

PAKISTAN

CHF 1,263,000

Programme No. 01.57/2000

National Context

Pakistan is the world's second most populous Muslim country with an estimated 140 million inhabitants, of whom 70% live in rural areas. However, most health care is concentrated in urban areas, and rural facilities are often badly understaffed and under-equipped. Overall, expenditure on public health is less than 1%. One quarter of new born babies have low birth weight and 62% of children under five suffer from malnutrition. Approximately 45% of the population has no access to health facilities and 30% has no access to safe drinking water.

Pakistan's history since the partition of India and independence half a century ago has been dominated by three themes: tense relations with its large southern neighbour, India, especially now that both countries are nuclear powers; its regional problems: and political instability, with long periods of military rule. The political instability has had a significantly adverse impact on Pakistan's overall development, slowing down the search for solutions to the country's many social and economic problems, including the question of land ownership and distribution.

Pakistan is vulnerable to a range of disasters. Located over some of the most active tectonic faults, it regularly experiences strong earthquakes in both the arid West and the mountainous North. Vast flooding occurs almost annually in the central Indus valley and the huge Indus delta plain, causing significant damage in a predominantly agricultural society. Droughts in the arid western areas cause food shortages, while cyclones occasionally make landfall in the densely populated coastal plains of Sindh province. Two permanent threats looming over the country are increasing communal violence and the continuing conflict with India over territorial claims.

Pakistan has a well-established and effective government early warning system for river floods that helps limit loss of life and livestock. In addition many flood-prone communities are taking preventive or preparedness measures, encouraged by a variety of organisations, including the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS). The potential of community action is increasingly being recognised in the rural context, where women's self help groups are emerging and adding to community based resources.

Country Assistance Strategy

After several years of ad hoc support to the Pakistan Red Crescent, and following a period during which more focus was placed on support to operations in neighbouring Afghanistan, the Federation now envisages more structured and planned long-term support to the Society, both for institutional and organisational development and for programmes.

The Pakistan Red Crescent is a valued partner of its Government, particularly in emergencies and disasters where it has increased its credibility by operating independently and using its own resources. The Society does not yet have an overall development plan but work is in progress on a major planning exercise to establish a

programme with a clear vision for the next five years.

PRCS today is committed to modernisation, upgrading of facilities, systems and management, and strengthening its public information capacity, and has taken its first steps in this direction. Human resource development has started in the form of regular workshops and the participation of staff and volunteers in country, regional and international training events.

The overall aims and priorities of Federation assistance are: to support the PRCS in the development of its health programmes so that they have a wider and deeper impact and professional management; and to reinforce PRCS efforts to modernize and upgrade its management structure and systems and build its capacity to run effective programmes.

So far, Federation support has been provided by its Regional Delegation in New Delhi. Efforts are currently under way to place a country delegate in Pakistan to work closely with the PRCS.

Programme Objectives

Disaster Response

The Federation will provide training and continuous assistance in further strengthening the disaster response capacity of the Society.

Disaster Preparedness

The PRCS plans to run disaster related training for PRCS staff and volunteers and extend its Community Based Disaster Preparedness and First Aid Programme. The Federation will provide assistance as part of its support to improve structures within the National Society and will also provide occasional technical support as requested by the PRCS.

Health

The Federation will provide support for three PRCS health programmes over the next four years. It will take the form of establishing a PHC infrastructure for Reproductive and Child Health Services in Baluchistan; supporting a safe blood programme; and strengthening reproductive and child health through 61 MCH centres and their surrounding peri-urban and rural communities

The objectives of Federation support are: to develop systems and expertise to manage the new structures such as the MCH Centres, first aid posts, mobile clinics and to strengthen branches in order to implement the PHC infrastructure programme in Baluchistan; to develop better management systems to run the upgraded PRCS blood centre; to upgrade the skills of the staff working in the MCH centres and improve project management capacity.

Humanitarian Values

The Federation will assist in the promotion of humanitarian values through its health and ID interventions and by working with the PRCS on a public information and image building programme. This will include co-operation with the ICRC country delegation.

Capacity Building

PRCS has only just begun to address programme development in a more strategic manner. It will be part of the future development strategy of the Federation and the National Society to focus more on the use of planning tools such as baseline surveys, feasibility studies and market research. This will ultimately lead to a better definition of what 'vulnerability' means in the context of Pakistan and its diverse regions with their different challenges and capacities. Once vulnerability has been properly defined, it will be easier to establish the selection criteria for 'the most vulnerable', and set appropriate project goals.

The Federation's selective support to the PRCS will have as its objectives to: improve management capacity to run programmes; develop relations with UN, NGOs and government agencies in order to build partnerships for training, technical assistance and resource development purposes; develop a transparent system of accounting