

ERITREA
CHF 1,869,000
Programme No. 01.10/2000

National Context

Eritrea gained its independence in 1991 after a liberation war that lasted 30 years and left the country as one of the poorest nations in the world with both its infrastructure and economy in ruins. Almost a decade later Eritrea still ranks among the ten poorest countries in the world. However a number of health indicators point towards a slow improvement of the overall human development of the country.

Since its independence Eritrea has been in a process of reconstruction and rehabilitation, for which the country has developed a policy of self reliance rather than counting on foreign relief, assistance or loans. Though positive results are visible in many parts of the country, problems such as poverty, disease, drought, and armed conflict continue.

In May 1998, a border conflict with Ethiopia degenerated into a full scale war between the two countries, resulting in the deaths of thousands of people, thousands internally displaced, tens of thousands deported from Ethiopia, and many more people directly or indirectly affected.

Country Assistance Strategy

The Federation strategy is formulated to support the key priorities of the Red Cross Society of Eritrea (RCSE), specifically in the areas of organisational development, improving emergency response and disaster preparedness, developing health services, strengthening the ambulance services, and increasing and broadening the volunteer base. The Federation will provide technical support primarily in areas of policy development, resource mobilisation, co-ordination of the PNSs' input, as well as technical assistance and experience sharing in various Red Cross Red Crescent activities. The Federation's programme is coordinated with the ICRC as well as United Nations agencies.

Programme Objectives

Disaster Response

During the present conflict situation, the RCSE is supported by the ICRC in providing assistance to over 60,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Eritrea. If a peace agreement is reached between Ethiopia and Eritrea, it is expected that the National Society will appeal through the Federation for support to provide assistance to war affected victims and vulnerable groups.

Disaster Preparedness

The Federation focus will be on obtaining clearly defined operational systems and structures at the national and selected branch levels, preparing a contingency plan for RCSE disaster response, training RCSE staff, volunteers and the public in disaster prevention and mitigation, identifying coping mechanisms, developing appropriate training and programmes to address small scale emergencies and disasters, forming Red Cross action teams in strategic branches to effectively respond to larger scale disasters in a professional and timely manner.

Health

The Federation will focus on developing and supporting a revised health policy for the RCSE and in providing technical assistance to the existing health programmes, particularly to:

- provide First Aid training in communities and schools with an emphasis on common diseases, water and sanitation problems, vector problems and sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS.
- support First Aid Posts with basic first aid materials in schools and villages.
- develop and initiate training activities in health related capacity building areas such as Home Management and Income Generating activities for self support, with the main target group being female heads of families.
- implement Water and Sanitation projects in vulnerable communities.
- provide ambulance services.

Humanitarian Values

The ICRC have focused part of their co-operation support in this area, and it is anticipated that this will continue with Federation support limited to complementing and supporting the ICRC in the areas of tracing and family reunion, a dissemination programme with government officials, local organisations, and the media. Training sessions on promotion of humanitarian values with RCSE staff, branches, and volunteers will also form a priority focus with the production, printing and distribution of dissemination materials.

Capacity Building

The Federation will focus on the provision of technical advice and expertise in different fields, including establishing a transitional committee at central level, revitalising committees at provincial levels, and establishing a strategy for recognition of the National Society by the Eritrean Government.