

REPUBLIC OF CONGO: HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

29 August, 2000

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situation report no. 02
period covered: 31 March to 30 June 2000*

With the dynamic Congolese Red Cross teams and favourable trends in the country it has been possible to continue strengthening the operational capacity of the regional branches in Cuvette, Pool and Niari and the communal branches for Brazzaville and Pointe Noire. As outlined in the assistance strategy for the CRC, all these Branches received community-based first aid training, adding more than 250 first aiders to the 350 persons awarded certificates in 1999. With its effective, well-supervised teams, the CRC organises community health activities for more than 160,000 beneficiaries each month.

Funds are now needed for training in the regions of Boenza and Lékoumen, regions which were severely affected by the war and inaccessible but can now be reached, as well as for monitoring activities which would strengthen volunteer loyalty and motivation.

The context

The conflict that broke out in the Republic of Congo in September 1998 displaced some 350,000 persons, a figure that rose to 810,000 at the end of 1999, causing dramatic humanitarian consequences and endangering the health of hundreds of thousands of persons who no longer had access to their traditional sources of food supply and medical care. The insecurity prevailing in the region, the important role played by the militia and the morose outlook for economic growth continue to undermine food security and to further weaken an already faltering health-care system. Fighting continues, seriously hampering Congolese Red Cross (CRC) activities.

As a result of the conflict and in response to humanitarian needs, to the extent possible under the current conditions of security in the country, the Federation has worked out a provisional development

plan to help the CRC, focused on strengthening operational capacity in three areas - emergency, community health and first aid.

The Federation also plans to provide its support for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the premises of the CRC headquarters, the improvement of resource management and development and the organisation of the National Society's regional general assemblies in preparation for the national general assembly planned next year.

Latest events

The situation in a number of areas has significantly improved in the last six months:

- **Respect for the peace accords**

The monitoring committee provided for in the December 1999 accords maintains positive dialogue among the parties concerned and pursues its disarmament work. As a direct consequence of respect for the accords to cease hostilities, zones to which the humanitarian agencies previously did not have access are now within reach.

- **Return of displaced**

It is estimated that 75% of the displaced population, 600,000 persons, has returned home. Almost all the civil authorities are also back.

- **Improved living conditions**

The malnutrition levels indicated at the beginning of the year have considerably improved with the resumption of agricultural activities and most of the nutrition centres are now closed.

However, there remain major outstanding needs: health structures are not able to meet the population's needs for preventive and curative care. The drinking water supply system is far from sufficient. Housing remains a problem for many families whose homes were destroyed during the conflict. The agricultural sector, the source of livelihood for most of the rural population, was severely affected, as two harvests in a row were lost as a result of the conflict. Education has lagged behind considerably; quick action is called for. Lastly, Angolan refugees in the region of Kouilou and Congolese refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in the region of Likouala and Cuvette need further assistance.

To respond in reorienting humanitarian assistance to meet the population's needs, emergency aid programmes are gradually being reoriented to development activities. Restoring basic services such as health care and education, and development of production activities such as trade and agriculture are now top priority.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

During the first six months, the Red Cross Movement made a major contribution to resettling the displaced populations. The three components of the Movement, in accordance with their respective mandates, provided medical assistance, distributed essential goods and were involved in sanitation activities in the most affected regions.

In addition to its traditional activities in the areas of dissemination, detention and forwarding messages, the ICRC was very active in health activities, opening a nutrition centre at Kindamba and supporting the functioning of 18 health centres in the regions of Pool and Niari. The ICRC donated water distribution equipment to the National Society to restore the water treatment facilities in Dolisie, Nkayi and Djambala.

The Federation is pursuing its programme to strengthen the CRC's capacity through various kinds of assistance in the fields of emergency, community health and first aid, and plans to become involved in a programme to strengthen the structures of the regional branches. The Federation and the CRC work in

partnership with the UNFPA on a programme to strengthen the reproductive health services and assist female victims of sexual violence in post-conflict situations and with HCR to assist Cabindan refugees at Pointe Noire.

At the beginning of the second half of the year, much has been accomplished, the projects are fully under way and measurable results have been recorded in the different regions where the CRC is working under the Federation's supervision.

Support to the CRC's first aid and community health services •

Geographically, this project was devised to cover two communal branches and three regional branches: Brazzaville and Pointe Noire, plus the regions of Pool, Niari and Cuvette. In light of the results obtained, it may be extended to two further regions: Bouenza and Lekounou.

Training was given to 45 CRC trainers, and 552 volunteers were trained in community-based first aid in connection with knowledge of the Red Cross Movement and dissemination of its principles, disaster preparedness and emergency assistance, community health through health/hygiene education and sanitation and first aid.

The trained volunteers give vitality to the regional branches. They also provide the link between the health structures and the community through their community-health activities (IEC for the most common diseases - malaria, cholera, STD/AIDS, skin infections, diarrhoeal diseases and respiratory infections), hygiene and sanitation activities, and educational discussions on peace. The first two types of activity are now carried out by the 552 first aiders, in contact with an average of 163,500 persons a month.

To consolidate the results achieved, the CRC national leaders regularly visit the regions to ensure the activities undertaken by the local and regional branches are both effective and systematically organised. To date 11 monitoring visits have been made to the regions, an average of one mission every two months to each region.

Results:

CRC local branch in Cuvette (target population: 13,500 persons):

- Community-based first aid training (CBFA) and regular supervision of 45 first aiders.
- Reopening of 9 CRC local branches that carry out community-health activities.
- Disaster-preparedness activities in 3 of the 9 local branches in view of the floods that regularly affect the region: Owando, Mossaka, Loukouléla.

CRC regional branch in Pool (target population: 15,000 persons):

- Training in CBFA and regular monitoring of 44 first aiders,
- Refresher training for 5 trainers in CBFA,
- Support to get community-health activities going again in 13 local branches.

CRC communal branch in Brazzaville (target population: 60,000 persons):

- Supervision of community-health activities of 300 first aiders.
- Refresher training for 20 trainers in CBFA.
- Support for the 7 Brazzaville district branches with supplies for community-health activities.

CRC regional branch in Niari (target population: 15,000 persons):

- Training in CBFA and regular supervision of 56 first aiders.
- Refresher training for 5 trainers in CBFA.
- Development of 14 local branches.
- Development of 14 micro projects.

CRC communal branch in Pointe Noire (target population: 60,000 persons):

- Regular supervision of 107 first aiders.
- Refresher training for 8 trainers in CBFA.
- Support for community-health activities in 4 Pointe Noire district branches.

Strengthening the structures of regional branches •

This project complements the above projects and focuses on strengthening the structures of regional branches. It has three components:

- Minor renovation of the buildings the civil authorities put free of charge at the disposal of the regional branches of Kinkala, Dolisie and Kkayi.
- Development of a fund-raising project in the cities of Brazzaville, Kinkala, Dolisie, Nkayi and Pointe Noire.
- Lastly, in preparation for the CRC general assembly planned in 2001, it is foreseen to hold regional general assemblies in Kinkala, Dolisie, Nkayi, Sibiti and Owando.

A project description is available on request.

Strengthening reproductive health services and assistance for female victims of sexual violence in post-conflict situations •

This project, a partnership with the UNFPA, strengthens the project to support the CRC's community-health services. The CRC teams, with the support of the Federation, are now organising refresher training in reproductive health for 106 doctors, midwives and nursing auxiliaries, training in reproductive health for 76 CRC volunteers, minor renovations of 14 health centres and 4 health posts including supplies of medicine to care for persons victim of sexual violence, and the setting up of 16 CRC posts. The target population is estimated to number 2,000 persons and the project covers the cities of Brazzaville, Pointe Noire, Kinkala, Nkayi, Sibiti and Dolisie.

The results:

CRC regional branch in Pool:

- Evaluation of needs of the Kinkala reference hospital and the Madiba integrated health centre.
- Refresher training for 5 persons responsible for reproductive health in Kinkala.
- Training of 4 CRC volunteers involved in the assistance programme for victims of sexual violence.

CRC communal branch in Brazzaville:

- Evaluation of needs at the hospital in Makélékélé, Talangai, Blanche Gomez, the integrated centre at Indzouli and Plateaux des Quinze Ans.
- Refresher training for medical staff: 38 doctors, midwives and nursing auxiliaries in the health structures involved in the project.
- Training of 30 CRC volunteers involved in the assistance programme for victims of sexual violence.

CRC communal branch at Pointe Noire

- Evaluation of needs of the integrated health centres in Mpaka, Mbota and Loandjili, the ACBEF Clinic and the health post in Plateaux.

Assistance to Cabindan refugees •

In partnership with UNHCR, the CRC and the Federation, via its Sub-Delegation, helps the Point Noire communal branch supervise 32 first aiders responsible for the different activities under the project to construct and maintain schools and shelters, for maintaining the roads leading to the site, managing the three local pharmacies on a cost-recovery basis, training refugees in micro-project management and social assistance for urban refugees.

Achievements:

The project is functioning well and the assistance provided enables the refugees gradually to become self reliant. The chart below indicates how many refugees at each of the three sites benefited from assistance under the project.

		April	May	June
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Cabindan refugees at the three sites		2,987	2,992	2,993
	Mavoadi	289	289	288
	Komi	2,658	2,660	2,661
Urban refugees		103	110	113
Total		6,037	6,051	6,055

Outstanding needs

Funds are urgently needed to complete the activities planned in the Federation's strategic assistance plan for the CRC in 2000. Three regions and the two largest cities of the country benefited from support to get their programmes going again in the context of the "Support for the CRC's first aid and community health services" project, but the same activities planned for the regional branches in Bouenza and Lekounou await funding.

The community-health activities undertaken by the regional and communal branches have proven to be effective. It would now be advisable to move on to the second stage of the Federation's strategic assistance plan which involves the development of the structures of these branches. Now that training and community-health activities are under way, it is time to tackle the renovation of headquarters, the development of financial resources and the organisation of regional general assemblies in preparation for the general assembly scheduled for February 2001.

External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

Red Cross magazines and publications are distributed to Embassies and the different Ministries with which the Delegation works, ensuring good visibility of the Red Cross Movement. Celebrations for 8 May and the presentation of Strategy 2010 also provided opportunities to strengthen existing cooperation between the Red Cross Movement and the different national and international organisations.

Thanks to regular coordination meetings very production relations are maintained with the humanitarian agencies in the Congo, particularly UNHCR and UNFPA.

Contributions

See Annex 2 for details.

Conclusion

The projects implemented over the past six months have enabled the CRC to help the community in the two largest cities in the country and in 3 of the 9 regions that make up the Republic of Congo. More than 500 first aiders are present in the community providing health education and carrying out hygiene and sanitation campaigns for an average of 25,000 families a month.

In view of these encouraging results the activities planned must be continued in order not to lose the benefit of what has been achieved. With the Republic of Congo emerging from a long, painful conflict for its population, the CRC can play a decisive role in the reconstruction of the social fabric of the Congolese communities by organising and developing five regional branches. More funds are essential if it is to fulfil the mission it set for itself this year.

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Congo			
		ANNEX 1	
<u>BUDGET SUMMARY</u>			
APPEAL No. 01.07/2000R	CHF		
TYPE	<u>Initial Budget</u>	<u>Revised Budget</u>	<u>Variances</u>
RELIEF NEEDS			
Shelter & constructions	75,000		75,000
Clothing & textiles			0
Food & seeds			0
Water			0
Medical & first aid	22,600	23,440	-840
Teaching materials			0
Utensils & tools	12,765	21,734	-8,969
Other relief supplies			0
TOTAL RELIEF NEEDS	110,365	45,174	65,191
CAPITAL EQUIPMENT			
Vehicles			0
Computers & telecom		23,500	-23,500
Office furniture & equipment		4,980	-4,980
Household furniture & equipment			0
Generators & lightning		6,000	-6,000
Medical equipment			0
Other equipment	43,750	3,000	40,750
PROGRAMME SUPPORT			
Programme management (automatic calculation)	129,299	68,783	60,516
Technical support (automatic calculation)	38,705	20,614	18,091
Professional services (automatic calculation)	42,924	23,101	19,823
TRANSPORT STORAGE & VEHICLE COSTS	153,072	59,823	93,249
PERSONNEL			
Expatriate staff	580,200	303,028	277,172
National staff	545,060	236,924	308,136
Training		42,622	-42,622
ADMINISTRATIVE & GENERAL SERVICES			
Travel & related expenses	73,450	22,475	50,975
Information expenses	32,390	14,159	18,231
Administrative & general expenses	168,308	84,587	83,721
External workshops & seminars		62,000	-62,000
TOTAL OPERATIONAL NEEDS	1,807,157	975,596	831,562
TOTAL APPEAL CASH, KIND, SERVICES	1,917,522	1,020,769	896,753
LESS AVAILABLE RESOURCES (-)		736,366	
NET REQUEST		284,403	

Congo						ANNEX 2
APPEAL No. 01.07/2000		PLEDGES RECEIVED			30/08/00	
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
CASH						
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				1,020,769		TOTAL COVERAGE 72.1%
Carried forward from 1999				-349,946		
Outstanding payment ICRC				349,946		Invoice 1492/SRI 2125/A -
AMERICAN - GOVT/PRM		81,000	USD	136,769	17.07.00	
CANADA - RC/GOVT		100,000	CAD	108,470	15/03/00	NOT FOR PURCH/TRANS FOOD
ICRC				482,749	17/03/00	DISPLACED PEOPLE
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				727,988	CHF	71.3%
KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
Belgium	Delegate(s)			8,378		
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				8,378	CHF	0.8%
ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				0	CHF	