjects covered were rational use of Antibiotics, Hypertension, Goitre, Rickets, Iron Deficiency and Anaemia. 30 nurses in Kutaisi, Batumi and Senaki received training in First Aid. The nurses were tested and given certificates valid for two years. The First Aid manual is being translated from English into Georgian. The Federation is planning to produce 200 copies of the manual, which will then be distributed to the GRCS regional First Aid Co-ordinators.

Institutional and Resource Development

The Federation delegation in Georgia has continued to support the GRCS's development towards achieving the characteristics of a well-functioning national society within the context of an agreed plan of action. Consultations and discussions were held with the GRCS leadership on a regular basis.

Coordination and Management

In order to effectively execute its duties to help the most vulnerable and to assist the National Society in building its capacity, the Federation's Delegation in Georgia has been supporting and ensuring the institutional capacity-building of the GRCS by advising the GRCS in its relief operations, capacity building, institutional and resource development and other development programmes. During the reported period, communication has been maintained with the Federation secretariat on the progress of ongoing operations, development programme and resource needs. Relations were maintained with the other Red Cross and Red Crescent partners in-country, the UN, NGOs, as well as the embassies and missions of donor governments in order to raise programme funds and coordinate Federation activities with programmes of other agencies, and to build the profile of the Federation to the international community, the media, the government and the people of Georgia.

Regional Cooperation

The ***Regional Knowledge Sharing*** project seeks to expand and enhance each of the three southern Caucasus National Societies' abilities to serve the most vulnerable by sharing the experience, procedures, skills and techniques, that have been learnt and/or developed by other National Societies. Within the framework of the project, supported by the Capacity Building Fund of the Federation, a regional health strategy was adopted by the National Societies and other stakeholders such as donors and cooperation partners based on the specific needs in the region as well as the Federation Strategy 2010. Two workshops were held for the National Societies to develop health promotion skills and first aid programme implementation methods. Common issues have been identified for the National Societies within the area of information, communication and marketing through a questionnaire developed and filled in by each National Society. Preparations have started for a cooperation meeting on the disaster preparedness programmes. The meeting aims to share experiences, identify gaps within programmes and find solutions by learning from each other. Another cooperation meeting, planned for May 2001, aims to build up greater understanding of community development activities within a Red Cross and Red Crescent setting, and to identify entry points for introducing or developing a community development approach in Red Cross and Red Crescent programmes.

11 candidates from the Federation's delegations and National Societies of the Caucasus region have participated in a Regional Basic Training Course for future delegates in Turkey. The candidates had been identified through formal interviews based on the Federation's Standard Interview Module (standard position description, language test, interview questionnaire and assessment form) to ensure that the most qualified candidates are recruited.

Outstanding needs

Several projects will be finalized shortly, and the programme therefore requires further support to ensure the continuation of the planned activities.

For further details please contact: Sylvie Chevalley; Phone: 41 22 730 4276; Fax: 41 22 733 03 95; email: chevalle@ifrc.org

All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>.

Peter Rees-Gildea
Head a.i.
Relationship Management Department

Martin Faller
Head a.i.
Europe Department

The Caucasus						ANNEX 1
APPEAL No. 01.58/2001		PLEDGES RECEIVED			16.05.2001	
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
CASH						
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				16'851'008		TOTAL COVERAGE 20.3%
CASH CARRIED FORWARD				533'537		
AMERICAN - GOVT		1'000'000	USD	1'628'000	20.02.01	IDP CENTER REHABILITATION & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
BRITISH - RC		53'932	GBP	129'976	30.01.01	MOBILE TECHNICAL TEAM
EXXON		12'000	USD	19'536	10.01.01	AZERBAIJAN,FINALISE ROOFING
EXXON		81'000	USD	131'868	10.01.01	AZERBAIJAN, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
EXXON		220'000	USD	358'160	10.01.01	AZERBAIJAN, AGRICULTURE
EXXON		20'000	USD	32'560	07.12.00	AZERBAIJAN, DPP
FINNISH - RC		3'017	EUR	4'582	26.02.01	AZERBAIJAN
GERMAN - RC		42'073	DEM	32'350	27.12.00	ARMENIA, HOD
GERMAN - RC		18'420	DEM	14'163	12.01.01	ARMENIA, HOD
SWEDISH - RC				61'500	11.01.01	COMM. DEVELOPMENT DELEGATE
SWEDISH - RC		125'000	SEK	21'713	05.02.01	AZERBAIJAN, IINSTITUTIONAL DEV.
SWEDISH - RC		125'000	SEK	21'713	05.02.01	AZERBAIJAN, DISASTER RESP. TIZULI REPATRIATION
SWEDISH - RC		50'000	SEK	8'685	05.02.01	AZERBAIJAN, COORDINATION & MGT
SWEDISH - RC		250'000	SEK	43'425	05.02.01	AZERBAIJAN: DISASTER RESP. COMMUNITY DEV.
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				3'041'768	CHF	18.1%
KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
Australia	Delegate(s)			27'269		
Iran	Delegate(s)			31'211		
Japan	Delegate(s)			46'488		
Netherlands	Delegate(s)			17'577		
Norway	Delegate(s)			59'959		
Sweden	Delegate(s)			67'679		
Switzerland	Delegate(s)			5'092		
Great Britain	Delegate(s)			25'790		
FINNISH - RC		381'234	FIM	97'405	26.02.01	17'937 KG SECOND HAND CLOTHES, TRANSPORTATION & INSURANCE
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				378'470	CHF	2.2%
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:						