

# ***LIBERIA: SPECIAL REPORT***

13 July 1999

***appeal no. 01.05/99 (Revised budget)***

***situation report no. 04***

***period covered: January - June 1999***

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*Faced with a 1 per cent response in April to the appeal for programmes in Liberia, the Federation has slashed back budgets by 55 per cent and reduced projects and beneficiary figures. It is now seeking CHF 2.6 million for the remaining six months of this year, to help 150,000 people -- 300,000 fewer than the original target. Unless support materialises rapidly the programmes will have to close. Despite the difficult financial and operational context, the Liberian Red Cross has been providing a range of relief services for IDPs and returnees, running a health clinic in Monrovia, building latrines and training health personnel.*

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## ***The context***

After seven years of war, peace was restored in Liberia in 1997. Since then, the country has been struggling with reconstruction, rehabilitation, reconciliation and development. The economic situation is difficult, with unemployment at an estimated 85% or higher, severe poverty (a per capita income of less than USD 120) due to a concentration of wealth in the hands of a few (60% of the country's wealth belongs to 4% of the population), and 60.7% adult illiteracy. The country continues to suffer from a poor water supply (only 11% population receives clean water), while access to adequate sanitation is 16.9%. Because 95% of the health infrastructure was destroyed, over 90% of the population does not have access to basic health care.

To help the Government address development needs, UN agencies and other INGOs are assisting it in rehabilitating Government health facilities, the reconstruction of the national database, good governance, development of local co-operatives that provide credit; resettling the displaced; targeting ex-combatants, and develop sustainable livelihoods through micro credit projects.

## ***Latest events***

The economy appears to have taken an upturn recently, due to the improved security environment, and better international ties with other African leaders and the rest of the world community. There is an influx of investors into the country to assess the situation. In July electricity will be restored to a portion of the capital (after nine years).

On the surface, the security situation in Liberia is peaceful, but there have been several recent incidents outside the capital. In April, gunfire was exchanged between government troops and unidentified armed gunmen in the city of Voinjama, Lofa County, and a group of senior UN officials, a diplomat and donor representatives were abducted and robbed of their personal effects. Several days later in the Bopolu

area, a Lutheran World Services warehouse was looted in two separate incidents. The government set up a Committee to prevent the occurrence of similar incidents.

Despite the fluctuating security, Liberians continue to return home. According to ANCHOR, 16,566 persons have been repatriated since January 1999, bringing the total repatriated to 107,104. The Government estimates that another 209,000 persons have returned spontaneously.

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

The Appeal for Cote D'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone presented in the 1999 Emergency Appeal (Programme 01.05/99), sought CHF 4,756,012 for Liberia. By April, when only 1% funding had been secured for this part of the appeal, the Federation and the National Society began to streamline the project activities and revise the budget.

This work has now been completed. The budget has been revised downwards to CHF 1,198,927.---, a reduction of 55%. The programme objectives and the plan of action for each project have been adjusted, based on the following considerations:

1. the current needs of the most vulnerable in the country,
2. a reduced target population (from 450,000 to 150,000) and smaller geographical coverage,
3. the capacity of the National Society,
4. the remaining time frame (from July to December)

Despite the cutbacks in LNRCS/Federation activities brought on by the severe funding difficulties, the LNRCS has managed to carry out community work related to health, water and sanitation, relief and institutional/resource development. Assistance to date has taken the form of shelter kits, the construction and rehabilitation of wells, latrines and chapter (branch) facilities, and the establishment of income generating projects in chapters.

### **w Community Health/Wat.San (PLR520)**

Based on the revised objectives, and in co-ordination with the Ministry of Health, the Red Cross will support six clinics providing curative and preventive care for the most vulnerable population.

At present, due to financial constraints, only one clinic is operational. Situated at the LRCS headquarters in Monrovia, it is serving an average of 650 persons per month -- a patient load that has recently increased due to the improved quality of services, the high-level of professionalism and a "patient friendly" environment that includes such simple measures as a fresh coat of paint on the walls, the refurbishment of the benches with foam cushions and drinking water available for waiting patients. The clinic staff conduct "health talks" three times a week on the most common illnesses and health problems observed during the previous week. Topics typically include education on nutrition, malaria prevention, STD, AIDS, and safe motherhood.

A medical laboratory attached to the HQ clinic provides services to the patients attending the clinic and to patients referred from Government and private facilities. In May, the laboratory facilities were upgraded with reagents and equipment. The income generated from the clinic and laboratory fees will be used to sustain the lab, as well as offset the National Society's operational costs (i.e. staff salaries, administration and logistics). Bi-monthly staff meetings are held and committees have been established to improve the flow of work in the clinic and lab and also improve staff and management working relations. In addition, manuals providing guidelines on clinic services, guidelines for treatment, a standardised drug list for the rural and headquarters' clinics, a standard list for administrative and cleaning supplies, a training manual on health management and the job description for each position have been finalised.

**This Health programme has received 10% funding so far. CHF 242,725 are urgently required in order to continue this essential service. Subject to funding, the five remaining clinics scheduled for re-opening are located in Bomi, Nimba and Cape Mount counties.**

### **Other Health players**

The main health centres in Zwedru and Harper, which were badly damaged during the war, are now operational on an out-patient basis. They were partly refurbished by the Liberian Government, with support from Children Aid Direct (CAD) and MSF International.

Merci-Liberia has provided support in making three health posts functional within the Threnbo district of Grand Kru county.

### **Water and Sanitation**

Despite some logistical setbacks, Watsan activities are under way: they include the construction of five institutional pit latrines, 30 family latrines, and seven wells and the organisation of community clean up campaigns. In the Gbarzon district, Southeast region, six towns are actively engaged in the fabrication of 77 Ferro cement culverts, and the construction of 32 institutional latrines and 17 slabs and San plat slabs. Brick laying for the institutional latrines is in progress and collars to support slabs have been cast. Several workshops, such as Training of Trainers (TOT) for 21 volunteers and community members, have been conducted within the framework of the Community Based Health programmes. In addition, there has been on the job-training and coaching through the temporary assignment of headquarters' staff to the chapters in the Southeast and regular visits have been made by the LNRCS senior Health staff and the Federation Health and WatSan delegates.

### **Other Wat/San players**

In Grand Gedeh, the European Union (EU) and Action International Contre La Faim (AICF) are engaged in water and sanitation activities, but not in the same operational areas as the Federation/LNRCS. Other key players are Concern Worldwide, TEAR Fund, and Liberians United to Serve Humanity (LUSH).

### **w Relief and Disaster Preparedness (PLR510)**

An estimated 60,000 persons remain internally displaced in Monrovia and its environs. They need transport back to their communities of origin, shelter materials and tools to re-build their homes, safe drinking water, sanitation and medical facilities. The Red Cross is involved in the distribution of relief items (i.e. Family and community kits), and the distribution of food provided by WFP and used clothing donated by Children Aid Direct. The Red Cross has established links with support programmes such as CRS, GTZ, CAD, UN organisations (WFP, UNHCR) and EU to assist in meeting the needs of the IDPs and returnees.

During the period May-June, the Red Cross:

- v Distributed 400 family kits consisting of pots, pans, soap and plastic sheeting to returnees in Grand Kru.
- v Distributed 996 family kits to 4,321 persons under Phase III, and 247 family kits to 790 persons under Phase IV (transport of IDPs by sea to the Southeast). Remaining population to assist in Phase III is 6,683 families (33,415 persons) and in Phase IV 1,753 families (9,210 persons).
- v Provided first aid and distributed food aboard two sea transports to Greenville,
- v Assumed responsibility for the transit centre, registration, first aid services, distribution of food and non-food items to returnees,
- v Provided first aid and escort for the road convoys to the final destination of the returnees.

**Support to the IDP programme, designed to resettle the returnees in their communities of origin, is now critical: CHF 314,267 is urgently required for the provision of shelter kits, training and the DPP part of the programme.**

### **w Institutional Development (PLR002)**

Despite poor infrastructure in the operational area, the high cost of transportation and the shortage of funds, the Construction Unit completed a number of projects and the several events and activities at three vocational centres, thanks to a very motivated and professional team at the field and headquarters' level:

- ✓ The renovation work on the chapter office in Bong and a four room guest house was completed,
- ✓ A generator house was completed in Zwedru,
- ✓ Construction and electrical materials for offices and guest houses in Grand Gedeh and Maryland chapters were dispatched to the operational areas,
- ✓ The National Society organised a major fund raising and membership drive jointly with ICRC and supported by the Federation and EU in June. A concert in celebration of the Millennium and the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions was held with an attendance of more than 20,000 persons. In July, a Beauty Pageant contest was held, with attendance from diplomatic missions and government officials. All proceeds from both events will support operational activities,
- ✓ Quarterly Governance meetings are conducted,
- ✓ Regular Management meetings are taking place, though there is room for improvement,
- ✓ Good monthly and quarterly reports are submitted.
- ✓ The vocational training programme for 120 war affected youth commenced in April at three vocational centres.

Despite these successes, LNRCS continues to suffer from constraints in capacity building: the zonal branches involved in the operations still lack appropriate facilities, and the programme for the development of LNRCS' own resource base is still in its early days.

**CHF 312,802 are urgently needed in order to effectively build capacities of LNRCS at the level of three zones and selected branches as well as to establish an income generating base for the Society.**

#### **w Co-ordination and Management (PLR501)**

The co-ordination, planning and management of the Federation's assistance to LNRCS' operations and development as well as the co-operation with other agencies, both national and international, require the presence of a Federation's country delegation in Monrovia. **CHF 310,799.-- are required immediately in order to avoid the closure of the delegation and assure the smooth implementation of the programmes.**

## ***Outstanding needs***

A steady flow of income covering the remaining six months of the year is crucial if the Federation and LNRCS activities are to continue. Unless the needed cash support materialises almost immediately, the programmes covering institutional development, the provision of shelter kits, and health care services to the vulnerable population will have to close.

The Delegation has been operating with a minimum number of delegates. The replacement of the Finance and Water/Sanitation delegates is critical: suppression of these two key positions will create a serious operational constraint.

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

Relations continue to improve at all levels. Weekly meetings are held with the representatives of various agencies. Within the health and watsan sectors, liaison with the respective line ministry is well established and monthly meetings are conducted. Co-ordination with the INGO and United Nations agencies also continues, with active participation at all meetings dealing with humanitarian matters. The

relationship with the UNDP is co-operative, while discussions are underway with UNHCR to become an operational partner.

## *Contributions*

PLR002 (Development)	CHF 71,460.93
PLR501 (Co-ordination and Management)	CHF 127,618.40
PLR510 (Repatriation and DPP)	CHF 111,830.37
PLR520 (Community Health/Wat.San.)	CHF 52,791.39

## *Conclusion*

Good progress has been made this past quarter (April-June), although under very difficult circumstances and with an acute shortage of funds. Despite a slow start, the Federation is confident that with proper support the LNRCS will be able to implement the revised plan of action. However, if programmes, which have been severely pruned, are to continue smoothly, commitments to the operation need to be formalised as quickly as possible. Donors are therefore urged to notify the Federation of their intended support, whether in-kind or cash contributions, as a matter of urgency.

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