

# **PAPUA NEW GUINEA:**

## ***Emergency Relief, Capacity Building***

*9 September 1998*

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*Once funding became available mid-year, operations made major headway. They are now increasingly shifting the emphasis from relief to rehabilitation and stressing community involvement and responsibility. With the peace process security has improved, but logistics are still difficult .*

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### ***The context***

After nine years of secessionist conflict, the PNG Island Province of Bougainville entered a new era of hope with the signing of a Cease-fire Agreement on 30 April 1998. The signatories were the PNG National Government, the Bougainville Transitional Government (BTG), the pro-government Resistance and finally the rebel Bougainville Revolutionary Army/Bougainville Interim Government (BRA/BIG).

The Federation/PNG Red Cross (PNGRC), has been present on the island since the early days of the conflict -- the only humanitarian agency able to operate freely in all areas of the island. The new environment of calm and peace bodes well for the next phase of operations in support of the thousands of people displaced as a result of the conflict and as laid out in the 1998/1999 Plan of Action.

### ***Latest events***

The Burnham/Lincoln Agreements that led to the cease-fire laid out a series of objectives aimed at promoting a return to peace, reconciliation, and rehabilitation. Among the most significant were the holding of election by the end of 1998, the laying down of arms, the creation of a neutral, weapons-free zone in Arawa and the withdrawal of troops from Bougainville. With some limitations, all of these objectives have been reached in the past months.

The security situation has improved but occasional incidents involving fire arms, robbery and intimidation occur as a reminder that progress remains fraught with difficulties. Most

Bougainvillians want an end to violence and accept that if any form of autonomy or devolution is to be possible in the future, it must be preceded by peace and stability. Widespread, intense political debate and activity goes on, but traditional reconciliation is also taking place.

## ***Red Cross/Red Crescent action***

The Federation Plan of Action for 1998 was part of a three phase approach to Bougainville's needs. In 1997 the operations were geared to emergency relief assistance targeting individual displaced families throughout the island. This intervention was extremely successful and, entering into 1998, with funds still available the need continued to address additional pockets of vulnerable groups in every corner of the island. While waiting donor commitments for the projects a start was also made on the second phase. The projects for 1998 had specific objectives that would develop naturally from the 1997 Family Pack operations:

1. Reduce the "Relief hand-out" component and move towards rehabilitation, resettlement and community self-reliance.
2. Increase the responsibility and involvement in Red Cross programmes of traditional or newly emerging local authorities through the council of chiefs and elders, all of which were identified as the appropriate structures by the peace process. The objective of all Bougainville projects is to emphasise participation, responsibility and sustainability.
3. Increase the training and capacity building component, especially at the community level.
4. Increase further the capacity and expertise of the Federation/PNGRC staff to take on additional responsibilities.
5. Strengthen the "mobile" emergency operation configuration of the Federation team to that of a more traditional longer term structure.

Progress on all planned projects has been made. However the considerable logistic and procurement process could not start before June, after major donors made final funding commitments in late May. In addition the country delegation was called upon to respond to the serious drought from November 1997 to April 1998 and, more recently, to undertake the emergency response operation following the devastating Tsunami tidal wave in Aitape. All of this made for sporadic activity on Bougainville.

### **Village Resettlement Kits (VRK) project ●**

A formula was developed to meet the need of returning villagers for basic construction tools and equipment for resettlement, house building and repair activities, and to rehabilitate community infrastructure. This project has been designed to encourage communities to undertake self-administered village improvement initiatives and not just accept handouts. Distributions are through 17 existing gazetted Village Councils of Elders or Chiefs, or other suitable groups that fairly reflect their community. Responsibility for distributions is left with the elders. The Red Cross procures, delivers and on a random basis monitors the ongoing sub-distribution at village level to ensure transparency, fairness and suitability. The arrangements have proved successful and well received by those communities serviced to date.

The kits, each valued at around PGK 6,500 (CHF 4,390), contain the following items, sufficient for a village council comprising between five and seven villages.

Cross cut saws	Claw Hammers	Door Hinges
Bow saws	Wood Chisels	Screwdrivers
Axes (small & large)	Sledge Hammers	Tape measures
Bush Knives	Files	Brace & Bits sets
Spirit Levels	Heavy hoe heads	Pinch Bars
Gardening fork heads	Nails (Four sizes)	Squares

The first 20 Kits were purchased from funds carried over from 1997. Phased distributions similar to the Family Pack operation of last year should allow completion of this project by the end of October.

### **Community Health Care Projects ●**

The Health programme for 1998 is an extension of the ongoing 1993/97 Primary Health Care support to health centres and aid posts, particularly those in remote or sensitive areas occupied by the BRA and accessible only by the Red Cross. The projects this year include:

- **The continuation of the delivery of essential drugs, basic equipment and materials.**
- **Assistance in repairing and rehabilitating Health Centres and Aid Posts.**
- **The upgrading of skills and training for health workers, particularly in the areas of clinic management, drug protocols and management, diagnosis and prescription techniques.**
- **The assessment and support of general health and welfare in communities, and Community Health Training and First Aid.**

Following the arrival of a new Health Delegate the training and detailed programme assessment is well under way. In addition, in conjunction with NZODA, AusAID, MSF and the BTG Health Dept, the Red Cross will evaluate an assistance package to the major Health Centre in Central Bougainville in Arawa. In the meantime the other health activities have been fully operational this year.

Along with each Medical Kit a kit of appropriate basic equipment will be delivered. Short term assistance has also been given in the form of essential specialised drugs for Leprosy and TB to augment the dwindling stocks at Arawa and Buin Health Centres.

### **Water & Sanitation ●**

As part of the Community Health Programme the need to improve the overall standard of water supply, protection, quality and use around Health Centres and Aid Posts was identified. The PNG Water & Sanitation Delegate has made preliminary assessments on a number of clinics with a view to establishing a minimum standard of supply. A stock of hardware and materials for upgrading to this standard has been procured. With the added pressure on water & sanitation work due to the ongoing drought activities as well as the demands likely to emerge in the Aitape rehabilitation operations, a second water sanitation delegate will be sought for Bougainville and its outer islands and atolls plus the island provinces of New Britain and New Ireland.

### **Trauma Counselling for youths and children ●**

As part of the Social projects identified in the 1998 Appeal this programme will commence during the coming school holidays. Teachers from various regions of Bougainville will be brought together in a series of workshops to be arranged by the delegation in consultation with the BTG Education dept. Two qualified volunteer consultants have been identified.

### **Social Projects ●**

In conjunction with AusAID the first of a series of distributions of Education packs has been carried out to schools. These packs will in future be distributed in collaboration with the Bougainville Transitional Government.

### **Education and Awareness ●**

A consignment of wind-up radios were donated to the Red Cross operation. These were distributed by the Red Cross in July to a total of 49 schools around the island.

### **Social Projects/Community Support Activities ●**

As part of a request for assistance from the Arawa Hospital the Red Cross has helped to organise a community based project where members of the town population volunteer to prepare and deliver

meals to the hospital to maintain a three meal a day regime. The Red Cross will not directly manage the project but will provide cooking pots, plates, cutlery and additional materials including gardening tools to establish a hospital vegetable garden for fresh produce. This project is beginning to bear fruit and a fund raising campaign has been started by the hospital board to maintain the momentum.

### **Logistics ●**

Logistics will remain the single greatest challenge. Many roads and bridges have been repaired but considerable difficulties remain in the bush and remote areas. The Red Cross logistic capacity has been increased by the purchase of additional vehicles.

### **Delegates & Staff ●**

The Bougainville team now has a new Team Leader, a Health Delegate and support from the PNG based water & sanitation delegate. In the last few weeks the new team has made great progress in changing the profile of Red Cross operations and presence from emergency relief to rehabilitation and future development and capacity building. This has already met with approval from all sides as a longer term Red Cross presence has been given high priority by both the BTG and the BRA/BIG. It is planned to add a Logistic Delegate, based in Lae and responsible for support to all operations in PNG. A newly appointed Development Delegate (based in Port Moresby) will be closely involved with the training and capacity building components that are a part of all Federation programmes on Bougainville.

The Bougainville local staff will be augmented to 12 covering positions from Field Officers from last year, warehouse, project assistants, administration staff and security. In addition, with the expanded fleet in an operational area still without any repair facilities, tools or supplies, a mechanic has been taken on.

### **Security ●**

There is currently a spate of robberies and petty pilferage. The Red Cross warehouse was robbed, but losses were minor. A new fence has been erected around the main supply warehouse. Particularly sensitive areas are being avoided and regular contact maintained with Police, PNGDF, BRA field commanders and officials at all times.

Communications and telecom capacity has been improved with new Satphone with data links to Port Moresby and Geneva through e. mail and fax links.

## ***External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media***

There are close contacts with the PNG Office of the UNDP which has programmes identified for Bougainville and where there may be future co-operation with the Red Cross. Close liaison is maintained with EU, as with the other two major donors in PNG, AusAID and NZODA. The four major NGO agencies currently operational on the island -- MSF (Buin), OXFAM/NZ (Arawa), NZVSA (Arawa), ADRA (N.E), World Vision (Buka) -- meet regularly and are planning a co-ordinated approach to monitor projects and general progress.

*PNG Govt. Office of Bougainville Affairs (OBA).* Through the ministry in POM and an office in Arawa a regular conduit to the PNG Government is maintained. Working Group meetings are planned to co-ordinated NGO/Govt/Local NGO and council activities.

*BTG/BRA/BIG:* The Red Cross meets frequently with senior leaders and officials to co-ordinate and expedite deliveries of assistance.

*PMG:* At all times the various commanders and personnel of the group have been willing and keen to assist the Red Cross. Some of the PMG personnel need a better understanding of the mandate,

principles and work that guide and limit Red Cross relations with military units and it is suggested that some form of detailed briefing be organised for incoming PMG staff.

The peace newspaper "Nuis Belong Peace" which is distributed by PMG teams and patrols throughout the island is an excellent way to inform and advise the population of all agencies' activities, distribution dates and locations.

*Media:* Increased awareness and information exchange through the media, both local and international, are planned now that the need for a low profile appropriate to the conflict is over. A mission by the Regional Information Delegate (Kuala Lumpur) is planned to assess both the Federation and PNGRC needs in this area.

## ***Contributions***

See Annex 1 for details.

## ***Conclusion***

While the peace initiative is making headway, the work load for the Red Cross and other agencies remains very heavy. The mid-year influx of funds has enabled progress to be made in all projects. Now that the Red Cross pipeline is fully resourced the next months will be ones of intense activity as distributions are carried out simultaneously at various central points around the island.

Peter Rees-Gildea  
Director  
Operations Funding & Reporting Department

Hiroshi Higashiura  
Director  
Asia & Pacific Department