

SOUTH EAST AND EAST ASIA

REGIONAL PROGRAMMES

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While the quality of life in East and South East Asia — measured in terms of life expectancy, infant mortality and per capita income — has improved decisively over recent decades, there are still vast disparities between and within countries. Although poverty has decreased, the number of poor is constant or on the increase in some countries. One of the most striking indicators of imbalance is the regional phenomenon of migration, from rural to urban areas and from lower to higher income countries. The human costs of these substantial foreign currency earnings are family disintegration and the social exclusion of legal and illegal migrant workers.

Increased mobility also exacerbates the spread of HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases, some of which are re-emerging at an alarming rate. Health services in many countries are now facing both the disease pattern of underdevelopment and the ill-health symptoms of industrialisation and urbanisation.

The region is still the most exposed to natural disasters in the world. On average, more than 46,000 people are killed and 120 million affected annually by natural disasters in Asia. Recurrent natural disaster is still one of the main causes of persisting poverty in the countries regularly exposed to typhoons and floods. Although the region has been generally peaceful in recent years, internal conflicts still plague several of its countries.

This context of dynamic social evolution and new humanitarian concerns means that the ability of the Red Cross and Red Crescent to adapt and change is more important than ever. Social transition and the erosion of basic values require new ways of disseminating humanitarian principles. The needs of newly excluded and vulnerable groups must be identified and met, through credible humanitarian

advocacy on their behalf. Changing disease patterns require a redefinition of the roles of all health service providers. Natural disasters in urban environments pose new challenges. While the will to do voluntary service is generally decreasing, humanitarian agencies need to attract more volunteers and professional staff. The substantial financial resources in the region must be tapped for humanitarian purposes.

Many National Societies (NSs) in the region are not well equipped to meet these new challenges. Structures and resources are inadequate in some cases and a clear sense of mission in a new age is sometimes missing. They need systematic, long-term development support if they are to respond successfully to expectations and needs. It is against this background that Regional Programmes for 1998 have been designed.

Objectives in 1998

The main objectives of the Regional Delegation (RD), Kuala Lumpur, are:

- | To mobilise and co-ordinate the region's human, material and financial National Society resources for a common humanitarian purpose;
- | to assist National Societies in upgrading ongoing and developing new service programmes. Through its Disaster Preparedness, Health, Information and Institutional Development programmes, the Regional Delegation provides assistance to all central areas of National Society activity and attempts to co-ordinate different programme areas for maximum efficiency. Urbanisation, migration and resource mobilisation based on integration with information and dissemination activities are major themes that cut across all regional programmes in 1998;
- | to maintain a high emergency response capacity. This is an overriding and permanent task for the Regional Delegation.

Federation key policies are furthered inter alia through inclusion of the Code of Conduct and the Principles and Rules of Disaster Relief in the training of the regional emergency response team, as well as in a disaster preparedness training course module which will be ready for implementation in 1998.

Programmes in 1998

Disaster Preparedness

This programme aims to enable National Societies to build, integrate and fully utilise their capacity to respond to the effects of man-made and natural disasters at the local and national level, and to build a regional level disaster response and preparedness capacity.

Many NSs have an efficient disaster response capacity, involving mainly relief distribution structures, but lack the basic elements for a more community based approach, not least in urban settings. In other cases response and preparedness functions are organised in a vertical structure that precludes realisation of the National Society's full potential for disaster preparedness.

The Regional Disaster Preparedness Unit will assist NSs in upgrading their preparedness capacity. Main activities will be advisory services for the NSs, as well as the provision of tools in the form of a training module, disaster preparedness guidelines and facilitation of in-country training. The Unit will also enable a staff-on-loan to take part in all its different activities. Close co-operation with the Regional Delegations of ICRC is foreseen for in-country training.

The regional component of the programme is focused on further developing the capacity and expertise of the regional emergency response team established in 1997 and ready for emergency assessment deployment. In close co-operation with the Health Unit, a selected group of National Society health staff will be added to the team, and topics such as water and sanitation and emergency health included in its training. A new element in the regional part of the programme will be a review of major emergencies twice yearly in order to systematically analyse and learn from the very considerable experience available in the region.

Health

This programme is divided into three sub-programmes.

Capacity Building aims to enable National Societies to improve the quality and relevance of health programmes and thereby respond to emerging health hazards, and to institute a regional capacity for health analysis and planning.

With the rapidly changing epidemiological situation in the region, NSs need to be able to redefine roles and priorities within the totality of a national health service system. Some countries are simultaneously facing the challenge of the traditional disease pattern of underdevelopment and of new “civilisation” diseases. A particularly serious challenge is the re-emergence of infectious diseases such as malaria, dengue fever and tuberculosis. Red Cross/Red Crescent health managers need new skills to plan, implement and evaluate new programmes, based on a sound public health approach, combining elements such as water and sanitation, disaster preparedness and social welfare. The programme includes training seminars and workshops on health planning. It is also planned to establish a regional resource centre in the Regional Delegation.

The regional part of the programme tackles the same issues at regional level, including the establishment of a regional core group of health planners. This group will address issues such as National Society health services in urban environments and for not readily accessible groups such as illegal migrants, with the aim of proposing health components in a regional plan of action. A staff-on-loan position will be offered in the Regional Delegation within this programme.

The Health Information Programme aims to establish a regional capacity to identify, monitor and learn from health trends and action in the region.

This should be regarded as one of the core functions in a regional health programme. In order to make possible Federation long-term planning based on the timely identification of new health hazards and trends, it is imperative to have the capacity for regular disease monitoring and surveillance. The aim is to train National Society staff to carry out this function at the national level, which means a close link to the Capacity Building programme. This programme will also contribute to the regional emergency review presented under the Disaster Preparedness programme.

The Community Based First Aid (CBFA) Programme aims to define a relevant and clearly understood policy on first aid and enable National Societies to implement it in the region.

Based on the considerable achievements of the CBFA programme in the region, this programme aims to reconcile the new approach with more traditional approaches. Particular emphasis will be put on first aid and CBFA in urban contexts and as tools to reach migrant populations with health services. A specific objective is to create an Asian First Aid Certificate. The establishment of a

regional task force is foreseen, with the ultimate aim of making one National Society the focal point for future activities.

HIV/AIDS

This programme aims to prevent new HIV infection and AIDS-related discrimination in Asia by developing strong national Red Cross/Red Crescent programmes through regional collaboration.

The Asian Red Cross and Red Crescent AIDS Task Force (ART) was launched in 1994 and now comprises 12 National Societies. It focuses on training young people at grassroots level as youth peer educators. ART is co-ordinated from its secretariat in the Regional Delegation.

In 1998 ART will concentrate on evaluating and sharing lessons learned in responding to the HIV pandemic. Non-ART NSs in the region will be approached to share the ART experience, thus strengthening the regional network. A major task will be to structure the handover of the ART Secretariat responsibilities to one of the ART member NSs. This will have implications for the organisation of the RDKL Health Unit.

Information

The three objectives of this programme are: to maintain and expand the capacity to efficiently respond to information needs during emergencies, increase support for the Red Cross/Red Crescent through dissemination of its values and activities, and widen the scope and increase the quality of National Society information activities.

Information activities must be closely integrated with dissemination and resource mobilisation in order to optimise communication between National Societies and the public and mobilise support for the humanitarian cause of the Red Cross/Red Crescent.

In order to improve its emergency response capability in 1998, the Programme will upgrade the technical capacity of the RD Information Unit, building on the successful implementation in 1997 of the pilot project on electronic/digital reporting of text and images from the field. The main regular activities under the second objective will be publication of four issues of Asia Pacific FOCUS and editorial support to the Regional Website, hosted by Hong Kong Branch of the Red Cross Society of China. In addition, information service activities are scheduled for the Regional Conference, the regional launch of World Disasters Report and other events.

The development part of the programme contains two pilot projects with the NSs of Nepal and Vietnam which, jointly with ICRC, will be assisted in implementing an integrated information strategy linking information, dissemination and resource mobilisation. In addition, the Information Unit, in collaboration with the Regional Delegations in New Delhi and Suva, will facilitate sub-regional information workshops based on the regional workshop model used in 1997. The Unit will be strengthened by the recruitment of a second delegate in late 1997, ensuring the flexibility needed in order to provide emergency response capacity while maintaining regular information tasks.

Institutional Development

Under the general goal of promoting well functioning National Societies in the region, the specific objective of this programme in 1998 will be to promote institutional change in NSs.

The humanitarian challenges facing NSs in the region are matched by equally challenging opportunities. A young and well-educated population and very substantial financial resources remain largely untapped for humanitarian purposes and represent a tremendous potential for NSs and the Movement. It will be one of the very important objectives of the ID programme to address these issues and to build a common strategy and support structures to assist the National Societies in this resource development field. The ID programme will build on the access to NSs in the region through

other programmes to promote institutional evolution reflecting the changing demands and opportunities.

The Regional Delegation will seek acceptance for more profound organisational change among Societies' senior management and governance. It is planned to appoint an Institutional Development Delegate as of 1 July 1998 to launch a programme which will build largely on experiences of NSs in the region.

Strategic Planning

This programme provides the framework for executing some of the most important tasks of Regional Delegations — those that will result in a change of direction for old Federation and National Society programmes and the launching of new ones in response to newly identified humanitarian concerns. It builds strongly on close and regular consultation with National Societies in the region, and on an established network with other regional agencies and institutions. Its principal objective is to contribute to finding the medium and long term direction of the Federation in the East and South East Asia region and to mobilise resources for implementation.

In 1998 it is expected that the Asia Pacific Regional Conference will provide general guidance for the coming years, but that it will be up to the Regional Delegation to support the process of translating this guidance into more specific implementation. Furthermore, the Delegation plans to prepare or commission position papers on new issues of concern, in particular on the phenomenon of population movements in the region. Systematic efforts will be made to seek representation on regional bodies and to access governments and institutions that could provide financial support for Federation activities.

Delegation Management

In 1998, the RD will increase from 5 to 6.5 delegates and from 7 to 9 local staff. Two staff on loan positions will be offered under the Health and Disaster Preparedness programmes. The increase in personnel makes an extra vehicle and renovation of office space necessary.

INDONESIA

Indonesia, the largest and most populous country in South East Asia, is also one of the most disaster prone nations in the region. The Indonesian Red Cross, with its 800,000 members and volunteers, has extensive experience in disaster response (including presence in conflictual areas in East Timor in close collaboration with ICRC) and is a member of government disaster management bodies at all levels. Most recently, in the second half of 1997, the National Society launched an emergency programme to relieve the health effects of the forest fires in Sumatra and Kalimantan, while simultaneously providing food assistance to the drought-affected population in Irian Jaya. A Federation emergency appeal in late October was designed to enable the National Society to train and mobilise its volunteers for intensive health education while providing local community care for the worst affected and most vulnerable groups of the exposed population.

In order to expand the Indonesian Red Cross's disaster mitigation capacity, a three year disaster preparedness programme has been designed with the assistance of the RD in Kuala Lumpur. The Indonesian Red Cross and the Federation have agreed as of 1998 to station a representative in Jakarta to advise on its implementation and assist in branch and institutional development. This posting will also improve the Federation's ability to provide timely assistance during emergencies.

The specific objective of the Disaster Preparedness programme is to strengthen the coping capacity of vulnerable communities through the establishment of the necessary human and material resource infrastructure in a community based disaster preparedness approach.

The programme is being co-ordinated with the Indonesian government's programme for the 22,000 poorest villages. It will be implemented in two phases. The first phase will include the training of senior provincial and branch staff and the provision of emergency equipment — paving the way for a community based second phase, in which public information, vulnerability and capacity assessment, training and community organisation and planning will be the main elements.

LAOS

When the Federation Delegation opened in 1992, the Lao Red Cross (LRC) was a small organisation with limited activities, mainly in Vientiane. Today there are 33 paid staff at LRC HQ and another 30 in eight provincial branches, as well as some 640 active volunteers.

A government audit/evaluation of the Society, completed in May 1997, brought a change of leadership. Structural changes at LRC HQ are expected to follow, plus a series of provincial branch assessments and modifications.

An evaluation of the Federation Delegation support to the LRC during the period 1992-1997 was scheduled for late 1997. It will recommend strategies, targets and programme components for future Federation support to the Society.

The main objective of the Federation Delegation in 1998 will be to continue support to the LRC in the implementation of its 1997-2000 Plan of Action. This will include structural and institutional development, blood programme, youth, HIV/AIDS, CBFA and health promotion, women's development, relief and disaster preparedness, plus — a major new activity — support to national rural development, especially assistance to ethnic minorities in remote areas through micro-projects in water and sanitation, food security, etc.

The Delegation will also help develop the management, financial, fund-raising, community development, foreign language, communication and computer skills of LRC staff at HQ and branch levels.

As the programme funds (totalling CHF 1.2 million) will be covered by PNSs who are already supporting these projects in Laos, the Federation urges donors to finance the Delegation support and management costs.

MONGOLIA

National Society Development

The Mongolian Red Cross Society (MRCS) continues to make steady progress in its institutional development. Given this pattern of growth, it is anticipated that a Federation Representative will be needed to provide in-country support until mid-1999, when the Delegation would be closed. The Regional Delegation, Kuala Lumpur, would continue to provide support. In 1998 the Federation Representative will assist the NS in on-going prioritised programmes. Management skills training will be given to branch managers and to MRCS Headquarters staff. Red Cross Youth projects will continue to provide RC Youth with skills training, and to foster community activities and recruitment. Strengthening of the RC Youth Programme in both Headquarters and branches will be prioritised. The Youth Training Centre will acquire training aids to increase skill capacity of the Youth Volunteers,

including computer training. The cattle breeding programme will also continue. An evaluation of the 3 year plan (1995-97) will take place in mid-1998.

Health and Community Based First Aid

During the last two years, health and CBFA training has been largely theoretical. In 1998 the MRCS will introduce practical training programmes and develop and procure training aids. It will also increase its training in HIV/AIDS prevention and community education. The MRCS will procure 10,000 first aid kits for new drivers. This gives the Society the ability to start-up its driver first aid training programme, through agreement with the Ministry of Justice. New drivers are obliged to purchase a kit after the first aid training, conducted by MRCS trained instructors. After the start-up period, this will become an income generation activity not requiring donor support.

Information and Dissemination

The MRCS will undertake an active media campaign in 1998 to promote its activities and enhance its image throughout the country. The Society has identified several themes for this endeavour, capitalising on the millennium. Information training workshops will be held in selected branches throughout the country to reinforce local information capacity. In addition, a printing shop will be set up at MRCS Headquarters. Ultimately it is hoped that the Society will be able to generate some income through commercial printing, in addition to substantial savings in their own costs.

Community Service

The MRCS will continue with its community service work through skills training and income generation. The main purpose of this programme is to contribute towards the improvement of the situation of the vulnerable by strengthening community-based, volunteer social work activities, emphasising self-sustainability. Assistance provided will be material, psychological and educational.

The sewing workshops will be enhanced by the procurement of additional equipment and expansion of the training programmes. Culturally appropriate clothing designed and made specifically for the demanding needs of winter will be manufactured for the disaster preparedness programme as well as generating income for participants and programme sustainability. The burial boot making workshops have been successful and will be expanded, as market demand is increasing.

With the establishment of the Ulaanbaatar Social Service Centre, a number of vulnerable groups have been identified: orphans, young children of single mothers, and street children. The MRCS Youth Volunteers will help identify those targeted for assistance, and will be directly involved in dissemination, Summer Camp. Under the guidance of the Youth Co-ordinator, they will distribute clothing, food, and sanitation materials.

To strengthen the financial base of the Centre, the MRCS will develop a bakery in the Centre itself. Proceeds will go to feeding the very poor, establishing a disaster fund, and on-going operational costs for the project. Approximately 50 loaves will be provided free daily to street children and vulnerable single parent families. Other loaves will be sold at low cost to identified vulnerable people.

Disaster Preparedness (DP)

The MRCS will continue the extension of DP training programmes to branches throughout the country. These programmes focus on disaster relief work, disaster preparedness, the conduct of relief operations, warehousing, information and working with the media in times of disaster and for disaster preparedness. As branches receive training, relief supplies will be stocked in strategic places. The different types of disasters require branches to develop response systems that meet the potential needs of their communities - including different types of relief stock. Community Based First Aid training will focus on initial disaster response. The MRCS will also construct a warehouse in Ulaanbaatar so

relief goods can be readily at hand for distribution nation-wide Integration of tracing activities will also be evaluated.

MYANMAR

Institutional and Resource Development

The Federation will continue to assist the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) in meeting its objective of becoming a well functioning and self-sufficient NS. Drawing on Federation-facilitated resource development training in 1995, the MRCS will continue to prioritise the strengthening of its financial resource base to develop a viable fund-raising and income generation plan linked with MRCS activities. The programme will also undertake an ID assessment of the operational management capacity of the MRCS National Headquarters and assist in its enhancement. Development of six selected RC branches is planned. MRCS managers at national and branch levels will receive appropriate training in resource management and income generation to link all MRCS service programmes to ID/RD.

Community Based First Aid (CBFA)

This programme, operational since late 1996, aims to improve the skills and knowledge of trained RC first-aid volunteers throughout the country in order to provide adequate first aid coverage to vulnerable communities affected by disasters and daily emergencies. The key element of the programme is that the communities themselves decide which health problems the training will address. Training-of-Trainers and volunteer training will be carried out. The programme will be evaluated in the middle of the year.

Rakhine Integrated Assistance Programme for Returnees

This programme aims to assist MRCS in developing its capacity to plan, implement, maintain and evaluate community based development programmes. The Federation will provide the MRCS with technical support for community and branch development. Funding for individual projects is provided through a MRCS/UNHCR agreement. Federation support will become even more essential as UNHCR downsizes and ultimately discontinues its support.

The returnees are some of the most vulnerable people in Myanmar - ethnically and geographically separate from most of the country. The MRCS would like to expand services throughout the area and thus assist in the improvement of the conditions of the vulnerable. The programme will enable MRCS to identify local community development projects, and to develop training modules for MRCS Community Development workers. It will also address the skills training needs of the vulnerable in the community so they can effectively partake in income-generation activities. The development of local MRCS branches is also prioritised.

Disaster Preparedness (DP)

The MRCS has an active, well-established volunteer system. The community based elements in some branches are well integrated and provide quick and efficient relief to victims of disasters. This includes collecting and distributing food from the non-affected population, arranging shelter and providing first aid. Learning from what works successfully in some areas of the country and defining the need for disaster preparedness in others are integral parts of developing a National Disaster Preparedness Policy and Strategic Plan. The role of the MRCS headquarters in relation to disaster preparedness and response and how it can support its branches will be defined. The role and external relations of MRCS as a national relief organisation will be established; all staff and volunteers of the NS will know their respective roles before, during and after a disaster. A participatory planning process will be adopted. In addition, relevant training workshops, incorporating community-based first aid and disaster tracing, will take place around the country to develop human resource capacity. The work is expected to take a minimum of nine months. At the end of this process a policy paper

with a long term DP Plan will be submitted for approval and implementation to the MRCS Executive Council.

VIETNAM

In 1998 the Federation will provide support to the Red Cross of Vietnam (VNRC) in implementing five programmes selected by the NS and outlined below. Their overall objective is to contribute to establishing a well-functioning NS capable of responding to emergency needs and serving the most vulnerable people in the community.

Institutional Development

Institutional development (ID) and capacity building will remain a top priority for the VNRC in 1998 and beyond. "VNRC 2000", an ID project introduced in September 1995, has conducted a series of workshops in VNRC HQ and 24 provincial branches across the country. In 1998 another 17 provincial branches will be targeted. The programme's objectives include developing a well-functioning VNRC by the year 2000 and helping the VNRC to define its mission, vision and roles at the national and provincial level. It also includes training for VNRC staff in management, computer and language skills.

Community Based Health Care (CBHC)

CBHC is a traditional VNRC activity. The ASEAN group of RC/RC Societies chose VNRC as "focus point" for health programmes. The strategy is now to focus on Primary Health Care (PHC), HIV/AIDS Prevention, Voluntary Blood Donation and Traditional Medicine. The Federation supports the Community Based First Aid programme (CBFA), as part of the regional CBFA initiative. Training activities, organised on a pilot basis in three provinces since 1996, will continue in 1998 in ten new provinces.

Community Based Disaster Preparedness (CBDP)

With PNS/Federation support, the VNRC has constructed 40 DP Centres in the most disaster prone regions in Vietnam. These centres serve as focal points for volunteer DP networking in the community. Many require additional capacity building to consolidate their position. In 1998, 14 training courses will be organised at provincial and district levels with 284 participants. The mangrove plantation programme (aimed at disaster mitigation) will continue in seven coastal provinces.

Community Based Social Work (CBSW)

Social work has long been a core activity in all VNRC branches. A training programme for VNRC social workers was developed in 1996 and training material pilot tested in three provinces. It will be expanded in 1998, primarily focusing on "VNRC 2000" provinces. A national core group of qualified trainers will be formed to train the trainers. There is also a need to develop additional material for volunteers. Community based rehabilitation "Micro-Projects" will target 12 provinces in 1998. A core of 30 staff/volunteers will be trained in each of these provinces who will then train 4-5,000 volunteers at district and community level.

Branch and Community Development Programme (BCDP)

In 1998 a BCDP programme, supported by five European PNSs, will start in six provinces in central Vietnam. The VNRC plans to initiate a similar programme in three provinces in the Mekong Delta, with special focus on the "New Economic Zones" and Ho Chi Minh City. The objectives include building up self-sustaining RC branches with effective development and relief activities for risk prone communities, and strengthening the capacity of selected provincial RC branches in planning and programme implementation.