

RWANDA: REHABILITATION, DISASTER PREPAREDNESS, AND CAPACITY BUILDING

18 June 1999

appeal no. 01.11/99

situation report no. 1

period covered: January - March, 1999

With the challenging security situation which exists throughout the Great Lakes region of Central Africa, the implementation of basic relief and development programmes has been restricted. The additional constraint of very limited funding has further impeded activities. The Federation has attempted to respond in support of the Rwandan Red Cross (RRC) by focusing on Institutional Development, training, and restructuring. Despite the difficulties encountered, recent discussions have resulted in what the Federation considers a more realistic and viable course of action for the RRC.

The context

Rwanda continues to suffer from the consequences of the 1994 genocide. Mass population movements to and from the country put constant pressure on attempts to normalise the situation. It is in this context that the 1999 Appeal was planned, with the following objectives:

- { to address the country's housing shortage, as well as the deterioration of community infrastructure such as schools, health centres, and water sources;
- { to complete the process of training 360 community volunteers in the country-wide network of Community-Based First Aid Programme (CBFA);
- { To complete a disaster preparedness and response plan in co-operation with the government and humanitarian organisations; and
- { To assist in sustainable community development working with vulnerable groups.

On the surface, the security situation in Rwanda remains peaceful, although several incidents were reported outside the capital, particularly in the neighbouring north-western region and along the border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Over 15,000 Interhamwe and former soldiers of the Rwandan armed forces are now reportedly supporting the DRC government forces and, making incursions into Rwanda and attacking villages near the border to harass the inhabitants and disrupt Rwandan government programmes. Several incidents took place in the west and north of Rwanda and neighbouring regions, with some of the incursions occurring less than 50 kms from Kigali.

In Kigali itself, the situation remained stable and calm, although theft and other crimes continue to be rife. The Security Council of Kigali recently announced that infiltrators, demobilised soldiers, criminal gangs and street children were largely responsible for security problems in the city.

The government officially maintains a strong armed presence in the capital, particularly during the evening and at night-time, to keep the peace and protect the population.

Latest events

While the security situation continued to improve, there were further incidents of intimidation despite a strong military presence in the region. From January to March, the Umudugudu re-settlement programme was carried out in a calm and peaceful atmosphere, and the 650,000 intended beneficiaries (displaced persons) are now installed in a new protected village located to afford inhabitants access to their farmland. People have gradually come to accept the programme, particularly when they were resettled somewhere near their former village/hill. Furthermore, according to some reports, these people, who have been living in a state of war and instability for several years, have now ceased to support rebels who are returning to the country and hiding in the hills to disrupt resettlement programmes.

Rwandan refugees who had sought assistance and protection in the DRC in recent years have begun to return home at a rate of several hundred per day or per week. They are received by UNHCR trucks and, under the supervision of government representatives, taken directly to their home commune. It is expected that the number of refugees returning will continue to rise due to troubles in the Kivu area and the move to impose a cease-fire and the increasingly stable situation in Rwanda.

Elections were held for "secteurs" and "cellules" throughout Rwanda on 29 March, and the process was generally considered fair and transparent.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

RRC Action w

The financial crisis was the most significant concern of the RRC during this period, hindering the implementation of programmes. The problem is based on the fact that the RRC has had great difficulty in preparing viable humanitarian and institutional development programmes acceptable to the Participating National Societies (PNS) for 1999. On the basis of discussions at the end of February, it was decided that a task force, formed by representatives from the PNSs, the Federation and the ICRC, should be set up in Rwanda to assist in developing a strategy and programmes for Rwanda for the year 2000 and beyond.

Although the need to cut headquarters and operational costs has been discussed on various occasions, the RRC experienced difficulty in developing a policy to restructure its headquarters as required, taking into account political considerations, the difficult and complex employment situation, and the factor of extended families in Rwanda.

Despite a lack of funding, the RRC managed to participate in and carry out work in the community related to training first-aid teams, relief work, and youth programmes.

The ***Central Governing Committee (CGC)***, the supreme governing body of the RRC, held its quarterly meeting on 24 January 1999. The following substantive issues were discussed: 1) communication difficulties, the lack of leadership, cohesion and teamwork at headquarters; 2) management problems; 3) the need to establish appropriate management procedures and to hold regular meetings at headquarters; 4) budgetary problems and the need for monthly financial reports; 5) the lack of funding; and 6) the lack of a links between governance and the executive. There was general consensus that the RRC was not operating efficiently as a national humanitarian organisation. The treasurer and the vice-president of the CGC resigned and will be replaced at the General Assembly scheduled for later this year.

The ***Social Community Service Department***, consisting of the social health and relief services, was primarily involved with implementing and co-ordinating bilateral programmes. During this quarter, in

addition to performing the day-to-day duties as activity manager and co-ordinator and dealing with the enormous amount of work involved in planning for 1999, the head of department took part in the following meetings and activities: 1) weekly RRC management meetings; 2) the CGC meeting; 3) a technical meeting and field visit for the Spanish Red Cross programme in Musambira; 4) meeting of the Psycho-Educational Commission for the Kacyiru orphans programme; 5) participation in a Ministry of Health seminar on the implementation of a national disaster preparedness and prevention (DPP) programme; 6) follow-up of a community project in rural Kigali; 7) follow-up of the Swiss Red Cross project to train anaesthetists; 7) meeting on the Swiss Red Cross community support project in Butare; 8) meeting of the Resource Development Commission; and finally 9) training, monitoring and field visits in connection with the activities carried out by his department.

The respective heads of the *Social Health and Relief Services* assisted to facilitate a First Aid in Conflict Situations training-of-trainers seminar for 66 persons from 18 January to 5 March 1999, a course funded and directed by the ICRC. Follow-up training was given for community-based first-aid (CBFA) volunteers from 12 February to 6 March at the national university of Rwanda in co-operation with the Youth Service. The Social Health Service also carried out follow-up work on the community development micro-projects launched in the communes of Gashora and Gikomero in the Kigali prefecture. The Relief Service continued its work with the Ministry of Health to develop a national DPP programme, in which the RRC will play a vital role through its prefecture centres and its own DPP programme.

Following an assessment visit by the secretary general of the RRC and a member of the Secretariat, the RRC prepared and implemented an emergency operation to assist displaced people in northwestern Rwanda, who were still in transit camps under the Umudugudu government programme. The operation consisted of two phases, the first carried out in Nyamutera for 7,010 displaced families, and the second in Cyambingo for 2,185 families. The operation was prepared by the head of the relief service, and the technical support and the supplies distributed were provided by the Federation. After a somewhat slow start, the operation was completed successfully. In all, approximately 9,200 pieces of plastic sheeting, blankets, jerry cans, cooking pots and bars of soap were distributed by RRC volunteers from the Ruhengeri prefecture. The operation, which was funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), also served to re-establish relations with the United Nations agencies operating in Rwanda and, at the same time, prompted a reopening of dialogue with the ICRC on humanitarian work in regions where access is restricted (for security reasons) and on relations amongst the components of the Red Cross Movement, in keeping with the Seville Agreement.

The *Development Department* continued to improve the institutional development of the RRC both at headquarters and branch level, comprised of training, information dissemination and youth services. The department is responsible for the organisation, follow-up and reporting of institutional development activities, which included the 1999 plan of action seminar, preparations for self-assessment, the governance workshop and management training seminars for the branches.

In co-operation with the ICRC, the *Information Dissemination Service* established its plan of action for the year in publicity-related areas. The service also participated in providing training for organizers/disseminators in Gitarama in January and in preparing another training course for Gikongoro in April. The head of this service was also heavily involved in the preparations for the 8 May Movement celebrations.

Approximately 115 youth section trainers began providing instruction for volunteers in schools, with the objective of training 2,300 young people by the end of 1999. Thirty-nine students at the national university have already been training. In fulfilment of its responsibility to monitor and support micro-projects in the communes, youth service personnel visited the apiculture project set up by the 99 members of the youth section of the Rusumo communes. By February, the 2,000 traditional beehives had already produced 150 kgs of honey.

The **Training Service** participated in the following activities in the first quarter of the year: formulating an institutional development programme; setting up a goat-raising project in Umutara; restarting the "Rutobwe baker's" project; restarting the youth club; helping to prepare the plans and projects of the prefecture committees; and follow-up of the "school shop" project in Mbogo.

The **Finance, Administration and Project Department** is responsible for RRC accountancy and general administration, human resources programmes and projects to raise funds for the National Society.

The **Human Resources Service** submitted a draft proposal for staff regulations and a personnel evaluation scale to the CGC meeting for discussion, suggestions and approval. These two items were returned with comments and will be resubmitted at the next CGC meeting.

The head of the **Project Service** is in the process of developing the Kacyiru social and cultural centre as a source of revenue, with the profitability study currently under review to ensure that anticipated expenses and revenues have been accurately calculated. The Spanish Red Cross has indicated some interest in this project.

Joint RRC/Delegation Activities w

The **Construction Unit**, despite a shortage of funds, completed a number of projects and prepared others, included:

- { completion of 100 houses and 100 latrines in Munini and closing of the construction site;
- { preparation of quotations, topographical surveying and talks with local authorities in relation to a water conveyance project funded by the British Red Cross Society for the village of Munini;
- { construction of a recreation centre in the commune of Musambira in the prefecture of Gitarama, funded by the Spanish Red Cross as part of its community programme in cooperation with the RRC;
- { preparation and construction of a repair pit for the Federation vehicle repair workshop (completed on 19 March 1999);
- { preparation of quotations, invitations to tender and selection of bidders, contracts and start of construction work for prefecture centres in Kibungo and Gikongoro; and,
- { visit to and surveying of sites in the city of Kigali and rural Kigali prior to the construction of houses as part of the 1999 programme, and various other preparatory activities.

A four-day 1999 plan of action seminar was jointly organised at the St Paul Centre in Kigali in January, 1999, bringing together the heads of department and service and the prefecture secretaries to formulate, plan, co-ordinate and integrate programmes within the 1999 Strategic Plan, and to discuss ways in which to direct and manage these programmes. The seminar, the first of its kind in the recent history of the RRC, was extended for an extra day and was welcomed by all those involved, providing a forum for a candid exchange of views and paving the way for the implementation of the new RRC decentralisation policy. This new policy, the components and procedures of which have yet to be defined, accords precedence to the prefecture committees in the identification, development and implementation of programmes to meet the needs of the vulnerable in the communes and prefectures. These programmes will be monitored by headquarters staff once the RRC prefecture authorities have demonstrated their ability to deal with all aspects of the projects to be implemented.

Federation Activities w

The Delegation began the year with two new delegates: the Head of Delegation and the logistics delegate. These additions brought the total number of delegates to five (Head of Delegation, finance/administration, DPP, construction and logistics). The DPP post became vacant in February and remains unfilled.

The Delegation specified several areas where costs could be cut, mainly in logistics. All possible reductions have been identified such as selling unneeded vehicles on the local market, terminating contracts on two warehouses, streamlining vehicle repair costs, and making reductions in the radio equipment used.

The Disaster Preparedness and Prevention delegate assisted the head of the RRC relief service in preparing an emergency operation in the northwest of Rwanda.

The logistics delegate has been working on reorganising, restructuring and centralising all the elements of the department, namely purchases, warehousing, communications, and the vehicle fleet. In February, the logistics delegate organised all the logistic aspects of the first phase of the relief operation in Ruhengeri for displaced people in the camps at Nyamutera and Cyambingo (see RRC relief activities for a description of this operation). In total, almost 10,000 blankets, jerry cans, pieces of plastic sheeting and bars of soap were donated to the RRC for distribution. In addition, the Delegation received four new emergency health kits from Nairobi in preparation for a medically-focused relief operation to be carried out at a later date. Finally, the water and sanitation equipment donated by ECHO, which had been stored in Nairobi, was transported to Kigali and given to UNICEF to be used in the northwest areas.

Bilateral Programmes Activities w

Relations with the National Red Cross Societies of Switzerland, Belgium, Spain and Germany, which work with the RRC on bi/trilateral programmes in Rwanda, continued to improve. The concepts of working methods and organisation discussed at Geneva during the meeting to formulate a strategy for the Great Lakes region at the end of February were implemented, permitting a progressive move towards a closer working relationship, greater cooperation, more open, effective and regular communications and more successful collaboration.

Outstanding needs

A steady flow of income covering a defined period of time is essential if Federation and RRC activities are to continue.

The Delegation has been operating with only a minimal number of delegates, and retention and delegate staffing is a serious ongoing operational constraint.

External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

Relations with the ICRC continued to improve at all levels. Regular weekly meetings are held between respective representatives of various agencies.

Co-ordination with all United Nations agencies also continued, with active participation at all meetings dealing with humanitarian matters in Kigali. The relationship with the UNDP and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is particularly co-operative. The Delegation has actively promoted a working link between United Nations agencies and the RRC, one that had been missing (particularly with UNHCR) in January.

Liaison with the ministries requires improvement to ensure that the work of the Federation in Rwanda is acknowledged.

Contributions

See Annex 1 for details.

Conclusion

Effective progress has been made since January in improving the working relationship and partnership with the RRC, an accomplishment achieved under very difficult circumstances arising from a desperate shortage of funds. Despite a very slow start, the Federation is confident that with proper support the RRC will develop into a Society capable of implementing successful and effective operations by adjusting its operating methods and procedures and its structure.

Peter Rees-Gildea
Director
Operations Funding and Reporting Department

Bekele Geleta
Director
Africa Department