

CAMBODIA: DISASTER PREPAREDNESS, CAPACITY BUILDING

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The Cambodian Red Cross successfully held its General Assembly as scheduled. Following the election of governance and executive officers, the Society is now moving ahead on the implementation of its three year plan of action. The Federation, which is supporting this crucial process, continues to require financial and technical support from the National Societies and donors.

The context

The Programme outlined in the Federation's 1998 Emergency Appeal seeks funding for two objectives in 1998: Disaster Preparedness and Relief; and Capacity Building. Support to capacity building will be through organisational and programme development, concentrating on the implementation of a three year development plan and the consolidation of community based programmes.

Latest events

The Cambodian Red Cross successfully conducted its 2nd General Assembly as planned on 30 April. The Federation, the ICRC, National Societies working bi-laterally in Cambodia, and a Danish Red Cross Legal Base Team were invited to attend the meeting as observers.

The General Assembly:

{ adopted the Report on CRC activities for the last four years as well as the Three Year Development Plan (1998 - 2000).

{ adopted the Financial Report for 1994 - 1998

{ amended the modification of the Statutes of the Cambodian Red Cross

{ elected the Central Committee (15 members) of the Cambodian Red Cross for a second term.

Madame Bun Rany Hun Sen was elected as President by the Central Committee and Dr. My Samedy was appointed Secretary General.

Mr. Ouk Damry (former deputy Secretary General) was appointed first vice-president and Madame Ieng Mouly second vice president. Madame Ouk Maly was appointed Treasurer.

The CRC Central Committee met for a second time on 5 May and appointed Ms. Pum Chantinié as first deputy Secretary General and Dr. Nguon Sakhon as second deputy Secretary General.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

Immediately after the Assembly the Management of the CRC began work on implementation of the Three Year Development Plan. Whilst the CRC's overall goal is to work towards improved living conditions and capacity for Cambodia's vulnerable, its objectives are:

- to strengthen its organisation and management
- to strengthen Red Cross relationships at regional and international level
- to increase funding support for its programmes
- to strengthen the Society's public image.

The CRC, both at the management and governance level, is actively seeking support and advice from the Federation in order to strengthen its capacity to reach the goal and objectives outlined above.

The first practical step of the CRC will be to reorganise its structure at the central and provincial levels, in line with defined priorities. The second important issue is to conduct the Audit for 1997 which was already agreed upon by the CRC and the Federation last year and will be funded by the Federation during the first half of 1998.

As far as programmes are concerned, support for institutional development initiatives and Community Based Disaster Preparedness (supported by AmCross and the Asia Disaster Preparedness Centre through the Federation delegation) will be the high priority programmes of 1998. There will also be important on-going bilateral support from a number of key donor National Societies.

Outstanding needs

Close co-operation with the new President - emphasising the Federation's advisory role - has already been established, focusing on the future plans of CRC. It is essential at this stage and when developing the plan of action, that the Federation delegation has adequate resources to follow through on its commitment to the Cambodian Red Cross. Moreover continued support and assistance from the ICRC delegation in Cambodia, sister National Societies currently working in Cambodia and PNSs, is a must if the Movement is to assist in the further development of this National Society.

External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

Based on an offer of the Danish Red Cross to assist the Federation Secretariat with the legal aspects of the institutional development of National Societies and the protection and improvement of their integrity, a team of three Danish lawyers has just completed a 10-day Federation mission in Cambodia. The team participated in the CRC Assembly as observers, and held discussions with the CRC Governance, Management and officers at both national and provincial level. A series of meetings with the Federation, ICRC, various UN Agencies, IOs and NGOs was organised in order to obtain a comprehensive picture of CRC and its work in Cambodia. The outcome of the team's work will be a set of criteria to be used in drafting, revising and updating National Society statutes.

Contributions

See Annex 1 for details.

Conclusion

The Cambodian Red Cross (CRC) continues to make significant progress towards its emergence as a well-functioning National Society, however, there is still a considerable amount of work to be done.

In a context where 40% of the population earn less than USD 11 per day (EIU, December 1997), where 120,000 people are infected with HIV (UNDP, Human Development Report, 1997) and where as many as 200 people lose limbs as a result of land-mines on a monthly basis, there is an urgent need to develop indigenous humanitarian capacity.

In mid 1998, the Cambodian Red Cross is well placed to fulfil this requirement, however, to achieve this goal, the International Federation must receive greater support from its donors. Whilst a detailed plan of action will be drawn up during the coming weeks, support to the Federation and CRC is essential if this opportunity is not to be lost.

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