

ANNUAL REPORT



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

SOUTHEAST ASIA: REGIONAL PROGRAMMES

14 May 2004

In Brief

Appeal No. 01.65/2003; Appeal target: CHF 2,549,593 (USD 1,868,518 or EUR 1,746,297); Appeal coverage: 103.3% ([click here to go directly to the Financial Report](#)).

This Annual Report reflects activities implemented over a one-year period; they form part of, and are based on, longer-term, multi-year planning. All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

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Overall analysis of the programme

The Secretariat of the International Federation, situated in Geneva, has a regional office for Southeast Asia (hereafter called the regional delegation) in Bangkok. As a secretariat, the regional delegation provides services to the Red Cross Red/Crescent Societies (Federation members) in 11 countries in Southeast Asia. The Federation's *Strategy 2010* has been the basis of all the work in the region, both for the regional delegation and the 11 societies. The technical services the regional delegation offers are together called the regional programmes and include:

- health and care;
- disaster management;
- promoting humanitarian values and visibility for the Red Cross/Red Crescent; and
- organisational development (OD).

The services are provided by the respective health, disaster management, information and OD units in the delegation. Facilitating networking between Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies has been an important part of the unit's work. In 2003, the regional health network on HIV/AIDS and the network of OD focal persons (OD forum) were actively involved. Information networking was not a priority in 2003 since the information policy for the region focused on individual countries and on building a media presence. While the regional network in disaster management (DM) has been active, the thrust of the DM unit's work has been on addressing individual country needs. In 2003, the unit also invested efforts in building a regional response team for large-scale disasters.

In addition, regional delegation has an important role in:

- coordinating between Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies (generically called national societies);
- managing its field personnel and
- representing the Federation at international organisations in the region.

These functions are also part of the delegation's programmes discussed below. Apart from the regional delegation, the Federation also has country offices in the region. These offices, called country delegations, were located in six countries in 2003 - Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, East Timor, Indonesia and Vietnam. By January 2004, the Federation had five country delegations in Southeast Asia after the delegation in Laos closed. The Lao delegation has been replaced by a CAS (Cooperation Agreement Strategy) office in keeping with the strategy it is named after. (Details can be found under Federation Coordination). The regional and country delegations work in close communication, and draw on each other's resources to provide services to the national societies. In 2002, Southeast Asia was one of the four sub-regions globally where the Federation piloted its *Strategy for Change*. The strategy calls for a more decentralised secretariat, with greater responsibilities present in the field offices.

The 11 Southeast Asian countries are largely diverse with regard to socioeconomic and human development levels, political systems, population sizes and geographic features. Indonesia and the Philippines are markedly disaster-prone, while in East Timor, which received nation status only in 2002, poverty is endemic. The countries in the Mekong delta – Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Thailand - alternate between seasons of flooding and seasons of low water levels, which is a breeding ground for mosquitoes that cause dengue and malaria. Myanmar's political isolation has been one of the biggest challenges for its socioeconomic development. Though it is assumed that middle and high-income countries in the region – Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore – have few humanitarian needs, the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak in 2003 proved this false. Singapore and Vietnam were among the most severely affected by this new disease. The WHO saw SARS as a considerable threat to public health and recommended in April that travellers should consider postponing essential travel to affected areas. For the regional delegation and national societies, SARS turned out to be an opportunity to spread hygiene and public health messages. On the other hand, SARS was a major constraint in the regional delegation's travel to countries and for regional events. Only after the cessation of the outbreak in July did the regional programmes pick up momentum and were completed as far as possible before the year end. Some plans and associated funding were carried into the first quarter of 2004.

Funding for the regional programmes comes from external governments and national societies (called Partner National Societies or PNS). Usually the funds have a duration within which they are to be used and could range from less than a year to over a year's duration. In case of delays in programme implementation, the regional delegation informs its donors and, if necessary, asks for an extension for usage of funds. In one such case the regional delegation got an extension for using 2003 funds from the Swedish Red Cross Society by the first quarter of 2004.

Health and Care

Introduction

The objective of the regional health unit (RHU) programme is to see the region's national Societies deliver quality health and care programmes that address the needs of the most vulnerable communities. Over the past decades, there has been substantial progress in disease prevention and control with a region wide decline in communicable diseases. However, emerging and re-emerging diseases such as HIV/AIDS, dengue haemorrhagic fever and tuberculosis pose increasing threats to the region. They have added to the burden caused by endemic diseases such as malaria and gastrointestinal infections, which stem from widespread lack of access to safe drinking water and hygienic sanitation. Population movements and urbanisation, combined with microbial evolution, have put all countries in the region at risk. The SARS outbreak in 2003 was a clear example of how the emergence of a new infectious disease, combined with extensive global travelling, could suddenly place the world in danger of a new pandemic. Furthermore, several countries in economic transition are simultaneously experiencing ill health patterns typical of developing countries as well as those of affluence, creating a double burden for governments. All of this places an enormous challenge on the health departments of Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies to

constantly redefine their role and adapt to external conditions in order to continue serving the most vulnerable. The RHU seeks to support the national societies in this process.

Expected Result 1

There is increased capacity in the region's national societies for effective design, planning, implementation and management of relevant high quality health and care programmes. The RHU will support this capacity building process by providing technical assistance and advice to national societies in accordance with specific needs and development plans.

Expected Result 2

There is enhanced regional networking for cross-border transfer of technology, information sharing, advocacy, and effective resource mobilisation and utilisation within the region. Underpinning the regional networks will be an enhanced focus on increasing the ownership of the membership, with national societies taking on the chair/secretariat role of the networks and, importantly, becoming more committed to supporting one another. The RHU will be instrumental in assisting the networks in developing and implementing cross-border activities.

Expected Result 3

There is improved coordination of health and care activities within the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and, together with relevant external agencies in the region, development of sustainable national society health programmes. The RHU will act as a facilitator in the coordination of health and care activities in the region.

Achievements

Health Strategic Plans

In 2003, several national societies requested support from the RHU to develop health strategic plans as a means of developing more consistent health programmes with clear focus, priorities and vision. By mid-year the RHU organised a one week workshop for key health managers and staff from Vietnam and Lao Red Cross Societies to initiate the process. The workshop led to the development of draft strategic plans in both countries, which in turn were used to seek funding as well as technical support from other partners. In both countries, support has been ensured and the strategic plans will be finalised in 2004. There is now clearly an increased understanding within national societies of the importance of strategic planning. Even though the process has not yet been finalised in Laos and Vietnam, some results can already be witnessed, such as improved internal coordination within different sections of national societies. For example, two key health sections in Lao Red Cross Society – the health department and the blood transfusion service centre – have started to discuss cooperation, where previously they worked in isolation.

Health-in-Emergencies

The SARS epidemic in 2003 threatened to turn into a major disaster of worldwide consequences. With RHU support, a number of national societies in the region initiated activities aimed at informing the public about the disease and taking relevant preventive measures. The activities also aimed at supporting their national governments in providing adequate treatment and support for SARS patients. The International Federation raised funds through an emergency appeal in May 2003 to increase preparedness and strengthen prevention of communicable diseases. The work of the national societies, which included a large variety of activities in accordance with local needs and priorities, undoubtedly contributed to containing the epidemic. The experience also led many national societies to review their internal structures and external relationships for dealing with public health emergencies and, today, most are much better prepared to respond to similar outbreaks in the future. In some countries, the hygiene awareness programmes led to lasting improvements in health and hygiene behaviour, as for example in Singapore, where the practice of spitting in the street has all but disappeared.

HIV/AIDS

2003 saw the launch of an OPEC funded programme for reducing household vulnerability to HIV/AIDS in selected countries in Asia and the Pacific region. The support from the OPEC Fund has led to a scale-up of HIV/AIDS related activities in Southeast Asia national societies and provided greater depth and coverage to current programmes. The OPEC support also provided an opportunity for the Movement to try new management and implementation structures, with the Federation working in partnership with the Australian Red Cross Society in supporting national societies and managing the programme.

An external evaluation of the Asian Regional Taskforce on HIV/AIDS (ART) was conducted in May 2003. The evaluation found that the capacity of national societies to respond to HIV/AIDS has substantially enhanced over the last five years. The national societies have an increased capability to deliver HIV/AIDS programmes and increased availability of resources for these programmes in the region. This is further substantiated by the development of more comprehensive activities addressing, for example, prevention, stigma and discrimination, harm reduction, psycho-social support, and home-based care. These are targeted to a wider cross-section of society – commercial sex workers, police and army, youth, people living with HIV/AIDS, truck drivers, mobile workers, etc. In contrast, activities prior to 1998 were mainly youth peer education and prevention activities. Though these developments cannot be credited to the work of ART alone, there is no doubt that ART has been an important contributor. The evaluation, however, also identified a number of weaknesses confronting ART; some related to structure, some to operational inefficiency.

The evaluation report formed the basis for the 15th ART meeting and strategic planning workshop held in Indonesia in September 2003. The main outcome of this meeting was the development of a new strategic plan 2004-08 that attempts to reinforce the positive impacts of the ART network and address its shortcomings. The vision of ART has now shifted from one of building the capacity of individual member national societies for delivering effective HIV/AIDS related programmes to one of being a strong network and a key player in addressing HIV/AIDS related issues in the region. Thus, the slogan ‘Strength through pARTnership’ was designed as the direction for translating the new ART vision into reality. A group of people living with HIV/AIDS was involved and actively participated in drawing up the strategy.

Blood Donor Recruitment

A second meeting of the Regional Blood Donor Recruitment Task Force (a regional health grouping on blood related matters) was held in February 2003. The meeting was hosted and partly funded by the Singapore Red Cross Society. It provided an opportunity for national societies to exchange and share their experiences and expertise in the field, and to discuss future regional coordination. As a result of the meeting it was decided to substitute the taskforce with smaller working groups for specific tasks. One such task is to develop a regional poster on blood donor recruitment for the upcoming international colloquium on blood donor recruitment in Beijing in April 2004.

Water and Sanitation

Throughout 2003, the RHU continued to assist the national societies in East Timor, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Cambodia, the Philippines, Vietnam, China and DPR Korea with their water and sanitation programmes. This substantial increase in water and sanitation activities in the region included a special focus on developing holistic programmes (for instance by combining hygiene education).

Coordination

Since the Asia Pacific regional health team meeting in December 2002, the RHU has continued to strengthen the links between all Federation, ICRC, national society and PNS health and care delegates in the region, by maintaining a contact list and keeping in regular contact with all. As a result of this coordination, in one instance a Danish Red Cross Society bilateral health delegate assisted the Federation in undertaking a review of the DPR Korea health program. A second Southeast Asia health team meeting was held in November 2003, focussing on strategic planning as the basis for project development and support. The meeting resulted in general consensus about the importance of strategic planning as well as commitments from all parties to support national societies in this area.

Throughout the year, the RHU also continued to develop links with relevant external agencies and regional bodies by participating in international and regional meetings and conferences. These include the World Water Forum in Japan in March, the regional Global Fund for AIDS TB and Malaria meeting in Myanmar also in March, the 14th International Conference on Drug Related Harm in April, and the 59th UNESCAP Committee on Emerging Social Issues in September 2003. The RHU maintains close links with relevant UN agencies as a member of the UN Regional Taskforce on Mobility and HIV Vulnerability. Furthermore, in September, the Federation and the WHO South East Asia Regional Office (SEARO) in Delhi signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the two agencies, promoting and encouraging closer collaboration throughout the SEARO region. For Southeast Asia, the MoU covers Thailand, Myanmar, Indonesia and East Timor.

Constraints

The SARS epidemic affected the region during the first half of 2003 in more than one way. Activities and regional events were delayed as most countries in the region imposed severe travel restrictions in an attempt to prevent the spread of the disease. Several international events scheduled for the second half of 2003 were postponed to 2004 and beyond.

Support to and communication with the different health networks has been ongoing during the period, but there were no opportunities for the water and sanitation, first aid and health-in-emergencies networks to meet. One constraint was the lack of funding for these particular areas, while another was the lack of willingness by national societies to take the lead in operating the networks. Regional networks require funding and administrative/management support for their sustenance. Considering the still limited potential for self funding faced by many national societies in the region, the network model has to be further discussed and determined for each individual network.

Disaster Management

Introduction

The overall goal of the regional DM unit programme is that communities in the countries in Southeast Asia that are at risk have improved their ability to cope with and respond to disasters. To reach this goal the unit objective is to ensure that the disaster preparedness and response capacity at national society and regional level is substantially improved. Further, the linkages with and mobilisation of the Federation's global response system are assured through a comprehensive, integrated regional DM approach.

The regional disaster management unit (RDMU) at the end of 2003 comprised three persons – a DM coordinator (for preparedness), a DM coordinator (for emergency preparedness and response), and a DM programme officer (from the Philippines). The unit planned for an assistant DM programme officer (from Myanmar) in late 2003 and recruited a staff person in early 2004. The unit forms part of a regional disaster management team. This includes two delegates (one in Indonesia and another in Myanmar) in the Federation country delegations.

Expected Result 1

All national societies are systematically addressing their DM development needs, based on well developed plans and through strengthened regional cooperation.

Achievements

Achievements during visits

An essential part of the work of the RDMU is to support national societies in preparation for disasters and in ongoing DM programme needs. In order to achieve this, staff undertook regular visits to six prioritised countries in the region – Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia, Myanmar and East Timor.

Little progress was made following the signing of a Federation-DIPECHO contract in Vietnam in May 2003. The RDMU therefore intervened and took on budget management responsibilities. Subsequently, implementation started and some progress was made in the latter part of the year. (Details can be found in the Annual Report for Vietnam). An in-country based consultant provided major support to that effect. The RDMU also made several

monitoring visits to Vietnam. Implementation of projects funded by DFID (on disaster preparedness for schoolchildren) and by the British Red Cross Society, (for hazard, vulnerability and capacity assessment and consequent development of disaster preparedness/mitigation activity in three Mekong delta provinces) went ahead relatively smoothly. The unit also worked with the Disaster Management Centre (a key part of the government's Central Committee for Storm and Flood Control) on the development of a draft framework agreement with the Vietnam Red Cross Society (VNRC). It is expected that this agreement, which outlines the roles and responsibilities of the VNRC in disaster management, will be approved in early 2004.

Three members of the regional DM team and a British Red Cross Society disaster preparedness advisor visited the Cambodian Red Cross Society (CRC) to undertake a review of their community-based disaster management programme. The impact, relevance, coordination/partnerships, sustainability, adaptability and coherence of: micro projects (small-scale mitigation projects), disaster response and capacity building were examined. The ten day review produced a brief report with detailed recommendations for the programme. Further follow-up by the regional DM officer was made twice during the year. The regional DM officer also assisted the CRC with a presentation at the Mekong River Commission meeting in November. The officer also helped develop publicity material for the DM programme and supported the society develop appropriate DM training material.

In addition, the unit jointly addressed national societies in the Mekong region – Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar and Vietnam. A three day contingency planning workshop for Lao and Cambodian Red Cross Societies was held in Laos. Draft contingency plans were developed for slow onset flooding in each country (the annual Mekong River flooding being common to each). Contingency plans for other hazards were subsequently developed. Similar three day workshops were also undertaken in Vietnam and Myanmar (as participants were not able to attend the event in Laos). Participants who were involved in the production of these plans have found them useful and realised the importance of clear, comprehensive but concise plans. As the events engaged a large cross section of participants from the national societies, there was a true sense of ownership and a desire to make sure that the plans were accessible and widely disseminated. These have yet to be placed onto the special DMIS focal page (an information sharing system on the Federation website) due to delays in finalisation by each society. However, these plans were expected to be completed by the end of the year.

A six day training-of-trainers (ToT) workshop (in participatory methodologies) was also held for 20 trainer-participants from Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia. Two Vietnamese from the Asian Institute for Technology Centre, Hanoi facilitated the training. The two facilitators were familiar with the Movement as they had been involved with training Red Cross staff in Vietnam over the last five years. National society trainers form the backbone of disaster management work and thus play a crucial role in the development of staff and Red Cross volunteers in their country. Generally, the 20 trainers had good disaster management knowledge but they had limited experience of training methodologies. The advantages of this truly sub-regional event were noted, with good development of skills/knowledge of methods and rapport between the trainees and trainers from the Mekong countries.

In Indonesia, the year began with a two day review of the Movement's response to the Bali bomb incident. Representatives of ICRC, the Federation's regional and country delegations, and the Indonesian, Australian and Singapore Red Cross Societies took part. Generic issues were compiled and circulated. The aim was to try to learn from the experiences and to be better prepared for such eventualities in the future. Less than one year later, the bomb at the JW Marriot Hotel in Jakarta brought back some of the same issues and further heightened the need for a greater level of preparedness and response. One key issue, which was taken up by the Indonesian Red Cross Society (PMI), with the support of the Federation, was the psycho-social support for their volunteers involved in such incidents. During the latter part of the year, a workshop took place in Jakarta with support from UNICEF and ICRC.

In the final quarters of the year, the DM coordinator visited East Timor to conduct a training needs assessment with the East Timor Red Cross Society (CVTL) staff. The assessment helped in preparation for a tailor-made leadership and management course and for DM courses in 2004. Visits were also made to the Philippines and Malaysia, particularly by the DM coordinator (for emergency preparedness and response) to improve understanding of the disaster management information system (DMIS) and to plan for a response team training event. Nationalsociety DM staff generally appreciated such visits by the RDMU and regular engagement in terms

of technical support and advice. The visits have helped to develop much stronger working relationships with each national society.

Other achievements

The unit designed a customised one week course to develop the managerial and leadership skills of the national society DM teams. This will take place in Bangkok in February 2004. The course, originally planned for March 2003, was at first postponed until August due to SARS and further postponed due to other commitments of resource people. It was at that stage that the RDMU planned to customise the course, which it had originally planned as a one-off training. Therefore, a needs assessment of over 40 staff from nine national societies was done in September/October. The results were analysed by a management consultancy company in Kuala Lumpur and a plan for individual staff members was developed. Preparations for this training event took place throughout the year and, during the final quarter, participants undertook pre-course work. The event will be conducted with the Institute of Disaster Risk Management (based in Manila) and human resources, finance and reporting staff of the Federation. Thirteen participants from seven national societies are expected to attend.

The unit organised a three day Red Cross/Red Crescent volunteers curriculum development workshop in August, attended by nine staff/volunteers from five national societies in the region. The participants, who were involved in Red Cross/Red Crescent volunteer training/material development in their own countries, jointly worked on a manual for volunteers. The manual, subsequently translated into Khmer, Vietnamese, and Bahasa Indonesia, will be piloted in some Southeast Asian countries in 2004.

Of increasing importance to the RDMU is the establishment of partnerships with important regional institutions. Over the latter part of the year, the DM coordinator (for preparedness) had discussions with the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC) and with the Institute of Disaster Risk Management along these lines. The unit thus anticipates a MoU with both organisations in the first quarter of 2004. These will cover sharing of material and human resources, cooperation in research, training, reviews and proposals. RDMU staff acted as resource persons for several days on an annual community-based disaster management course of the ADPC in July. Financial support provided for a Thai Red Cross Society staff member to attend this course came from money set aside for national society staff development. The same was used to support a Philippines Red Cross Society staff member to attend a team leader's course in Switzerland. Some discussions have also taken place with Red R over joint training initiatives for Red Cross/Red Crescent staff.

The RDMU also engaged in some research in 2003. A consultant hired by the unit produced a discussion paper on population movement, aimed at informing national society and Federation staff of the key issues in Southeast Asia (available as a separate paper and electronically). It was designed to stimulate debate amongst national society staff on this sensitive and important global issue. Similarly, there were discussions with a consultant and staff at the ADPC for ideas on an urban disaster risk management study. The joint study is expected to start in four urban centres in the region - Jakarta, Da Nang (Vietnam), Vientiane and Bangkok in February 2004.

Fifteen Federation policy documents related to disaster management were translated into Thai, Vietnamese, Khmer and Bahasa Indonesia. These were subsequently photocopied and in some cases distributed to national society branches. All are available electronically and will be placed on DMIS in 2004.

Successful funding applications for the regional disaster management programme ensured finance from the Netherlands government (via the Netherlands Red Cross Society) for CHF155, 000 and from Danida (via the Danish Red Cross Society) for CHF 27, 000. Further increases in funding commitments were also made by the British Red Cross Society (approximately CHF23, 000).

Constraints

The major constraint faced during the period was the outbreak of SARS. This caused delay in the implementation of the leadership and management course mentioned earlier. A considerable amount of time, effort and some money was lost as the event was postponed twice in the year. Ironically, these postponements led to the positive development of a tailor-made course for national society DM staff.

- A policy development workshop planned for three national societies did not take place due to time constraints. It is likely to be followed by a regional study on key advocacy issues.

- Due to slow progress in the development of agreements between the respective governments and the Red Cross in Vietnam and Cambodia, the DM unit had to postpone these until the first quarter of 2004.

Expected Result 2

The disaster response and response preparedness capacity within the region is further strengthened, at both individual national society and regional level, and the understanding of and linkages to the Federation's global response system are assured.

Achievements

Training events in response mechanisms

All disaster response training has included classroom sessions as well as field exercises. In addition, some participants' ability to utilise these skills was tested in disaster response operations, particularly in Indonesia, East Timor, the Philippines and Myanmar. In Indonesia, the regional DM coordinator (emergency response and preparedness) supported a four day training of the national level response team (called Tim Khusus) organised by PMI and the Federation country delegation. Similarly, the unit supported the Myanmar Red Cross Society in training their national disaster response team (known as the Damage Assessment and Response Team).

Apart from assisting with the development of national intervention teams, the RDMU promoted the Federation's regional emergency response concept – the regional disaster response team (RDRT). The concept was introduced at different stages:

- RDRT training components were used in national society disaster response training events in Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Myanmar.
- In June, a two person team from the regional delegation (health and disaster management units) and the DM delegate in Indonesia co-facilitated sessions during a response team training course organised by the Malaysian Red Crescent Society. The regional delegation piloted the RDRT during this training for 26 people, and those who passed the training joined the RDRT roster.
- A major achievement was the first RDRT event for Red Cross/Red Crescent staff and volunteers in Southeast Asia, held in East Java, Indonesia in September. The disaster management division in Geneva, the Indonesian country delegation and PMI were involved all along, providing advice, materials, and information on human resources. ICRC (Indonesia) supported this event and their staff members were present throughout the training. Thirty-six Red Cross/Red Crescent participants from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, East Timor and Myanmar attended the training. Later, standard operational procedures for the Southeast Asia RDRT were finalised and submitted to the Geneva Secretariat. The regional delegation now needs to negotiate with the national societies on practical arrangements prior to deploying their disaster management staff for a regional response.

National societies now have an improved understanding of the importance of a coherently linked disaster response system. Response teams from bottom to the top, that is from branch level rapid response teams, to national intervention teams, to regional disaster response teams, and even the global team (FACT), all have their own characteristic roles but have some standard components. In some cases, the teams even have the same personnel.

The Better Programming Initiative (BPI) is a Federation concept that ensures that programming is in line with internationally followed minimum standards for emergency response (SPHERE). The RDMU and the disaster preparedness and policy department (Geneva Secretariat) co-organised a BPI ToT workshop in November in Laos. The Lao Red Cross Society hosted this workshop attended by ten national society personnel from the Southeast Asia and the Asia Pacific region.

The RDMU organised a regional logistics workshop in December. This was the first of its kind in Southeast Asia and was co-facilitated by the Secretariat logistics department and the Belgian Red Cross Society. Fifteen persons from country/regional delegations and national societies (office managers, logistics and procurement staff) participated. Training on Federation logistics systems was also provided during various country visits as well as over the phone and email. The unit also mapped national society capacities and capabilities in logistics for Myanmar, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia and Laos. Further, RDMU staff advised and assisted national society persons in Cambodia, Myanmar, Vietnam, Indonesia, East Timor and Malaysia on procurement. Each national

society has shown willingness to improve procedures and to adopt the Federation logistics standards. Thus, there has been gradual progress to ensure the adaptation of these standards throughout the region.

The RDMU informed national societies of progress on the International Disaster Response Law at various training events. The RDMU maintained relations with the respective Standing Committee working group member and developed ties with specialists in this area of study. The unit was also the coordinator between these researchers and national societies in gathering information on their roles and mandates in disasters and conflict related responses.

Further, the RDMU has been involved in the following:

- A human resource database of DM staff and volunteers continues to be maintained for national society and Federation staff who attended RDRT, FACT and emergency response unit training events.
- During the latter part of the year, the RDMU and regional health unit initiated work in order to develop a more integrated approach to health in emergencies.
- The RDMU supported the regional disaster management committee (Southeast Asia grouping of national society DM persons) and its linkages with the ASEAN DM Committee (an inter-governmental regional body), and attended several ASEAN meetings providing the Federation perspective and encouraging further cooperation.
- Discussions continued with the Australian, Japanese, Singapore, Malaysian and Finnish Societies (supported by the Asia Pacific department) concerning the establishment of a regional emergency response unit (ERU). The ERU of the Federation consists of a team of specialist volunteers that are deployed soon after a large scale disaster. To date, however, no specific unit has been developed.
- Discussions took place with ICRC in Indonesia, the country delegation and PMI representatives concerning the 'Safer Access' (an approach in conflict response) event held there in late October.

Disaster response incidents/operations

During the year, the RDMU was involved with more than twenty disaster response operations implemented by national societies. Support has varied from moral support to advice and assistance for drafting documents and liaising between donors and national societies. For example:

- In Vietnam, the RDMU liaised with donors to secure support for the VNRC.
- In Indonesia, support was provided to help secure DREF (emergency funds) in planning and with ongoing advice.
- In the Philippines, the regional delegation supported the preparation of an emergency appeal with the Philippines Red Cross Society, and helped with coordination with other agencies (e.g. ICRC, Oxfam, donor agencies).
- In East Timor, the unit assisted with regular advice for assessments, DMIS, procurement, promoting the role of CVTL, and securing funding.

The RDMU actively supported the Malaysian Red Crescent Society in preparations for its deployment after the Bam earthquake in Iran. Throughout the year, support was provided by visits to their planning meetings, training of staff, helping the society to develop organisational structures, standard operating procedures, and by making links with the Federation response system. Talks with the Malaysian Red Crescent Society also focused on the national society's interest in establishing an ERU in the area of health.

Constraints

Postponement of the first RDRT training event from June to August/September due to the SARS outbreak in the first and second quarters of the year had serious implications on planned activities. Only one such event (and not two as originally proposed in the *Appeal 2003-2004*) was possible in the year. Some of the delays caused by SARS were, however, overcome by the appointment of a DM officer. The three person team in the unit enabled faster progress in undertaking the agreed activities.

- Only one logistics training event (and not three as had been originally planned) was undertaken due to financial and time constraints.
- Funds from the regional budget were used when the unit did not receive expected funding from the Geneva Secretariat for the RDRT training event. As a result, it was difficult to support further emergency response preparedness events.

- Although the RDMU did not undertake, as planned, SPHERE workshops for national societies, it ensured that the former regional DM administrator (from the Hong Kong Red Cross Society) co-facilitated one such training event that took place in Vietnam for Red Cross/Red Crescent and international NGO staff. It also planned for financial support to three national society staff for a SPHERE ToT by Red R in January 2004.
- One of the challenges for the RDMU has been balancing differing demands placed upon it during times of emergencies.

Expected Result 3

The linkages and mechanisms for DM information and knowledge sharing between the national, regional and global level are substantially improved.

Achievements

The Federation's information sharing system on disasters – DMIS – can be accessed by Red Cross/Red Crescent staff and volunteers worldwide. During the year, the unit trained staff in the Philippines, Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar on this system. There were other opportunities when DMIS training was given – RDRT, logistics training, etc. Indonesia, the Philippines and Malaysia have now appointed focal disaster information people at various branches in order to provide headquarters with timely information and to advertise the branches' work. Further training of other national society branch staff is still required. Clearly though, there are more timely and accurate DMIS entries and confidence is growing amongst all DMIS focal persons to make submissions. The number of frequent users of the DMIS in the region has risen by around a hundred. Globally, the Southeast Asia region comes first in timely monitoring reports. Regular DMIS reporting also helped national societies to expand and improve their funding base. There were few occasions for concerns about the timeliness of reports and the need for improved coordination within the Secretariat and the national society.

A questionnaire on national society capacities in disaster management and knowledge sharing was prepared by a working group, and shared at the sixth regional disaster management committee meeting. All Southeast Asia national societies were then sent this questionnaire, responses to which will be collated in early 2004.

The DM unit supported an exchange visit of four DM staff from the Lao Red Cross Society to the community-based DM programme of the CRC in September. The visitors reported that they had a much clearer understanding of the work of the CRC in this area and ties with the Cambodians have further strengthened after the visit. Another visit to Vietnam is planned for the first quarter of 2004. From these learning visits, national society staff can better judge the successes and challenges of a project and apply best practices in their own countries. National societies also appreciate visits of RDMU staff to their programmes and these visits go a long way in building a mutual understanding.

CVTL found the DM training material from Vietnam and Cambodia they were provided with useful. This material has been used to prepare a first draft of material for CVTL volunteers in Bahasa Indonesia.

The unit shared information on its programme with the Federation regional management team during the two team meetings in 2003. The team appreciated that the unit was proactive in its support to country delegations and the national societies. The challenges of the Red Cross/Red Crescent system at times of emergency were also openly and frankly discussed.

Work with PNS, operating either bilaterally in the region or supporting the programme work of national societies or the RDMU, continued. Particularly good working relationship exists with the main PNS supporters of the RDMU, such as the British, Danish, Swedish, Japanese, Netherlands and Finnish Red Cross Societies. More work is required, particularly with PNS operating bilaterally in the region and active in disaster management, to improve coordination and information sharing. At the country level, during regular visits by the regional DM staff, meetings are held with PNS working in disaster management. Further emphasis is to be placed upon engaging with the long-term programme work at country and regional level with PNS (e.g. the Danish and Australian Red Cross Societies).

The DM coordinator (preparedness) made a presentation at the ECHO 3 global meeting on the Federation DM programme and lessons learnt, specifically in the Southeast Asian context. This was an important event and was attended by important external agencies.

Constraints

The planned regional disaster management information and knowledge sharing workshop did not take place. However, the DM coordinator (emergency preparedness and response) had opportunities to guide national DMIS focal persons and to further develop a disaster management information network with selected branches.

- The planned IT needs assessment for six national societies did not take place due principally due to time constraints. It is expected that the regional IT officer will assist with this in 2004.

Expected Result 4

The Federation's regional DM cooperation framework is further developed, maintained and sustained.

Achievements

In April, a meeting of the Regional Disaster Management Committee (RDMC) chairpersons took place in Jakarta. The participants discussed the role of the RDMU and the chairpersons for facilitating the activities of the regional DM committee members. It was agreed that a more proactive role, at least in the short-term, for the RDMU was necessary for monitoring activities. Partly due to this reason, the RDMU appointed a regional disaster management officer in May.

The sixth RDMC meeting was held in August, at the Asian Institute of Technology Centre in Bangkok. The three day event was attended by disaster managers from 10 national societies in the region and by most regional DM team members. During the meeting:

- Updates were provided from each national society on their DM programmes and from the four working groups on progress against action plans.
- Thematic discussion took place on areas of key concern to the region: urban disasters, climate change, population movement and community-based DM.
- Members sought improvements on information sharing, on RDMC activities, better utilisation of Federation tools (particularly DMIS), production of regular bulletins (by the RDMU) and an information brochure (about the RDMC).
- Collaborating with ICRC was also another important issue. An ICRC representative will be invited to attend the next RDMC meeting and be asked to present on conflict preparedness. A resolution adopted at the meeting agreed that steps towards the formation of a regional DM secretariat should be considered at the seventh RDMC Meeting.

The meeting brought together national societies' DM directors nine months after the last gathering in Singapore. Opportunities for information exchange and new learning on key issues that effect the region were appreciated as was the frank dialogue on the RDMC and the challenges ahead. Subsequent to the meeting, action was taken to try to improve communication flows, and on encouraging the national society DMIS focal persons to input timely DM information. The seventh RDMC meeting will most likely be held in May 2004.

RDMC members and the RDMU attended the third regional meeting of the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) held in Bangkok in October. This was a follow-up to informal discussions between RDMC members and ASEAN at their meeting in August in the Philippines and exploratory talks in September in Indonesia. This was the first time that RDMC and RDMU attended an ASEAN meeting.

Constraints

Only one regional disaster management committee chairpersons' meeting was possible during the year. Therefore, RDMC members felt they were not sufficiently consulted by the RDMU. Similarly, because the regional DM team only met once during the RDMC meeting, there were some difficulties in coordinating together. Both issues need to be addressed in the future. The RDMU continued to facilitate the activities of the RDMC working groups. However, the three person team at the RDMU required further strengthening in order to assist the RDMC in the

undertaking of the strategic objectives and activities. The unit therefore explored other options such as outposting staff or a staff-on-loan.

Humanitarian Values

Introduction

The regional information unit in Bangkok began 2003 with five projects for humanitarian values across Southeast Asia: training national societies in communications; securing high visibility in disasters; raising awareness of humanitarian values; integrating communications training into workshops and seminars; and networking across the region. In previous years, the unit covered a larger region (East Asia and the Pacific) in addition to Southeast Asia. Initially, the changes in regional coverage were attributed partly to the unit's funding limitations. After a communications survey in Asia and the Pacific and a meeting of regional information managers in September 2003, it was confirmed that the Bangkok unit would only cover Southeast Asia sub-region.

Also in the meeting, the priority of information work was stated as "positioning the Red Cross/Red Crescent as the primary, credible source of information on humanitarian issues and disasters in the region". Thus, the unit cut down from its five original projects to two – training national societies in communications, and visibility. In summary, in 2003 the Southeast Asia information unit worked to build the organisation's image and profile through developing a greater media presence in the region and by generating a regular flow of publicity material. With national societies and sometimes independently, the unit tried to ensure effective and timely communications on the four core areas in *Strategy 2010* – disaster preparedness, disaster response, health and care, and humanitarian values. The unit took the opportunity of the Partnership meeting and Secretaries General forum in October to present the new focus in information to a large cross-section of the Red Cross/Red Crescent community.

There were also personnel changes in the unit in 2003 when a long serving delegate left in June. A Philippines Red Cross Society staff-on-loan joined on a six month contract, followed by a New Zealand Red Cross Society funded delegate in July.

Expected Result 1: Capacity

The region's national societies will have strong and well developed communications capacity integrated into programme areas.

Achievements

Unit staff interacted with national societies in the region to understand their communications capacity better, share strategies in information, and encourage them to bring stories from the field. Collaborations in the field with communications staff in Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam and Myanmar included jointly writing stories for visibility (e.g. the landslide rescue operation in Indonesia that led to the death of a volunteer), small group discussions and one-on-one coaching. The coaching was meant to improve the capacity of national societies to write stories and take photos. The unit also coached national societies (including Indonesia, Myanmar, Cambodia and Thailand) through distance to produce website quality stories and photos. The unit helped national societies identify suitable topics, draw up questions to be answered, and structure stories. Topics written about included road safety, HIV/AIDS peer education, community-based first aid, dengue fever, rebuilding schools burned during conflict, disaster preparedness, harm reduction, SARS, blood donor recruitment, typhoons, landslides, floods, street children and bombings.



A junior health worker uses comics to educate street children.



Rebuilding schools in Aceh, Indonesia.

Some of the stories were also used in internal publications of the societies or for national media. In some instances, national societies took the initiative and spontaneously sent stories and photos to the regional information unit for www.ifrc.org or for the new regional newsletter, *Southeast Asia Link*.

On request, the officer and delegate facilitated a one day workshop on communications for the leadership and management of the CRC. The aim was to emphasise the importance of integrating communications into the work of the CRC. Participants agreed to set up a working group to look at ways different departments in the CRC could cooperate on specific projects. Since then the CRC has come out with an annual report and information kit, circulated in-country and also presented during the regional Partnership meeting in Hanoi.



Cover page of the CRC information kit.

There was also an information component in the RDRT training course held in Surabaya, Indonesia. The head of communications in PMI and the regional information delegate gave a presentation on the role of communications during disasters. They focused on interview skills, photography and responding quickly to requests for information. RDRT participants from the Malaysian Red Crescent Society, who deployed after the December 2003 earthquake in Bam, Iran, were able to raise the visibility of the Movement on www.ifrc.org and in the media.

The staff-on-loan from the Philippines Red Cross Society substantially contributed to information activities in the second half of 2003. On returning to the Philippines Red Cross Society she has brought out stories both for the national and international media. The latter included web stories and photos in the *Bangkok Post* after the Philippines earthquake in December. When in the Philippines, the information officer gave a presentation on the importance of visibility in fundraising.

Constraints

Due to the changes in the first part of the year, the information unit could act on concrete plans only in the second half of the year. Some prime time and effort invested in the first half (such as for the regional communications network meeting) went on activities that were not seen as priorities later on. Contact with national societies resumed after a lag, in part brought on by SARS and changes in staff.

Although the disaster management team in national societies often collects detailed information, it may be used for visibility much later. For example, it can be difficult tracking down photos to go with disaster stories. Existing information is often not directly accessible to information managers in national societies, who may not be at the disaster site and are often very busy with various other tasks, such as volunteer management, fundraising and speech writing. In several national societies, apart from a shortage of funds, there is a shortage of skilled information staff. These constraints are unlikely to be resolved in the near future; but the regional information unit will continue to support communications departments to build their capacity.

Expected Result 2: Visibility

Links with regional and international media, as well as Federation and national society outlets, will be strengthened to secure high profile media coverage for the activities of the Federation and national societies in the region, particularly in times of emergencies.

Achievements

In the first seven months of 2003 the unit produced publicity material for the countries in and outside the region. This included the production and distribution of the HIV/AIDS *Changing Attitudes* CD, a regional profile of the Red Cross/Red Crescent, and the final issue of *Asia Pacific FOCUS*. The unit also brought out a brochure on the *Manila Action Plan*.

After the final edition of *Asia Pacific FOCUS*, which was discontinued, the unit devised a new, more economical, email-based publication, *Southeast Asia Link*. National societies contributed to three editions published in 2003. The newsletters were also faxed and photocopied for distribution to members of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement. *Southeast Asia Link* was produced regularly (about every six weeks) and it provided an opportunity to share information among national societies, and encourage stories and photos.

The table below shows the number of stories the regional information unit covered in 2002 and in 2003. The table only takes into consideration the unit's publications (*AP FOCUS* and *Southeast Asia Link*) and the Federation public website. The number of stories directly written by the unit was higher in 2002 versus 2003; this is understandable given the unit in 2002 was covering a much larger region. Interestingly, the number of stories written directly by national societies or from collaborations between the Federation and national societies, was much higher in 2003 over 2002. The work of national societies in Southeast Asia was more prominent on the website and in the *Southeast Asia Link* as national societies generated many more stories in 2003.

Red Cross/Red Crescent news stories in the region covered by the regional information unit

WRITTEN BY: PUBLISHED IN:	National society		National society and Federation or staff-on loan		Federation	
	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003
<i>Asia Pacific FOCUS/Southeast Asia Link</i>	12	11	2	3	21	16
www.ifrc.org	2	9	3	8	17	11
Total	14	20	5	11	38	27

In order to increase media presence, the new information delegate met journalists and bureau chiefs from newspapers, radio and TV organisations based in Bangkok and other centres. The delegate also attended several events and presentations at the Foreign Correspondents Club of Thailand to cultivate contacts. Specific actions included organising a press conference in October 2003 for the Fund the Fund campaign, aiming to put pressure on donor countries to fully fund the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, ahead of the Global Fund's

meeting in Chiang Mai. The press conference generated stories in several international and Thai-based media. Also, the BBC news website ran a story written by the unit on an HIV/AIDS peer education programme in Myanmar. In addition, stories on World First Aid Day appeared in the media in December.

In 2003, the unit was in touch with major partners, including the Japanese, Danish, British and New Zealand Red Cross Societies, to ensure these societies had material to show their donors in their regular newsletters and websites. The unit in turn received positive feedback from these PNS.

Organisational Development

Introduction

In 2003, the regional organisational development (OD) programme continued to focus on three core areas: regional coordination, planning, and direct support to national societies. The OD unit has guided its work so as to promote the ownership of OD in national societies by societies themselves. Since 2002, the commitment from the secretaries general of the national societies to appoint OD focal points to work directly with the unit has been important. In some important areas where national societies required Federation support, some national societies were comfortable approaching the unit on their internal matters. The unit assisted the national societies by working with them to come up with solutions.

There were, no doubt, some difficulties in carrying out the plans for 2003, especially given the slow start to the year when regional events were postponed due to the SARS outbreak. The last quarter saw the departure of the regional OD delegate, whose funding, subsequently unspent, led to a positive balance at the end of the year. These funds per se would be spent for regional OD plans, indicated also for Vietnam and Cambodia, in early 2004. The unit, with one staff member, has carried out plans since October to the present, and will be joined by a new delegate in April 2004. The targets that were met were also possible due to closer coordination with heads of delegations and OD delegates in supporting some initiatives of the regional OD unit. Close coordination continues with ICRC, the OD department in Geneva, country delegations and national societies in the region in all relevant activities.

Expected Result 1

National societies in the region achieve significant improvements in regional cooperation and coordination through a strong regional network of OD practitioners and practical training in OD related issues.

Achievements

The OD forum met twice during 2003 after its first meeting in 2002. The second meeting of the regional OD forum took place in June, with OD practitioners from five delegations and seven national societies. The OD focal point in the Geneva Secretariat also participated in the meeting. Two working groups created by the first regional OD forum presented their work in this meeting. The first group will continue its work to finalise mechanisms to institutionalise the forum and the second on branch development. As local capacity building to provide better services is increasingly becoming a thrust of OD in the region, the forum discussed the Philippines Red Cross Society experience in branch development and categorisation of the branches. It was also agreed that the main focus of the following meeting would be capacity building at the community level. The meeting was also a starting point for exchanges in fundraising when the Thai Red Cross Society shared its very impressive fundraising plans and practices, which many participants found to be extremely useful. (See below for details).

The third regional OD forum meeting took place in December. The participants were from eight national societies and two delegations. The forum took place in Cambodia, co-hosted by the CRC. This brought the opportunity to the directors of CRC to learn about OD work in the region. The forum discussed branch development where the CRC, along with the Thai, Myanmar and the Philippines Red Cross Societies shared their impressive progress. As participants agreed that it is essential to continue the forum, the regional OD unit suggested electing a coordinator from the national society to enhance ownership of OD work. The Philippines Red Cross Society representative was selected. The forum agreed to focus on governance and management in the next meeting which will be held in Malaysia in May, co-hosted by the Malaysia Red Crescent Society.

The regional delegation has been facilitating a developing partnership between the Thai and Lao Red Cross Societies. The two national are working together to develop fundraising plans and practical ways to help the Lao Red Cross Society strengthen its local fundraising capability. A senior Lao Red Cross Society team first visited Thai counterparts to initiate this partnership process, following which a technical team from the Thai Red Cross Society went to Laos to prepare a first draft fundraising plan with the Lao Red Cross Society. The regional delegation will continue to facilitate this process until the two national societies are comfortable managing it themselves.

The Thai Red Cross Society was again visited when staff from the fundraising department of the Philippines Red Cross Society came as exchange staff to share ideas in various aspects of fundraising. From the learning, the Philippines Red Cross Society has initiated new fundraising activities. Separately, the CRC made study visits to the Thai and the Philippines Red Cross Societies on fundraising and branch development progress. The leadership of the two national societies met and shared ideas. The VNRC took the initiative and visited the Thai Red Cross Society and the Malaysian Red Crescent Society to share management experiences.

The Southeast Asia Youth Cooperation Team, a new network for youth directors in the region, was formed soon after the first regional meeting of youth directors in September. (Details can be found under Expected Result 3). This network was also approved by the Secretaries General forum of Southeast Asia. (See also Federation Coordination).

In Southeast Asia a total of 75 management and field staff benefited from the three training events in a project management tool – the Project Planning Process (PPP). Some national societies are now using PPP as a planning tool. The unit has also received requests for conducting country level PPP training.

Constraints

In two national societies, nominated OD focal persons work not just in OD. Therefore, they have to divide their time for OD and the other responsibilities. This can be a limitation at times.

Expected Result 2

The capacity of at least two national societies in the field of human resource development is enhanced in order to ensure the engagement and retention of a sufficient number of qualified people to carry out the required programmes and activities.

Achievements

The regional OD unit provided the national societies with opportunities for professional enhancement as follows:

- Targeted management training support was provided to selected senior managers from CRC and the Philippines Red Cross Society.
- A Thai Red Cross Society staff member from the fundraising bureau was sent to a workshop for sharing skills in fundraising, organised by the Secretariat.
- Two staff members from the Philippines Red Cross Society were selected to attend a basic training course organised by the Australian Red Cross Society. The course is an induction course to the Red/Cross Red Crescent.

Constraints

Organisational hierarchies are sometimes barriers for the professional enhancement of some talented staff. This can lead to problems retaining the staff.

Expected Result 3

The Malaysian Red Crescent Society, the Philippines Red Cross Society, the Thai Red Cross Society and CRC benefited through direct assistance from the regional OD unit in, respectively, programme management, resource development and mobilisation, establishment of a youth network, and gender balance.

The unit and the Philippines Red Cross Society formalised an agreement for support to the society's financial resource development. The society conducted a ToT for its staff at the national society and in the field. For this training in fundraising, the society customised training material it received from a consultant in Manila. The

Philippines Red Cross Society staff also revised their fundraising policy and presented it to the board for approval.

The unit organised and facilitated the first regional youth directors meeting in the Philippines in September. During the meeting, the directors reviewed their national societies' youth policy and structures. The team also shared lesson identified and various activities. After a field trip the team gave the Philippines Red Cross Society feedback on its activities and made some suggestions.

The unit and the Thai Red Cross Society youth bureau organised study visits within the region for youth, staff and volunteers. The participants reported that they gained knowledge of the national societies' programmes and services.

In November, the unit organised a leadership and management workshop for national societies in the region. This workshop was originally intended only for the Malaysian Red Crescent Society in the first half of 2003. Due to the SARS outbreak the event had to be postponed to later in the year when only some Malaysians were available. Therefore, the unit organised a workshop for board members and seniors manager from 10 national societies in the region. The workshop was useful in increasing their knowledge and understanding on various topics in the Movement.

The CRC strategic plan was finalised and then approved by the board. The OD delegate in Cambodia, with some support from the regional OD unit, conducted PPP training for the national society.

The unit attended the first phase of the gender project in the Lao Red Cross Society and considered areas for support. The unit then supported the second and third phases of the gender development project. The Federation programme officer in Laos received an orientation on various OD issues and regional delegation functions. From 2004, the officer will be part of the CAS office in Laos and will assist the OD focal point in the Lao Red Cross Society in gender projects.

The newly appointed OD focal person in the VNRC discussed the possibility of support for OD issues with the regional delegation, in view of the reduced delegation in Vietnam. The VNRC has agreed to take the lead in its OD process with strategic planning as a starting point. The OD delegate in Cambodia and an officer from Indonesia conducted PPP training for the VNRC as part of the ongoing partnership in the region. Meanwhile, the regional OD unit is revisiting a first draft of strategic planning guidelines for national societies.

Federation Coordination

Introduction

The objective of the regional delegation's Federation Coordination programme is to ensure that partners have sustained and coordinated engagement with the Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies of Southeast Asia.

Looking at the past couple of years, participating national societies and their governments have continued to contribute to country level programmes of the Federation in Southeast Asia. (See country reports <http://www.ifrc.org/where/asiapac.asp>). The regional delegation has organised 'partnership' meetings for all 11 Southeast Asia societies and their contributors in order to share information and even discuss strategies for collaboration.

Some PNS have set up representative offices in some national societies in the region for bilateral relations and programmes. This has created an environment where a national society has several one-to-one partnerships with PNS. Noting that, globally, future support would lead to more bilateral programmes, the Federation in October 2001 introduced the CAS for a society to maximise the support it receives from several partners. The CAS process in Southeast Asia particularly progressed in Laos, Indonesia and Myanmar in 2003. The strategy was also welcomed in Vietnam towards the end of 2003.

Leaders of Southeast Asia national societies meet regularly under their forum for Secretaries General, and have continued to take greater interest in regional cooperation.

Expected Result 1

The leaderships of national societies and their PNS partners come together at least once a year.

Achievements

Partnership meeting

In 2003, the regional delegation and the VNRC jointly organised a partnership meeting in Hanoi. National societies in Southeast Asia had taken ownership of formulating the agenda of the partnership meeting in a preparatory meeting in early February. During the meeting in October, these societies expressed their viewpoint on the *Manila Action Plan*, a Federation declaration on health, disaster management and population activities in Asia and the Pacific. At the end of the meeting, societies (signatories to this plan a year ago) agreed to use it as a checklist for their activities and tailor it to the context of Southeast Asia and their national agenda.

On the sidelines, there were meetings between the leadership of a society and interested partners to discuss options for collaboration. Notably, the VNRC and its partners agreed on some critical steps for better relations and programming in the future.

Although partners could not reach a single definition for partnership because of a multitude of interests, they agreed on common conditions for partnerships; an example being partnership programmes should be country specific, even if drawn from a regional initiative. In 2004, the Secretariat will organise a country partnership meeting in Myanmar, and probably in some of the other countries where it has delegations. Partners found this would be a better arrangement over regional meetings for dialogue on cooperation in a particular country. The next regional partnership meeting is more likely to be in 2005.

Other regional meetings

Some regional events organised by technical units also included senior decision makers of national societies. The events therefore provided national societies with an opportunity to discuss and agree on technical approaches. The health team meeting in November was one such event.

Constraints

Due to the SARS outbreak, the partnership meeting took place after a delay of nearly six months. Time and resources were lost in redoing preparations, such as revisiting the agenda, sending out invitations, confirming participants and hotel bookings. Issues such as the *Manila Action Plan* and cooperation in Vietnam were also addressed only late in the year in the presence of all partners.

Expected Result 2

The Southeast Asia Secretaries General Forum becomes established and institutionalised.

Achievements

The secretaries general forum has long been a discussion room for secretaries general in Southeast Asia. In 2002, the Federation regional delegation was entrusted as secretariat to the forum with administration and logistical responsibilities. Rules and procedures, published in late 2002, have helped institutionalise the forum that convenes about twice a year. The ownership of the forum has stayed with the Southeast Asia societies, while the regional delegations of the Federation and ICRC have maintained observer status.

The secretaries general have given due importance to regional networks in technical areas (health, DM, and OD) that regularly account to the forum. In the last meeting, October 2003, the leaders accepted the newly formed Southeast Asia youth cooperation team. This team of national society youth directors will promote youth activities and volunteerism in countries through exchange/friendship visits.

In 2003, some national societies promoted exchange visits in technical areas with sister societies as a means of mutual learning. (See health, DM and OD sections for more details). Taking these exchanges a step further, secretaries general expressed interest in sending staff for short international missions. The Malaysian Red

Crescent Society acted on this initiative by sending its response team to Iran following the Bam earthquake in December.

Constraints

Secretaries general could not reach a decision on preparing their staff for long-term international missions. Southeast Asia Societies already have a pool of certified professionals that have not qualified for long-term missions due to funding constraints. Though the Singapore Red Cross Society was willing to host a regional basic training course, leaders saw limited scope for this credential due to present limitations.

Expected Result 3

By the end of 2003 a significant number of national societies in the region have begun a CAS process.

Achievements

As earlier mentioned, the Lao, Vietnamese, Indonesian and Myanmar societies are adopting cooperation strategies. In Laos, as over ninety per cent of the income was coming from international sources, the society and its Movement partners began discussions in 2000 on the means to maximise support. The Lao Red Cross Society's strategic plan was a guiding document for identifying programme areas that needed support from the partners. After sufficient consultations, in 2003 all partners became signatories to the CAS agreement/MoU for coordinated activities in Laos.

In December, the Federation's Laos office that had thus far provided coordination support closed its offices after two years of a reduced scale of operations. Local staff members from the Federation took up offers (effective from 2004) in a new department of the Lao Red Cross Society called the CAS office. This transfer of expertise is indeed an indicator of building capacities in the national society. The CAS office will provide coordination services, specifically in reporting and finance and logistics to all partners. Within the next two years, the Lao Red Cross Society and its partners expect this office to become part of the international department of the society. Every quarter the office will report to the CAS committee comprising of all partners (including the regional delegation) of its progress and its services.

In Vietnam, the yearly income of Federation coordinated programmes had remained at around two million Swiss Francs over the past couple of years. There was also an increase in the number of bilateral partners, indicated by a near double-fold increase in 2002. In 2003, with a void in management in the Federation office for nearly half the year and changes in the VNRC leadership, Federation programming was affected. During the year the nine bilateral partners of the VNRC also seemed to have operational difficulties. The VNRC, a leading humanitarian organisation in Vietnam, under its new presidency, presented a framework for its strategic plan to its partners in October. The framework identified organisational development as a priority area for the VNRC to grow as a lead agency in the country. As was later agreed by all partners, the Federation would facilitate coordination between the VNRC and its international partners and assist the society in its OD and strategic plan. The plan will form the basis of a CAS expected by 2005.

During the partnership meeting in Indonesia, all partners agreed to a draft MoU for a CAS in Indonesia. At each stage of the process, the Indonesian delegation worked with PMI and its partners to agree on the memorandum. (For details see Indonesia Annual Report 2003). In 2003, the Myanmar Red Cross Society completed important phases of its strategic planning, due for completion in early 2004, with assistance from the country delegation. The strategic plan will be the basis for a future CAS agreement.

Constraints

Because the CAS calls for several partners to reach a common agreement on working together, the negotiation period can be very long. In Laos, the CAS memorandum was signed nearly two years after discussions first started.

Expected Result 4

The Federation and ICRC continue to enjoy harmonious and close working relations across the region.

Achievements

The Federation and ICRC delegations in Myanmar are working together for the institutional development of the Myanmar Red Cross Society. The delegations in Indonesia have also had close working relations, and in September last they jointly conducted a team building exercise. PMI, ICRC and the Federation delegation worked together during disasters such as the Bali bombing in 2002 and Marriot hotel blast in August 2003.

Since the regional delegations of the Federation and ICRC cover several countries and because the countries covered are not the same, opportunities for collaborations at the regional level are limited. In 2003, ICRC also contributed towards the partnership meeting in Hanoi. The delegation representatives exchange information on country operations regularly.

Field Management

Introduction

In 2003, the Southeast Asia management team of the Federation Secretariat in Geneva, Bangkok and the six country delegations, contributed to the management and delivery of Federation programmes in the region.

In 2002, the Geneva Secretariat decentralised its reporting lines with country delegations to the regional delegation. Therefore, the regional delegation had greater responsibilities in ensuring the efficient use of human and financial resources. Donor reporting was also coordinated more from structures in the field. Set up in 2002, the Asia Pacific finance unit has been a service centre in the region. The Asia Pacific regional reporting unit, set up in 2003, also worked closely with the delegation for meeting its donor reporting requirements.

Expected Results 1&2

Regional management and coordination structures maintained; increased efficiency in the use of human resources in the region.

Expected Result 3

Unacceptable/unplanned financial deficits are eliminated.

Expected Result 4

All agreed donor reporting requirements are met in full.

Achievements

2003 provided several occasions for information exchange between the three levels of the Southeast Asia management team. The assistant to the regional officer, Geneva, was in Bangkok for a two month mission as interim programme coordinator in the second quarter. In a similar preparatory mission prior to an incoming delegate, Bangkok sent its staff member as interim OD delegate to Indonesia in September. The new programme coordinator and head of regional delegation shared the responsibilities of coordination of technical and country programmes and line management. As the delegation focal person for the Lao CAS process, the programme coordinator had full knowledge of programme and management aspects for Laos.

The entire team met during the quarterly regional management meetings, providing updates on the region and sharing experiences of the decentralised secretariat. Simple reports such as notes from weekly meetings in the regional delegation were shared on an ongoing basis with all members of the team. Overall, active information exchange during the period brought better understanding and coordination among team members.

The regional team also collaborated on an ongoing basis. For example, management would draw on the technical expertise of regional units while making decisions. Conversely, during the last quarter the regional programme coordinator directly supervised and supported the OD programme in the absence of the OD delegate.

The financial situation appeared healthy in 2003. Due to a more realistic budget and closer monitoring in 2003 the income for Appeal 2003-2004 was covered 100 per cent. This was an improvement over the year before when the Appeal was covered just close to 60 per cent. In turn, there were no gross deficits at the end of the year. The budget holders (heads of units and management) who were responsible for the financial management of their programmes received a refresher course in budget management early in 2003. Already in the plans for next year is an internal audit exercise. The delegation also upgraded its financial accounting software at the end of the year. In 2004 the delegation will directly produce financial reports, which will be verified by the Asia Pacific financial unit in Kuala Lumpur. The regional delegation produced frequent narrative reports in 2003 – three programme updates, up from two in 2002.

International Representation

Introduction

One of the objectives of the regional delegation is to enhance the profile of the Red Cross/Red Crescent in Southeast Asia. In general, national societies directly associate with non-Red Cross/Red Crescent organisations that operate nationally. However, the regional delegation takes the lead when external organisations have a region-wide interest and operation. At times, the Geneva Secretariat assists the delegation with coordinating between the national societies and the external organisation.

Expected Results

There is increased awareness among the international community of the Federation's global activities and key messages as well as the work of the region's national societies.

A foundation is laid for cooperation with major disaster management organisations in the region, including ADPC, to reach shared goals.

ESCAP and UNAIDS have developed enhanced knowledge on Federation activities and its potential to intervene for people living with HIV/AIDS.

There is augmented donor support from the region, including initiatives with the private sector.

Achievements

The offices of the regional delegation represented the Federation during various meetings in 2003. The highlights for the year are as follows:

- The regional delegation and the Indian and Thai Red Cross Societies attended the 59th Session of UN ESCAP. During this meeting, attended by several state parties, the Federation presented a statement on HIV/AIDS.
- The signing ceremony of a MoU between the Federation and the WHO Southeast Asia regional office was an important milestone in international relations. The regional health unit took this opportunity to accompany the Thai Red Cross Society in presenting an overview of health related activities in Southeast Asia. With this memorandum, national societies will have greater opportunity to collaborate with their ministries of health and the WHO.
- The regional DM unit had close working relations with the ADPC during the year. Since the exchange of expertise has been substantial, the two are considering a MoU for next year.
- The regional delegation has also tried to reach a wide audience in the media, diplomatic and donor community with its newsletter *Southeast Asia Link*. The newsletter provides a quarterly round-up of events in the national societies in the region. Staff members in the delegation also take such material for their meetings with external organisations.
- The regional delegation was present at most monthly UN development cooperation meetings in 2003.