

PROGRAMME UPDATE



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

LAO PDR

15 November 2001

Appeal No: 01.44/2001

Appeal Target: 877,157

Programme Update No: 2 Period covered: 1 July - 31 October 2001

“At a Glance”

Appeal coverage: 135.3%

Related Appeals: 01.40/01 South East Asia Regional Programmes

Outstanding needs: None

Update: The activities of the last quarter have been largely geared to consolidating the work done in the first six months of this year. At the same time emphasis has been placed on building up momentum so that the range of activities described below, which were to some extent on hold due to the absence of a representative, can be successfully completed by the end of this year.

Operational Developments:

The party central committee third plenary session held in September, under the chairmanship of Party President Khamtay Siphandone, reviewed the overall situation in the country with particular emphasis on adopting new economic measures for immediate and long term stability and growth. A major cause for concern is the growing drugs problem and increase in drugs related crimes. Another growing problem is the increase of illicit smuggling trade across the Mekong between Thailand and Laos.

According to the ministry of finance, statistics released this month show that foreign investment in Laos since December 1988 has involved some 860 projects, with a total value of over US\$7.1 billion. This amount was split into US\$1.3 billion for projects in partnership with the government and US\$5.8 billion for projects solely financed by foreign organisations with the electricity sector receiving US\$4.5 billion.

On 8 October the ministry of foreign affairs in collaboration with the Lao commission for drug control and supervision, held a briefing on the ‘national campaign against drugs’. Representatives from the diplomatic missions, international and non-governmental organisations were in attendance. The purpose of the briefing was to explain the government’s new strategy to combat the drug menace, with particular emphasis on young people. This new initiative will come directly under the prime minister’s office and will be complementary to the various programmes already in operation that are supported by donors.

Seasonal rice prices soared in local markets in October from about Kip 25,000 per 12kg to about Kip 36,000 for the same amount. This is due to the non harvest period, imports and price manipulation by local traders who raise their prices according to national economic indicators, hearsay about flooding and national currency fluctuation.

Japan agreed to a soft loan for construction of a second Mekong friendship bridge between Savannaket and Mukdahanh in Thailand.

The government, UN, donors, Red Cross, NGO information and co-ordination meetings were held to monitor the floods which have affected the southern provinces in particular. The situation is not as serious as last year, and no international appeal envisaged at this stage. The Lao Red Cross (LRC) delegation are monitoring the situation closely.

Disaster Response:

There were no significant disaster response activities during the reporting period. LRC and the Federation have been monitoring the Mekong flood situation closely since July in co-operation with NDMO, other concerned government agencies, the UN system and NGO's. LRC carried out one distribution of 5 metric tonnes (MT) of rice from its own stocks in Saravanne province. Government agencies, WFP, FAO, and WHO are in the process of completing thorough needs and damage assessments. Regular situation reports are sent to the regional disaster management unit in Bangkok.

Disaster Preparedness:

Objective 1

To create a disaster response capability in every branch of the Lao Red Cross.

Activities & Achievements

The balance of funds remaining from the 'Laos Floods 2000' emergency operation (the operation was completed during the first quarter of this year) has enabled the Federation to assist LRC to develop a continuing programme of disaster preparedness activities focusing initially on the southern provinces and LRC HQ. Priorities are:

- restocking the three regional disaster preparedness (DP) warehouses (to provide an emergency buffer stock);
- provision of equipment and training in stock management and inventory control for DP warehouse staff;
- preparation of a community-based disaster preparedness (CBDP) volunteer training module to be incorporated with ongoing community-based first aid (CBFA) training;
- holding regular LRC volunteer training workshops and initiating regular DP activities at the branches.

A good start has been made during this quarter with most of the procurement concluded and the CBDP training module well under way. The aim is to begin the training components in November/December.

The Head of the LRC DP Department attended the first regional DP meeting in Melacca and will also attend the next meeting in Vietnam in mid November. He also attended the Mekong River Flood Management workshop in Phnom Phen from 10-11 October.

Constraints

There were no constraints.

Objective 2

To build a national disaster preparedness system with effective links with the State system and the regional Red Cross societies

Activities & Achievements

A framework agreement with NDMO is currently in place in which LRC's role is outlined in emergency response. Discussions are currently ongoing between NDMO, LRC, Federation, the UN Agencies and NGOs regarding ways and means of building greater disaster prevention, mitigation and preparedness capacities into the Lao disaster management system at both central and local levels.

LRC can play an important part in this through its planned CBFA/CBDP activities involving trained volunteers who can help to raise DP awareness at the community level in normal times and be able to respond quickly and effectively in times of disaster.

LRC's links with other regional Red Cross initiatives continue to improve with the head of LRC DP department attending the first regional DP meeting in Melacca and plans to attend the next meeting in Vietnam scheduled for November. The Mekong flood study has now been completed; LRC staff made an important contribution during the consultant's mission to Laos. It is hoped that a LRC representative will be able to attend the Mekong River Commission (MRC) flood strategy workshop in Phnom Penh 10-11 October. The increased networking and exchanges have been largely facilitated by staff at the regional disaster management unit in Bangkok.

Constraints

There were no significant constraints.

Health and Care

In the area of health and care in the community, Japanese Red Cross (JRC) and the Federation have supported the LRC national blood programme since 1995. This programme will increasingly focus on developing an effective national blood donor recruitment system in-line with the Federation strategic directions as well as consolidating the achievements of the programme to date. The Federation continues to provide administrative support and financial reporting services for the blood programme.

The 2002-2003 appeal process has led to a strategic refocusing of the Federation's support for LRC in the health sector. There is a growing role for the regional health unit to play in close co-operation with PNS, WHO and other partners, in promoting capacity building within the LRC health division, enhancing networking skills, development of voluntary blood donor recruitment, CBFA, Watsan and HIV/AIDS awareness.

LRC is in the process of implementing a diarrhoea/cholera control awareness and capacity building programme in conjunction with Ministry of Public Health/WHO and with the support of the Federation and partner National Societies. The main thrust is continuous health awareness through poster, leaflet and awareness campaigns, volunteer training, mobilisation of high risk villages and distribution of oral rehydration salts (ORS). This is part of the overall CBFA programme which LRC regards as a priority.

Objective 1

To develop an effective national blood donor recruitment system.

Activities & Achievements

The target for 2001 is that 90% of blood donors will be non-remunerated. During the past three months an average of approximately 86% was achieved which is similar to the previous six months. Dissemination and voluntary blood donor recruitment activities continue to increase. Blood donor recruitment campaigns are being organised in 8 provinces with the ministries of health and education as well as at universities, schools, technical colleges, government training institutes, police and army training academies and hotels in Vientiane.

Constraints

Whilst the number of voluntary non remunerated donors is increasing, the volume of blood collected has remained stable during the third quarter. During the mid period of the year, blood collection tend to go down because most donors are students who are still on vacation.

Objective 2

To ensure the hygienic collection and full screening of all donated blood, and its safe transition including use of component therapy.

Activities & Achievements

A standard procedure was introduced earlier to ensure that all blood units are routinely tested for: ABO, Rh, HIV, HBV, HCV, syphilis and screening for antibodies. This procedure was introduced to ensure that compatibility testing was performed before blood transfusion.

Regular lectures on blood component therapy are given at the Friendship Hospital as well as other hospitals in Vientiane and the provinces.

Other major activities during the quarter include meeting with the Research Institute for Health and Sciences and the John Hopkins regarding the training course on blood transfusion services in Chiang Mai. Also discussed was the monitoring and follow up of the blood programmes in Khammouane, Savannakhet, Champasak, Saravanne, Luangprabang, Xayaboury and Oudomsay.

The director of the blood programme attended the Fogarty summer programme in the USA.

During the first six months of 2001 motorbikes for blood donor recruitment were handed over in Champasak and Savannakhet. Award ceremonies of appreciation certificates for regular donors also took place.

Constraints

There were no significant constraints.

Objective 3

To develop capacity in administration and management..

Activities & Achievements

The Federation delegation continued to provide administrative support and financial reporting services to the JRC funded LRC blood programme. In the future, the regional health unit will be providing increasing levels of support for the LRC health division in terms of skills development, capacity building and regional networking.

Constraints

There were no significant constraints

Institutional and Resource Development:

As indicated in the Focus on Capacity Building situation report of 15 January 2001, the primary focus of the Federation's work is in organisational and resource development OD/RD and capacity building, particularly at LRC HQ. The mood amongst the LRC and its partners is one of enthusiasm and confidence for building strong partnerships around an inclusive Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) framework with the LRC five year development plan and annual work plan as the foundations.

Since the beginning of this year, much positive groundwork has been done building on the initiatives launched at the Bangkok partnership meeting in May 2000, followed by LRC, Federation and partner National Societies Thalait planning workshop in August which resulted in the preparation of LRC's five year development plan. The OD governance workshop in November then set the strategic direction and priorities for the OD/RD programme this year.

In May, LRC's annual work plan based on the five year development plan was finalised and is now being implemented. LRC, the Federation and partner National Societies are all actively involved in monitoring progress.

Objective 1

To ensure that all Lao Red Cross senior managers are equipped with the basic management skills needed to run the society.

Activities & Achievements

Following the provision of funds from the Swiss government for capacity building, and German RC for OD/RD, the Federation has resources at its disposal to support a range of activities working in close co-operation with PNS. Danish RC, Netherlands RC and Australian RC, in particular, are committed to supporting HQ capacity building in addition to their other programmes.

On his arrival, the new Federation representative has focussed on the following core areas which are priorities in LRC's annual work plan:

- conducting a Training Needs Assessment (TNA);
- assisting LRC to develop a human resource policy and strategy;
- assisting LRC to prepare a national resource mobilisation strategy and action plan drawing on the experiences of HQ and branches;
- expanding information dissemination in close collaboration with ICRC;
- support for the planning process.

Constraints

No specific constraints

Objective 2

To ensure that the society has functioning systems and clear procedures for monitoring, finance, information, and relief goods, and for management processes and decisions.

Activities & Achievements

The annual work plan 2001, which started being implemented in May, is proving a valuable tool for involving LRC, PNS, Federation and ICRC in monitoring progress in a more cohesive and effective manner. This more inclusive branch development planning and consultation process began with a needs assessment & planning workshop in Luang Prabang at the end of May sponsored by Netherlands RC (NRC).

Two regional planning & review meetings will be held at Savnakheth (17-19 October) and Udomsai (8-10 November) followed by a national planning meeting in Vientiane at the end of November or early December when the annual work plan for 2002 will be finalised. partner National Society and the Federation are actively engaged in supporting LRC with the planning process in which the branches all have a key role to play by contributing experience gained through implementing their various activities. The cost of these planning and review meetings is being shared between LRC and its partners.

The NRC bilateral programme continues to provide strong support to the LRC branch development unit (BDU) to finalise the HQ and branch development plan in close consultation with the Federation and PNS. NRC is also providing support for branch development in the southern region while Danish RC (DRC) and Swiss RC (SRC) continue to provide support for branch development in the northern provinces. Thus, there is a much more integrated approach by all the partners to assist LRC develop its "model" of branch development.

Constraints

No specific constraints

Objective 3

To significantly strengthen the management and programming of the four most recently established branches which currently receive no external assistance.

Activities & Achievements

The French Red Cross made a second mission to Lao in August to prepare a firm proposal for supporting two unsponsored branches, Sayabouri and Vientiane Provinces. This would be done through an institutional development, CBFA and Water and sanitation programme. The French Red Cross (FRC) aims to launch the programme in early 2002.

As a result, only Luang Nam Tha and Vientiane municipality remain unsponsored. The Federation is providing some support for all the unsponsored branches through the OD programme as well as funding their participation in the above mentioned planning and review meetings. ICRC and the Federation are co-operating on information dissemination activities for all branches.

Constraints

Achieving this objective is constrained by the need to focus on developing LRC HQ capacity so that they are able to provide more direct support and better service to the branches. A number of issues were reflected at the Luang Prabang 'Needs Assessment Workshop' in May. Highlighted was the concern that branches were not adequately supported by HQ. These are being addressed by LRC, Federation and PNS.

Coordination and Management:

The new Federation representative took up his post at the end of July. Coordination and management is provided by the delegation with support from the regional delegation.

Objective 1

To establish a fully inclusive country assistance strategy (CAS) which supports the Laos Red Cross national plan and strategy and is accepted by all partners.

Activities & Achievements

The LRC, partner National Societies and ICRC all acknowledge the importance of the Federation's role in facilitating and guiding the CAS process to a successful conclusion. LRC has assumed ownership for the CAS which it sees as essential to promoting its model for the development of the NS in an inclusive and well co-ordinated manner with the full support of all the stakeholders. The firm intention of all the stakeholders is that the Lao CAS should be finalised by the end of this year.

The delegation, in close consultation with all the stakeholders including the regional delegation and CAS officer in Geneva, is currently revising the draft CAS which will then be circulated to all concerned for comment by the end of October or early November. The final stage will be a CAS finalisation and ratification meeting before end December at which it is hoped that all stakeholders will 'sign off and buy into' the Lao CAS so that implementation can begin in 2002. FRC and other potential CAS stakeholders will be kept in the loop by the regional delegation.

Constraints

There were no constraints.

Objective 2

To develop and implement the in-country management approaches needed to ensure the CAS is correctly implemented.

Activities & Achievements

The delegation's main priority is to further strengthen the good co-operation and co-ordination which exists between the LRC, the Federation, PNS and ICRC through a shared commitment to making the Lao CAS work. Central to this is the collective involvement in the annual planning and progress monitoring process which is now in operation.

Regular trilateral co-ordination meetings have resumed in addition to informal co-ordination meetings between the Federation, PNS and ICRC on specific issues. The delegation's priorities are finalising the

CAS, strengthening co-ordination between all the stakeholders (particularly of external resources) and HQ capacity building as part of the focus on OD/RD.

Constraints

There were no constraints.

Federation Delegation:

At the end of July 2001, the new Federation representative, sponsored by the Danish RC, took up his post in Vientiane and was able to start building on the momentum achieved during the first six months of the year. The initial task was to draft the Lao appeal for 2002-2003. The delegation is staffed by the representative and three national staff (one programme officer, one finance officer and one driver). The delegation works closely with, and receives good support from the regional delegation.

Monitoring & Evaluation:

Monitoring against the appeal 2001 has been carried out by the delegation with the support from HoRD and Bangkok based technical units. The Lao based consultant who assisted with preparing the annual work plan 2001 has provided some limited inputs to assist the representative monitor progress. Financial monitoring support to the delegation has been provided by the regional finance unit (RFU). A review of the Mekong floods has been completed and the initial findings were reviewed at a meeting organised by the regional disaster management unit (RDMU) in Bangkok.

Lessons Learned:

The lessons learned highlighted in the previous update hold good. The key role played by the Danish RC in supporting the new Federation representative plus the expected willingness of other PNS to contribute towards the cost of running the delegation in Vientiane, demonstrates the value of working as a Federation (around the shared commitment of assisting LRC to achieve its goal of becoming a well functioning National Society by 2010). The challenge for the Federation will be to live up to the expectations and provide the added value and quality of service required.

Financial Update (see attached annex):

Ongoing support from the Japanese RC for the blood programme, the pledge of CHF 50,000 (following the partnership meeting) from German RC as well as funds from the Swiss Government for organisational development and the balance of flood funds reallocated to disaster preparedness, means that the appeal is well funded for the remainder of 2001. New funds from the French RC for CBFA Watsan and branch development in two unsponsored branches are anticipated in 2002. It is envisaged that there will be a carry forward of some unspent balances for OD and DP into 2002.

Outstanding needs:

There are no immediate outstanding needs.

Plans for the next quarter:

The key scheduled events are as follows;

November

- ICRC dissemination workshop, Attapeu.
- Trilateral meeting, Vientiane (so ICRC can attend).
- General assembly and council of delegates meeting, Geneva .
- DP training southern provinces (tentative).
- Annual LRC planning meeting followed by CAS finalisation meeting in Vientiane. (option 1)

December

- Annual LRC planning meeting followed by CAS finalisation meeting in Vientiane (option one).
- World HIV/AIDS day.
- Regional management team meeting in Bangkok.
- Visit to Philippines National Red Cross.

For further details please contact: Nick Russell, Phone: +856 2121 5762; Fax: +856 2121 935; email: ifrcls01@ifrc.org

All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>.

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Laos						ANNEX 1
APPEAL No. 01.44/2001		PLEDGES RECEIVED				14.11.2001
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
CASH						TOTAL COVERAGE
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				877'157		135.3%
CASH CARRIED FORWARD				36'814		
REALLOCATIONS FROM OTHER PROJECTS				294'971		
DANISH - RC				199'786	27.07.2001	FUNDING DELEGATE
JAPANESE - RC		11'900	USD	19'933	10.01.01	ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTION FOR COST OF T-SHIRTS
JAPANESE - RC				456'190	17.04.01	BLOOD PROGRAMME/DELEGATION COST
JAPANESE - RC				2'464	17.04.01	PSC
SWITZERLAND GVT				150'000	12.07.2001	ID PROGRAMME
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				1'160'158	CHF	132.3%
KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
Denmark	Delegate(s)			26'612		
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				26'612	CHF	3.0%