

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

CHF 1,408,000

Programme No. 01.08/2000

National Context

Since gaining its independence in 1960, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has been characterised by political and security problems (rebellions, secessions, and ethnic conflict). Following a short civil conflict in 1997, rebel forces under the leadership of Laurent Kabila assumed power and changed the name of the country from Zaire to the Democratic Republic of Congo. After one year of relative peace and optimism, a second civil war broke out, a conflict situation which continues today. On 10 July, 1999, a ceasefire accord was signed by the countries involved in the conflict and later by the representatives of the rebel groups.

Given the history of the DRC, the overall socio-economic situation is of considerable concern, characterised by a constant regression of living conditions caused by the series of internal conflicts. The impact has been dramatic on the national economy, and has forced the population to develop survival coping mechanisms, including the explosive growth of the informal sector, an increase in insecurity caused by stealing, and juvenile delinquency.

Given the decline in economic, social, environmental, and health conditions, the prevalence of illnesses and serious epidemics is increasing, including respiratory infections, tuberculosis, polio, diarrhoeal diseases, HIV and AIDS, malaria, sleeping sickness, water borne diseases, malnutrition, and the Ebola virus.

Country Assistance Strategy

In addition to the precarious nature of the Congolese economy, the conflict has not only increased the vulnerability of a large segment of the population, but has also dramatically affected the development and capacity of the Red Cross of the DRC. Given the very difficult environment existing in the country, the Federation has limited its strategy to two primary activities: immediate assistance to war victims, and assistance to vulnerable groups in areas of the country not directly involved in the conflict. Federation programmes in the DRC are co-ordinated with the ICRC which is the lead agency in the country.

Programme Objectives

Disaster Response

Local committees will be established in 15 villages in the BasCongo Province which have a Red Cross operated dispensary. Dispensary management committees will also be formed in 19 villages to prepare budgets and financial reports.

Disaster Preparedness

The Federation will assist the National Society in identifying and articulating its role and responsibilities in the Government national disaster plan, and elaborating on activities to be undertaken on a national and province level. The National Society will also be assisted to build up an emergency stock in the BasCongo province for 5,000 persons, and relaunch the disaster preparation and response activities in branches located in accessible areas by providing first aid training and kits. Lastly, the National Society will be assisted to provide disaster preparedness training to 21 branch managers and 210 volunteers in the BasCongo and Kinshasa.

Health

The National Society will continue to actively participate in the national vaccination campaign. In the BasCongo Province, the distribution of medication and medical supplies will continue. Related to the African Red Cross Red Crescent Health Initiative (ARCHI), the National Society is making efforts to establish the initial objectives. The National Society will also be assisted to provide primary health care training for 20 trainers, as well as 200 volunteers for the assistance project to Angolan and Congolese refugees.

Humanitarian Values

The National Society will be assisted in clarifying its role in the promotion of Humanitarian Values.

Capacity Building

Under the Tripartite Project, the National Society will continue institutional development, with a focus on improving financial management, reporting, internal and external transparency, the relation between governance and management, and restructuring. The National Society will be assisted to carry out the decisions taken at the Central Committee and General Assembly. Federation support will also be provided in applying the PriceWaterhouse recommendations related to governance and management. Lastly, a plan will be formulated for the relaunch of activities in Mbandaka and Kisangani, the security situation permitting. Other capacity building programmes include women and development to reinforce the capacity and activities of the programme at the national, provincial, and local level; and youth development to continue to develop the school support project, as well as the formation of youth.