

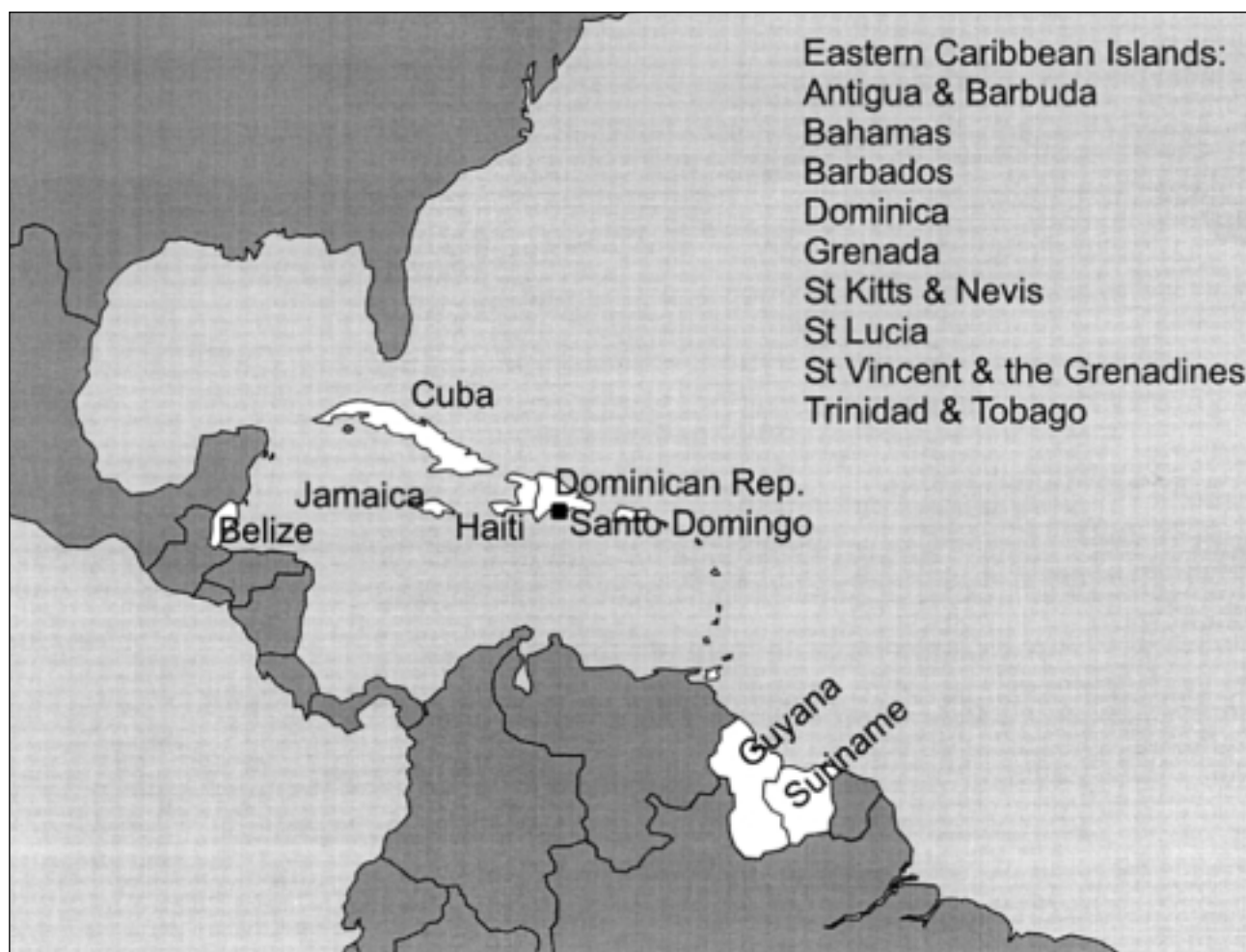
CARIBBEAN

CHF 3,298,000

Programme No. 01.49/2000

Regional Context

Politically, socially, and economically, the Caribbean is a large and diverse region. In most countries fragile ecosystems and equally fragile open economies face unique sustainable development problems and opportunities. With a few exceptions, the economies are strongly dependent upon tourism and agriculture, sectors highly susceptible to price and demand fluctuations of the international market. Agriculturally, low yields of mono crops and an inability to compete with international markets have resulted in a decline in the agricultural economy in the last decade. Several serious environmental problems have arisen in the wake of



tourism and other development activities over the last decade. Every state in the region now suffers from sewage pollution of coastal waters, and from contamination from oil spills and production leaks from mining and industrial activity. Most of the low income states of the region report unsustainable water and energy consumption, beach and coastal erosion and sedimentation from construction activities. At the entry to the new millennium, the political landscape is marked by many stable multi-party democracies throughout most of the Caribbean, with some notable exceptions.

The Caribbean countries are experiencing similar health related transformations encountered in all regions in transition, such as lower fertility rates, rapidly ageing populations, rapidly growing urbanisation and increasing gaps in health service availability and quality. The Caribbean countries are making several collaborative efforts to increase national and regional institutional capacities for sustainable development. The main political trends in the region point to closer collaboration and integration between the Caribbean nations through inter-governmental co-operation mechanisms like CARICOM and the Association of Caribbean States, enhancing the sustainable development capacity of the Caribbean countries.

At the same time, natural hazards of all types exist, from hydro-meteorological hazards (hurricanes, tropical storms, floods, landslides, and drought) and geological hazards (earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanoes, and landslides). The damage or destruction caused is magnified by the small physical size of most Caribbean countries. Natural disasters in the Caribbean have invariably shown that those with low income and a poor quality of housing suffer disproportionately when a natural disaster strikes. The poor, with lower levels of education, often live in improvised settlements in highly vulnerable locations, such as landslide-prone hills, the slopes of volcanoes, or riverbanks. In addition, population growth and the accelerated rate of urbanisation in the Caribbean adds to its vulnerability, and also leads to environmental degradation and to poverty.

Regional Assistance Strategy

The Federation's regional strategy is formulated to strengthen the National Societies' capacity to meet the needs of the most vulnerable, as well as to support governance and ensure sustainable management systems, and to develop and implement an integrated capacity building approach which link and complement the technical support provided by the delegation. The Federation will also promote the development of sustainable financial and human resources, enhance the comparative advantages of the individual Red Cross Society, and promote regional co-operation between the Caribbean National Societies.

The Caribbean Regional Delegation will continue its emphasis on institutional development by focusing on strengthening existing regional and National Society programmes and activities to achieve the synergy necessary to improve the actions, organisation and social impact of the respective National Societies.

Programme Objectives

Disaster Response

Given the strong possibility that the region will experience some type of disaster in 2000, the Federation will remain prepared to respond particularly to the risk of hurricanes. However, there are no ongoing disaster response programmes planned for 2000.

Disaster Preparedness

The Federation will strengthen the disaster management capacities of the Caribbean Red Cross and communities while reinforcing the relationship which exists between the Red Cross, governments and the private sector. The programme will bring these groups together in a collaborative effort to develop and implement proactive measures designed to reduce local vulnerabilities and improve the response capacities at the headquarters, local branch and community levels.

The Disaster Preparedness project, integrated in the regional disaster preparedness programme, is composed of three different, but complementary components: Community Based Disaster Preparedness, Disaster Response Teams, and Water Safety. Vulnerable communities at risk to disasters will improve their preparedness and response to these events and the response capacity of the National Societies will further be strengthened through improvements to the equipment, skills and working environment of the Disaster Response Teams and Lifeguards.

The Disaster Preparedness project aims at strengthening the disaster management capacities of local communities and of the National Society while reinforcing the relationships which exist between the Red Cross, the government, NGOs and other actors in the national disaster management sector. While the project will improve the disaster management capability and capacity of the National Society headquarters and branch levels, the main emphasis is on having vulnerable communities assume a greater role in local disaster management and risk reduction activities, including the elaboration of disaster plans which address the specific threats faced by the community. In order to improve the physical capacity of the vulnerable communities to cope with disasters, small scale mitigation projects identified by the community will be developed.

Health

The Caribbean Youth Development programme “Facing challenges, Empowering our youth” aims at reducing the vulnerabilities of young people in the Caribbean and supporting their personal development, and at decreasing the number of young people at risk. Furthermore, this project aims at reinforcing Red Cross youth activities at the provincial and local levels, particularly those related to HIV/STD prevention among young people, home visits to elderly living alone, disabled children and orphans, and involvement in first aid and disaster preparedness activities.

Humanitarian Values

The information and communication programme aims at promoting the activities and the social role of the Caribbean Societies through the design, with support from communications and marketing professionals, of country level programmes to improve the Red Cross image. An important element of the programme is to diversify the dissemination channels, using the media (local, national and international) and emphasising the use of alternative information sources and educational techniques through which the humanitarian values of the International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement will be promoted.

Capacity Building

The Federation will establish the following capacity building activities in this area:

Institutional and Resource Development programme: a medium-long term comprehensive initiative to enhance both the Caribbean National Societies’ capacity to respond to the needs of a variable environment and their presence at local level by emphasising the promotion and sustainable development of National Societies’ resources. This programme will be integrated with the regional programmes in an integrated Capacity Building approach.

The Co-operation and Networking programme aims at further building the capacity of the Caribbean Red Cross National Societies through the strengthening of the existing Red Cross internal and external networks within the region. In addition to systematically expanding regional activities to also include the local branches, the main programme objectives are to identify how the resources available can be better explored and utilised by the National Societies and the Caribbean branches of overseas Societies.

The Branch Development project aims at enabling respective National Societies to meet the needs of the most vulnerable communities through the strengthening of the functional autonomy of the regional branches and to establish and support the network of Red Cross first aid posts at the community level. This project will also provide selected Red Cross branches with training activities for their staff and governance/management level and with adequate working conditions through the provision of office equipment, dissemination material, repaired facilities and vehicles.