

CENTRAL AFRICA

REGIONAL PROGRAMMES

CHF 5,094,000

Programme No. 01.11/98

The Regional Delegation (RD) was opened in Brazzaville in December 1994 and became fully operational in February 1995. Up to mid-1997, it covered Cameroon, the Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tomé and Príncipe and the Democratic Republic of Congo (former Zaire). From August, 1997 onwards, the Democratic Republic of Congo was administratively handed over to the Great Lakes region. The setting-up of the country delegation in Kinshasa in April 1997 marked the end of direct assistance from the Regional Delegation to the Red Cross Society of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

In 1996, the main programmes were Community Health, First Aid, emergency assistance to the National Societies (NSs) in health-related disasters and armed conflict and evaluation of Federation support to the NSs. A first meeting of regional NSs took place in Douala in July 1997 to discuss the increasing instability in the region and NS strategies.

The Central African Region is marked by armed conflicts in Congo (Brazzaville) and the Central African Republic. During meetings between regional NSs, the RD and Secretariat staff in July and October 1997, the increase of poverty and of ethnic intolerance, the presence of private militias and the growing number of unemployed youth were identified as additional causes of conflict.

During both meetings, the NSs stressed again the urgent need to strengthen their capacities in order to handle the situation appropriately. They decided not only to organise relief operations in support of victims of the conflicts, but to realise programmes in health, social welfare and income generation at all levels. These programmes will target reoccurring natural disasters like floods and drought as well as epidemics like cholera, meningitis, Ebola and AIDS. Information programmes and training in International Humanitarian Law are also envisaged, as are youth programmes targeted at creating a "culture of peace".

Pointe Noire, Angolan Refugees, Congolese IDPs: The Regional Delegation is also responsible for the management of the operation for 5,000 refugees from the Angolan enclave of Cabinda, who fled to Pointe-Noire, Congo following heavy fighting in 1992. Armed conflict in the Congolese capital Brazzaville in 1997 caused the displacement of tens of thousands of citizens, many of whom ended up in Pointe-Noire.

The project provides food aid, non-food items, shelter, medical assistance and support for the education of the children, and is implemented in close co-operation with UNHCR. Between 1994 and

1997, five new sites were prepared for the refugees in order to give sufficient fertile land for self-sufficiency. Food distributions were reduced from general distribution to most vulnerable, two more sites were established with more than 130 houses, as were a dispensary, warehouse facilities and water points. Seeds and agricultural tools were distributed in all sites. A bakery, tailoring service and the production of cooking pots proved valuable income-generating projects. Vaccination programmes were implemented to curb outbreaks of measles.

Objectives in 1998

- | To assist the National Societies in the development of a programme for the promotion of peace, aimed mainly at youth;
- | to provide support to the NSs for the improvement of the institutional capacities in order to better organise, motivate and train their human resources on all levels, identify the most vulnerable, develop programmes with them and elaborate a development plan;
- | to install a communication network allowing interlinkage of the local, regional and central level of each National Society, inter-regional communication and better contact with the Secretariat in Geneva;
- | to assist the NSs in developing effective fund-raising strategies locally and regionally;
- | to support the NSs in establishing a system of prevention and preparedness for health related disasters;
- | to assist the NSs in establishing a system of preparedness for relief operations in case of conflict situations and/or natural disasters;
- | ***Pointe Noire:*** The established structure of the operation continues: targeted distribution of food aid, seeds and agricultural tools to the vulnerable as well as the new arrivals, comprehensive medical assistance to all refugees/IDPs, and co-operation with governmental and non-governmental services in the region. The focus will shift to reinforcing the efforts for self-sufficiency through improved agriculture, small animal husbandry and income generating projects. The Congolese Red Cross (CRCS) plans to upgrade the present system of education, and train refugee youth in Community Based First Aid.
- | ***Regional Delegation:*** The Regional Delegation will leave its temporary location in Kinshasa and will be established in a country where security, infrastructure and support from the authorities will allow it to be fully functional.
- | ***Brazzaville:*** The rehabilitation of the Congolese Red Cross, its support to returnees and the CRCS role in the reconstruction of Brazzaville will remain a priority for the Regional Delegation in 1998.

Federation Regional Delegation support will focus on supporting Youth, Institutional and Resource development, Telecommunication, Community Health, First Aid, Disaster Preparedness and Regional Co-operation.

Programmes in 1998

Youth

Campaigns will be organised by each NS (in schools, youth camps, at sports events, through drama etc.), developed by the youth department of each NS, targeted especially at urban youth, in co-operation with schools and other organisations.

Institutional Development

In order to increase managerial capacities of the NSs, workshops will be conducted for members of regional and local committees involved in technical programmes (Youth, Health, First Aid, Preparation for man-made, health and natural disasters). These will cover the areas of resource management (human, material, finances), assessment of needs, mobilisation of volunteers, reporting, fund-raising and monitoring.

The programme of self-evaluation, which started in 1996, will continue. Priority will be given to launching this process with the National Societies of Sao Tomé & Príncipe, Equatorial Guinea and Chad. In Cameroon, Congo and Central African Republic assistance will be provided in the elaboration of a development plan. Depending on funding, a Development Delegate will be provided to the National Societies of Gabon and Chad.

Support will be given to the National Societies of Central African Republic, Cameroon, Chad and Congo by the Regional Finance Delegate to help them establish sound financial procedures

Telecommunications

An analysis will be made into the existing systems of communication in each National Society and in the region and appropriate systems established with the help of the Secretariat.

Resource Development

The identification of funding needs will be part of the Health, Relief, Youth, and Institutional Development programmes. Workshops are planned with each of the National Societies in Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad and Gabon to identify local funding sources. Disbursement of seed money to start small scale income generating projects for regional and local committees in all seven NSs is planned.

Community Health & First Aid

One hundred persons in selected NSs will be trained as trainers and technical supervisors in First Aid and Community Health for the prevention and early intervention of cholera, meningitis, Ebola, diarrhoea and related endemic diseases.

Existing training modules and materials for sensitisation and information campaigns concerning cholera, meningitis and Ebola will be translated into local languages and put at the disposal of the NSs concerned.

For HIV/AIDS/STD, the programme of peer education via the regional network will continue. In order to ensure timely response to the most common epidemics in the region, emergency reserves in cash and kind (kits, and medical material) are needed at the Regional Delegation.

Preparedness

Workshops in systems of relief and logistics in the event of conflict or natural disasters will be organised for representatives of each NS. In Central African Republic, Congo and Cameroon 20 representatives from local and regional committees will be given a one week training in systems for relief, including basic logistics. Assessment missions for the logistical needs of the National Societies of Chad, Congo, Cameroon, and Central African Republic are planned.

Emergency stocks with basic non-food items and the necessary management systems will be put at the disposal of the National Societies of Congo, Central African Republic and Cameroon.

The Regional Delegation will assist the National Societies of Cameroon, Chad and Central African Republic to manage early warning systems to deal with natural disasters.

Assistance will be given to Chad Red Cross in determining a strategy for the response to reoccurring drought.

Regional Co-operation

The Regional Delegation will facilitate regional networking by supporting regular circulation of information between NSs and organising consultation meetings on an annual and an ad hoc basis as needed.