

# CARIBBEAN

## REGIONAL PROGRAMMES

**CHF 2,349,000**

**Programme No. 01.22/98**

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The Regional Delegation (RD) went through a period of planned expansion in 1997, bringing the total number of delegates from three to five and using the full-time services of a disaster preparedness consultant for much of the year. The 16 countries covered by the Kingston-based RD since its establishment in 1991 are Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, Surinam, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago.

The importance of the RD as a regional administrative and operational centre for the National Societies (NSs) grew considerably over the last year. It took on direct responsibility for the country programmes in Haiti; the funding of a Finance/Administration Delegate greatly improved training support to NS staff and volunteers; and the RD continues to maintain flexible structures to ensure disaster response capability, thus cutting down expenditure and delays in response to major disasters in the region.

The Delegation embarked on two major new programmes during the past year: Community Based Disaster Preparedness and Resource Development, which address in a very direct manner the expressed needs of the NSs for greater support in these key areas in order to improve their capacity to meet the needs of the most vulnerable. The International Federation's strategy in these areas was crafted in consultation with the 16 NSs in two major review workshops and received further endorsement at the 1997 Regional Meeting in Belize.

With the expansion of the RD, specific attention was given to providing support for institutional development, particularly in the Latin Caribbean. This involved close consultation and co-ordination with ICRC. A new Red Cross law was about to be introduced in the Dominican Republic in late 1997 and the Development Delegate was also able to aid significantly the St. Vincent and Grenadines Red Cross in initiating an organisational revamp and total review of its activities. An agreement for future co-operation was reached with the Cuban Red Cross. There is increasing co-operation with overseas branches of the American, British, French and Netherlands Red Cross. In particular, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the British Red Cross on the regional integration of their Caribbean branches. There are good working links with the Netherlands RC through the CBDP.

All finance/administration functions of the Federation presence in the region have now been concentrated in the Kingston based RD.

As was the case over the last two record-breaking hurricane seasons, the RD maintained a high level of disaster response capability in 1997, in particular continuing to monitor and co-ordinate support to the volcano-affected island of Montserrat on behalf of the British Red Cross.

In addition to predictions of increased hurricane-spawned destruction in coming years, based on global meteorological patterns, the region is faced with many socio-economic problems. The pernicious influence of the drug trade was manifested in rising crime rates in many parts of the Caribbean. There was also concern about the economic consequences of an end to favourable trading arrangements with the European Union for the region's banana industry following a WTO ruling. This was of particular concern to impoverished communities in the Windward Islands, heavily dependent on the banana as a cash crop.

## *Objectives in 1998*

The Delegation's objectives in 1998 are:

- | To continue support to specific relief operations, making maximum use of resources within the region;
- | to improve community capacity to cope with disasters and to minimise their effects on the most vulnerable, through the continued systematic introduction of a Community-Based Disaster Preparedness Programme;
- | to develop an integrated programme of institutional development which will build on existing regional programmes and activities to achieve the synergy necessary to improve the action, organisation and social impact of the NSs;
- | to assist NSs to make measurable progress in building stronger institutions and working towards financial self-reliance through a resource development programme;
- | to counteract the spread of AIDS/HIV among young people in the region;
- | to introduce programmes in favour of youth NS members;
- | to promote the work of the Red Cross in the region together with ICRC and to disseminate the Movement's Principles;
- | to provide technical and administrative support to country programmes in Haiti and Cuba.

## *Programmes in 1998*

### **Community Based Disaster Preparedness Programme**

This programme, probably the RD's most critical activity in this disaster-prone region, responds to needs identified by all 16 NSs and many of the Red Cross branches in the region. It receives targeted, complementary support from the Institutional and Resource Development programmes. A lead role for the Federation in this area has been agreed with the main agencies active at regional level in disaster preparedness, including CDERA, PAHO, USAID/OFDA, and the Caribbean Council of Churches. The RD's Disaster Preparedness Unit is presently focusing on the development of DP materials and training for the Anglophone Caribbean, including the British and Netherlands Red Cross branches. Co-operation is also planned with the French territories in the region.

Promotional material has been developed and a first series of sub-regional training workshops has been held. Training material has been developed for NSs and facilitators at community level. A logistics needs survey has been carried out and some improvements have been made to storage capacities in the East Caribbean. Communications needs have also been addressed through improvements in the Red Cross radio-network, better procedures during the hurricane season and the introduction of e-mail capability.

In 1998 the RD will seek to:

- | improve capacities at the community level to prepare for, and cope with, disasters;
- | improve the disaster management capacity of key staff at HQ and branch levels;
- | improve logistical capacity, thereby ensuring rapid mobilisation of essential relief items to meet the emergency needs of the most vulnerable;
- | improve the communications network between NS branches and the RD;
- | reduce vulnerability at community level by the introduction of appropriate micro-projects.

### **Institutional Capacity Building**

The NSs should have the capacity to respond to the needs of a variable and unstable environment. To achieve that capacity, NS need to have consistent development plans, a strong constituency to implement those plans, a trained and motivated membership and an appropriate organisation.

1997 saw continued improvement in the RD's capacity to provide targeted support to institutional development, as illustrated by the outcome of close co-operation with NSs in Cuba, Dominican Republic and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Targeted assistance is also required for NSs experiencing institutional problems arising from an inability to meet their constitutional obligations, to ensure a correct division between governance and management.

The following initiatives will be undertaken in 1998:

- | Promote the evaluation of the Strategic Workplan for the Nineties and the implementation of the Study on the Future of the Red Cross in Latin America and the Caribbean through a review and follow-up of NS implementation of its recommendations.
- | Ensure follow-up on institutional weaknesses identified among the eight NSs which participated in the first year (1997) of the Resource Development Programme.
- | Carry out a series of workshops in NSs experiencing institutional problems, using the methodology successfully tested in 1997.
- | Maintain support and technical assistance on integrity issues as and when they occur.
- | Promote the exchange of human resources and technical assistance within the region and facilitate sharing of information and co-operation activities.
- | Promote the development of the NSs' constituency and build the NSs' capacity to take full advantage of their involvement in all regional programmes.

- | Assist in developing a Plan of Action to integrate British RC branches into regional programmes.
- | Ensure co-ordination and co-operation as required with Caribbean branches of the American Red Cross, the French Red Cross and the Netherlands Red Cross.

### **Resource Development Programme**

The overall objective is to help NSs fortify their institutional structures so they are better equipped to provide both disaster related assistance and on-going social services. The focus of this programme is on improving image and the ability to recruit and motivate volunteers, and to boost fundraising. This programme combines on-site analyses, seminars, national workshops, technical assistance and local resources to help Caribbean NSs and branches address their unique capacity building needs.

A launching seminar for the programme was held in July 1996 followed by a series of on-site audits and feasibility studies conducted in the eight NSs participating in the first year of the programme. More than 500 Red Cross volunteers and staff, donors, business and community leaders, government representatives and members of the general public have provided input into the study's findings, confirming the resource development potential in the region and the need for improved NS marketing and solicitation activities. Also realised are the financial and public awareness benefits of promoting the Caribbean Red Cross Societies as an entity to potential corporate partners in the region and world-wide. A number of regional partnerships are already being developed.

The early results of the programme illustrate a greater awareness by NSs of the need to be independent-minded and an agreement that resource development must be viewed as an important opportunity and component of all programmes and services, as demonstrated with disaster preparedness and institutional development. Also, the Resource Development Programme has been instrumental in NSs establishing high-level fund-raising and resource development committees and targeting new sources of funds and volunteer support.

To sustain and develop the momentum built up so far in 1998 the RD will:

- | Complete the initial 12-month Technical Assistance Programme (TAP) involving the first eight NSs and begin providing assistance to the remaining eight NSs.
- | In collaboration with NSs, develop mutually beneficial regional corporate partnerships, focusing on areas such as the tourist industry and forging links with disaster preparedness in particular.
- | Support the promotion of the Caribbean Red Cross Societies by developing Internet homepages for the region and individual NSs; create promotional material, including advertising and brochures, and design focused fundraising, and volunteer recruitment campaigns.
- | Establish a revolving loan fund to be administered by the RD; seed loans will be available to NSs to begin or expand appropriate fund-raising activities and revenue generating projects.

### **Regional HIV/STD Programme**

The Regional Delegation and the Jamaican Red Cross Society propose to develop a Caribbean Regional HIV/STD prevention programme, built on JRCS' success in running a youth peer education HIV/STD programme in Jamaica over the past three years and utilising its prize-winning teaching materials. The Caribbean region includes countries with the highest incidence of AIDS per capita in the whole of the Americas. It will also address the 1997 Regional Meeting's recommendation that a Caribbean AIDS/HIV Task Force be established.

The main initiatives under the programme in 1998 will be to:

- | Introduce a training system for AIDS prevention programmes targeting youth in two new pilot countries.
- | Forge working relationships between the Jamaica Red Cross and the two new pilot National Societies.
- | Establish close linkages with the youth programme.
- | Establish a Caribbean AIDS/HIV Task Force.

### **Youth Programme**

The programme seeks to strengthen the Youth Red Cross network in the Caribbean, ensuring better targeting of assistance to vulnerable children and adolescents in deprived communities. It will pursue the implementation of the Youth Regional Plan of Action approved by NS youth leaders in Belize in 1997. This plan of action responds to the Federation's global strategy for youth.

- | Organise a Training Workshop for NS youth leaders on management, planning and branch development.
- | Co-ordinate and support the Youth Focus Group (Dominican Republic, Grenada, St. Lucia and Jamaica NS).
- | Create a database of youth resources and activities in the region.
- | Publish a monthly one-page bulletin on Caribbean youth issues.
- | Facilitate the exchange of young people as technical expertise.
- | Hire an experienced youth worker to oversee both this and the expansion of the peer education AIDS/HIV programme.

### **Information and Dissemination Programme**

The RD's work in this area is closely bound up with all other programme areas, particularly that of resource development with its focus on image, promotion and fundraising. The *Caribbean News* continues to be an important vehicle for both Red Cross and non-Red Cross audiences. Press releases are issued regularly directly from the RD which also supplies NSs with regular support to meet their own media needs. Publicity has been organised for World Red Cross Day and the World Disasters Report. The media throughout the region has responded enthusiastically to the support being raised for Montserrat by the Red Cross in the region.

The RD will pursue and consolidate the information programme as follows:

- | Continue publication of Caribbean News on a minimum quarterly basis.
- | Promote World Red Cross Day.
- | Participate in the global launch of the World Disasters Report 1998.
- | Maintain good relations with the media and provide technical support to NSs in this area.

- | Explore with media representatives and the ICRC the development of a pilot workshop on RC Principles and action internationally and in the region.
- | Establish a regional Red Cross database in combination with the Resource Development Programme and publish the results in the form of a Caribbean Red Cross Directory.
- | Provide journalistic support for the promotion of the Red Cross on the Internet as outlined in the Resource Development Programme.