

RWANDA: REHABILITATION, DISASTER PREPAREDNESS, AND CAPACITY BUILDING

07 October 1999

*appeal no. 01.11/99 (revised budget)
situation report no. 2
period covered: April - September 1999*

The Rwandan Red Cross Society (RRCS) and the International Federation have worked closely together over the months to reorient programmes and restructure the National Society. Despite the fact that real progress has been achieved in improving the management structure and internal processes of the RRCS, a low level of support has handicapped the initiatives. Therefore, the Federation has reduced the budget for this Appeal but underscores the essential need of donors to support the operation during this critical transition period, or risk losing the genuine progress achieved.

The context

Rwanda continues to suffer from the consequences of the 1994 genocide. Mass population movements to and from the country have put constant pressure on attempts to normalise the situation and it is with these two major influences 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 countrywide 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.

The general security situation improved considerably during the period. Many initiatives and policies of the government are producing positive results, increasing the population's support for the government and away from supporting rebel elements (Interhamwe and Ex-Forces Armées Rwandaises).

In spite of the recent signing of the Lusaka Accord, the situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) remains volatile and has the potential to continue to destabilise Rwanda. Despite the progress made, much of Eastern DRC remains highly insecure with civilians, soldiers, and vehicles frequently falling victims to ambushes.

The peace process in the DRC started in earnest during June with initiatives from different sources aimed at bringing all the combatants together. Rwanda implemented a unilateral cease-fire in early June and set as an overriding condition "the dismantling and disarming of the Interhamwe and the ex-FAR", before withdrawing its troops.

Some 23,000 refugees have returned to Rwanda since the beginning of the year, attempting to flee the continued fighting in eastern DRC and to benefit from the increased stability in Rwanda. They have been assisted by the government as well as UNHCR which has reopened transit camps in Gisenyi and Ruhengeri. Rwandan officials estimate there are still "more than 30,000 refugees in Eastern Congo".

The "villagisation" (or *Umudugudu*) process of the government in the north-west has been well accepted by the population, contributing greatly to restoring stability in the region and facilitating the development of the area.

World Red Cross day was celebrated in Kigali and in the twelve Prefectures. In Kigali, approximately 1,000 persons attended the celebrations which were presided over by the President of the Rwandan Red Cross.

Latest events

The overall security situation has continued to improve during the period. Very few incidents are now occurring as the military has established a presence in the rural and urban areas. The 650,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) have been integrated in their new villages with the help of the humanitarian agencies and now have very liberal access to their land.

Rwandan refugees continue to return home from the DRC to re-establish residence. During this period three official air repatriations have occurred, each of about 300 persons, organised by UNHCR with in-country assistance from the Rwandan Red Cross Society (RRCS).

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

Rwandan Red Cross

Management •

The past five months have been a very difficult and busy period for the RRCS. It has embarked on the process of reorganising itself through a self-evaluation, the development a long-term strategy for its humanitarian and institutional development programmes with the help of a task force, and finally, serious restructure of the Society. All staff received notice of termination, effective from the end of September, and inevitably, such uncertainty has had a negative effect on morale and output of the staff.

In mid-May, the RRCS went through a self-evaluation process with the assistance of the Federation. The results clearly indicated where the RRCS must improve to become more effective.

In late May, a Rwanda Task Force (RTF) made up of members from the secretariat, three Participating National Societies (PNS), the ICRC, RRCS staff, and volunteers met to discuss and plan a long-term strategy for the humanitarian, relief, and institutional development programmes of the RRCS, resulting in a strategic framework.

An external consultant provided assistance in creating a new organisational chart for the RRCS. The end result was a workable organigram which, after some adjustments, was adopted by the Central Committee of Direction (CCD) at its meeting of 29 August 1999.

On 30 June, some 58 members from the Headquarters, including the Secretary General and the 12 Prefectoral Secretaries, received a notification letter advising end-of-contract on 30 September. All posts identified for the new structure - currently twelve - will be open to internal and external candidates. Recruitment activities are due to take place in early October to fill these positions.

In July, the President took over the management of the RRCS and formed four Commissions to ensure that the handover process continues correctly. The Commissions covered the areas of direction, 1999 and 2000 planning, inventory, and recruitment, and have been effective in preparing the handover process. A consolidated audit of the RRCS is being conducted in September. Finally, the President himself has received the handover of financial affairs.

A recruitment campaign was conducted in August for the position of secretary general. Twenty-two applications were received. The CCD at its meeting of 29 August 1999 selected Mrs Rosemary Museminali to be the new secretary-general. She will formally take over on 11 October and an induction visit to Geneva will be planned for later in the year.

A physical inventory of all assets of the RRCS was conducted during August and is currently being recorded and finalised.

The Federation has provided technical advice for the preparation of the hiring of auditors, a process which will be undertaken in October.

Operations and Programmes •

The training of CBFA volunteers continued, albeit at a much reduced level. To maintain a presence and keep the youth members occupied, a low-key refresher programme provided by the local trainers is being conducted for some 2,300 volunteers in the prefectures and communes.

Since the departure of the RTF in May, the Planning Commission of the RRCS has prepared three-month programme proposals in CBFA (working at the community level and training of new volunteers), DPP, support of widows and orphan heads of families, dissemination, and institutional development of the headquarters and the branches. The proposals were developed in the prefectures and communes as members of the Commission conducted four two-day workshops (in four locations) with volunteers, to follow up the discussions of the RTF. Programme plans and budgets will be reviewed by the new management team and submitted to the secretariat and the PNS within the next few weeks.

The head of the relief service conducted relief operations in the prefectures of Ruhengeri and Gisenyi and the Communes of Kinigi, Kayove, Kibilira and Karago, providing assistance to those returnees who have still not been resettled completely. Non-food-items (NFI) and medicines have been distributed from the Federation's existing in-country disaster stocks. Through these operations and in response to other requests received by the Federation/RRCS, some 18,858 blankets, 12,880 kilograms of used clothing, 1,008 cooking sets, 7,024 20-litre jerry cans, 2,245 *kangas*, 77 medical kits, 231 rolls of plastic sheeting, 9,318 pots, and 9,203 pieces of tarpaulins were distributed.

In July, the RRCS was asked at short notice to assist the government in the reception of some 900 Rwandans being repatriated from the jails of Kinshasa and Kisangani in the DRC. The RRCS, assisted by the Federation, the ICRC and the Belgian Red Cross, responded positively by setting up and running a reception centre in a local school and providing shelter, food, and some amenities for two nights. The RRCS did an excellent job and received very good publicity as the repatriation was widely covered by the local media.

Department of Socio-Community Services •

This Department has continued to be active, particularly in the development of the three-month programmes, several planning workshops in the prefectures, and the subsequent writing of the proposals under different formats. The first aid-trained volunteers of the RRCS continue to provide first aid services at all events where large crowds are expected.

Development Department •

This department, which includes information/dissemination and institutional development activities, has been relatively dormant during the period due to the difficulties experienced within the RRCS.

Department of Finance, Administration and Projects •

Following the handover and departure of the head of this department, the accounting service has had difficulty in providing the required financial reports using the software provided by the Federation. This matter is in the process of being corrected so that proper financial reporting is provided to the Federation and the bilateral programmes.

The head of the Human Resources Service resigned in April and has not been replaced. The processes and files associated with this service need to be developed and improved without delay. The new management team will address this issue when in place.

The head of the Projects Service also resigned in April and has not been replaced. However, the physical inventory of the assets of the RRCS has revealed that it has many significant assets that need to be developed and exploited commercially to create additional revenue.

The financial crisis has forced the construction cell to concentrate on finishing the work that has been started and tying up loose ends from previous activities. No new construction work has been or will be started. The work to be finished includes:

- the Munini Water Adduction project, already funded by the British Red Cross;
- the completion of works at the two prefectural centres.

Federation Delegation •

The situation with the Delegation has also changed significantly: from being a Delegation with up to six delegates and some 46 local staff, numbers have been gradually reduced to one Federation representative and approximately 6 local staff (foreseen for the end of this year). Due to the funding situation, considerable cost reductions have been achieved at the Delegation in the following areas: delegate reduction; delegate housing; the vehicle fleet; closure of rented warehouses; radio telecommunications; the Federation vehicle garage; local personnel, and move of the Delegation.

Bilateral Programmes •

The relations between the Federation and the bilateral delegates of the Swiss, Spanish, Belgian and German Red Cross Societies remain positive and effective. The co-operation between the different delegates is good and communication quite open, ensuring that common problems are resolved. There remains considerable strain between the RRCS and some of the bilateral programmes, and these will need to be addressed.

Plans for the remainder of the Year •

- *Recruitment process of the RRCS:* The recruitment of the new personnel for the RRCS will continue and the Delegation will continue to provide technical assistance to the Recruitment Commission;
- *Rebuilding of the RRCS and Integration of the new Personnel into the Red Cross Movement:* A programme to assist the new members of the RRCS in learning about the Red Cross Movement, requirements and processes will be implemented, as well as providing technical assistance to develop the financial, managerial, and operational capacity that are required;
- *Planning for year 2000:* Following the Country Assistance Strategy, the Planning Commission will be asked to start planning the "Plan de Travail" for the year 2000, working in conjunction with the new organisation of the prefectures;

- *Legal Status Agreement:* The Delegation, supported by the President of the RRCS, will continue to stress the need for the Federation's Legal Status Agreement approved by the National Assembly.
- *Finalisation of Programmes and Budgets:* In conjunction with the RRCS, the programmes for the end of 1999 and the year 2000 will be finalised and commenced;
- *Downsizing of the Delegation:* The next few months will be busy with the continued down sizing of the Delegation as well as moving it to smaller and cheaper quarters;

Outstanding needs

In view of the restructuring process and revised budget, primary needs are for cash contributions to continue the process of change.

External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

Relations between the RRCS and the ICRC remain limited. While opportunities to improve the working relationship at the field level are recognised and used, efforts are underway to bring the organisations closer at the Headquarters level. Co-ordination with the United Nations agencies also require improvement, with more emphasis on exploring opportunities to develop greater relationships

Contributions

See Annex 1 for the revised budget of this Appeal. See Annex 2 for the list of contributions.

Conclusion

This period has been characterised by changes, adjustments, and reductions. Progress made by the RRCS to accept and proceed with these changes has not been matched with the level of support anticipated from the PNS. Without stronger financial commitments, the future remains uncertain at this critical time and for the important period of rebuilding ahead.

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