

# **PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

**CHF 3,500,000**

**Programme No. 01.28/2000**

## ***National Context***

Largely due to its mineral wealth, giving it a per capita income of USD 1,180, Papua New Guinea (PNG) ranks as a middle income country. But other social indicators such as income distribution, life expectancy, infant mortality and literacy rates are comparable with some of the poorest countries in the world: PNG has the lowest life expectancy in the South Pacific and the worst infant mortality rate.

Although 80% of the population still live a subsistence existence in isolated rural areas, changes due to the increase in cash crops, the exploitation of the vast timber reserves and above all the booming mining industry bring with them their own problems, including migration to the towns, environmental damage, land claims and local resentment and violence. In urban areas social problems have worsened and violent crime is widespread.

On Bougainville island, the nine year secessionist conflict, formally settled by a peace accord in 1997, and prolonged isolation from the outside world have taken a serious toll on a severely ravaged and traumatised population. It has left behind a divided political infrastructure, ill-equipped to deal with meeting the most basic health needs. Only recently has the island seen hopeful signs of political stability and peace, sufficient to enable the local authorities, the PNG government and its development partners to move in with small scale rehabilitation projects.

PNG regularly suffers from highly destructive natural disasters including volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, floods, Tsunami, and drought. In the last few years, the two volcanoes overlooking Rabaul erupted, destroying the town and displacing 60,000 people; 3,000 people were killed in the Aitape Tsunami in 1997, and parts of the Highlands were badly affected by drought as a result of El Nino from mid 1997 to April 1998.

## ***Country Assistance Strategy***

The PNG Red Cross is a very small Society, with only a few hundred members and branches in seven provinces. After concentrating from 1991 to 1998 almost entirely on disaster relief operations, dominated by assistance on Bougainville, the National Society is now switching its priorities to providing support to, and building Programmes in branches which have been left on their own for many years. The process began with the adoption of national development plans in 1998 and the incorporation of development oriented programmes into the Aitape tidal wave operation, also in 1998.

The Federation has identified two approaches for its support strategy to the National Society, which will cover the period 2000 - 2004. One will be to assist in the institutional development of the PNGRCS so that it has the necessary management capacity to implement focused programmes and to obtain the financial support needed to sustain its activities. The second will be to strengthen the capacity of the National Society to run effective programmes in the areas of Disaster Preparedness and Health and Social Welfare.

Specifically, the Federation will support the Society in establishing clear management procedures: improved financial management: a human resource development programme: stronger branches: increased public awareness: more diversified income sources: expanded relations with external organisations. In the programme area the Federation will support the Society in drawing up a National Disaster Preparedness Plan, developing DP and health services on Bougainville, and extending the training of community based volunteers in DP and health.

Because outside resources are so essential to the National Society, the Federation will continue to ensure that support from donors and partners is not only maintained but leads to a joint strategy for sustainable development.

## ***Programme Objectives***

### ***Disaster Response***

Two ongoing emergency relief operations are now well into a rehabilitation or development phase and are listed below as part of the Disaster Preparedness (DP) initiatives.

### ***Disaster Preparedness***

The National Society's DP capacity will be built on a national Disaster Preparedness Plan and on a trained core group of staff and volunteers. Besides helping the Society set up these basic structures, the Federation will also support training for disaster prone communities in the Aitape region and beyond and a nationwide training effort in community based self reliance, which in the next two years will have trained 120 community leaders in high risk areas.

### ***Health***

The overall objective of Federation-supported health projects in the next two years will be to upgrade the technical skills of health workers in various basic health care services. Those to benefit from training will include medical and teaching staff, traditional birth attendants, field workers and health volunteers. Skills to be imparted will relate to trauma counselling, obstetrics, TB and leprosy, HIV/AIDS and water and sanitation management.

### ***Humanitarian Values***

The promotion of humanitarian values through the dissemination of Red Cross ideals is an integral part of all training programmes, but is given special emphasis in programmes on Bougainville.

## ***Capacity Building***

The creation of new branches, a volunteer recruitment drive, the recruitment and training of six staff for the National Headquarters, plus the training programmes described above have been designed to give the National Society the growth in capacity it needs.