

# COUNTRY FOCUS - ECUADOR 2004



## 1. Introduction

Ecuador is one of the countries with the highest levels of vulnerability in South America. It has high poverty rates, lacks of minimum social services, has high levels of violence and insecurity, and is vulnerable to natural hazards given the active volcanoes that surround it and many faults that cross the country. Ecuador is prone to floods, earthquakes and landslides.

The increasing impoverishment of the population has led to migration to the USA and Europe. This situation has created new vulnerable groups as a result of the absence of one or both parents in most families. Nevertheless, there are expectations of an improved economy for future years based on the control of inflation and a new currency policy. However, there is a degree of social tension, as farmers are discontent with government of Lucio Gutiérrez and there is constant threat of social uprising. In addition, the conflict in Colombia has impacted the country's stability. The long borders allow the entrance of Colombians fleeing from their country and thus affect security conditions, especially in the areas of Sucumbios, Carchi and Esmeraldas.

## 2. National Context

### Human Development Indicators 2003

Country Ranking - HDI	97
Total population (millions)	12.6
Life expectancy at birth	70.8
Annual population growth rate %	1.3
% population under 15 yrs of age	33.6
% population aged 65 and above	4.9
% urban population	63.4
% of the population living below \$1/day	20.2
% of the population living below \$2/day	52.3
GDP per capita (US \$)	1,396
Infant mortality per 1,000 live births	24
Under 5 mortality per 1,000 live births	30
Maternal mortality rate per 100,000 live births	160
% of births attended by skilled health staff	69
% of population using improved water sources	85
% of population using adequate sanitation facilities	86
% of population with access to essential drugs	0-49
% of adults living with HIV/AIDS	0.3
Women living with HIV/AIDS	5,100
Children living with HIV/AIDS	660
Net primary school enrolment ratio %	99
Adult literacy rate % MALE age 15 yrs +	93.4
Adult literacy rate % FEMALE age 15 yrs +	90.3

(UNDP 2003)

There is a relatively high incidence of disease in Ecuador related to inadequate nutrition and poor sanitation and housing, especially in marginal urban and rural areas. Large numbers of vulnerable people have no access to clean water and sanitation. Health care in Ecuador has suffered as a result of government drives to cut spending on public services: the poorest generally receive least benefit from state health spending, because of the lack of coverage. In the late 1990s, conditions within public hospitals deteriorated and the value of health professionals' wages was drastically eroded. Thousands of doctors and nurses have left the country. Successive governments have sought to reduce illiteracy

and to increase the country's number of trained professionals through the provision of free education. The illiteracy rate has fallen as a result, although it remains high in older age groups and among disadvantaged communities.

### 3. Priorities of the National Society

Foundation ERC	1910
Recognized by ICRC	1923
Number of provincial branches	21
Number of cantonal teams	118
Staff	259
Active volunteers (estimated)	3,487

One of the main limitations of the Ecuadorian Red Cross is its lack of capacity in recruiting and retaining staff, due to the uncompetitive salaries offered by the National Society and the absence of any career plans, staff appraisal systems or employee welfare plans. The ERC needs to work on an improved human resource development programme, focusing on planning, evaluation, recruitment and training.

The ERC is focused on strengthening the volunteer system and on promoting operational programme capacities, especially in the area of disaster response. The national development plan (2002-2007) results from a participatory process. During recent years, the Ecuadorian Red Cross has engaged in project planning and monitoring processes, especially in the drawing up and initiation of local development plans. At present, the Ecuadorian Red Cross is undertaking a process at a governance level, which will lead to further definition of the future orientation of the National Society through new Statutes and the CAS process.

The ERC is working hard to train volunteers and humanitarian workers, as well as to strengthen fundraising in order to widen and diversify the economic resources available to the National Society.

#### Health and Care

- Ÿ Community health.
- Ÿ Reproductive health.
- Ÿ HIV/AIDS.
- Ÿ Non-remunerated voluntary blood donation. The national blood programme is the primary activity of the ERC. The National Society is responsible for the supply and use of blood and its derivatives.
- Ÿ First aid.

#### Disaster Management

- Ÿ Building up relief capacity.
- Ÿ Strengthened disaster response through mobilization of relief volunteers, strategically-placed warehouses and improved telecommunications.
- Ÿ Community based disaster preparedness.

#### Humanitarian Values

- Ÿ Focus on displaced and migrant communities, invalidity, drug addicts, adolescents and gender issues.

#### Organizational Development

- Ÿ Improvement of administrative procedures.
- Ÿ Development of human resources.
- Ÿ Resource development.
- Ÿ Strengthening of the National Society image.

- Ÿ Integrated projects at community level.
- Ÿ Volunteer programme.
- Ÿ Management of CENCAP, the national training centre in charge of training and developing human resources, both within and outside the institution.

### Coordination

- Ÿ Enhanced coordination and cooperation with both Red Cross and non Red Cross partners to strengthen community development and build local capacities.

### AT A GLANCE

ERC	COMMENT
<b>Statutes</b>	Revised in 2003
<b>National Development Plan</b>	NDP: 2002-2007
<b>Cooperation Agreement Strategy (CAS)</b>	In process
<b>Self Assessment</b>	Done in 2001
<b>Last Elections</b>	2003
<b>Next Elections</b>	2007
<b>Yearly audit</b>	2000
<b>Youth representative in the National Society governance</b>	Yes
<b>Disaster response plan within the National Society plan</b>	Yes
<b>Disaster response plan integrated with the government plan</b>	In process

### Main strengths

- Ambulance system: this is subscribed under the country's 911 emergency system which guarantees the compatibility of the network with other organizations.
- Community programmes: development work has been improved through the strengthening of management methodology and the introduction of evaluation of activities and impact, the prioritization of a gender perspective, environmental protection and enhanced respect for cultures and ethnic groups.
- Disaster preparedness and response implemented through a wide network of trained volunteers with clear organizational guidelines.
- Excellent coordination with the ICRC and the PNSs.

### Main challenges

- Ÿ Some branches are weak and communications with the headquarters is poor.
- Ÿ Dependence on external funding and lack of sustainability.
- Ÿ Need for the improvement of the human resources development programme.

## 4. Red Cross and Red Crescent Priorities

**Federation:** Provides support to the CAS process, the Amazónico Programme and the community based disaster preparedness programme in many branches and communities. The Amazónico programme has two objectives: to reduce vulnerability and improve health conditions and to strengthen Red Cross capacity in integrated development projects. The main achievements are that the National Societies have developed their participatory planning and project management skills, while improvement of health conditions needs to be further reinforced.

**ICRC:** Provides support to the communications department and to dissemination programmes especially aimed at the army and security forces. The ICRC also supports conflict prevention, particularly in Sucumbios (border with Colombia).

**PNS:** The American Red Cross, French Red Cross and Spanish Red Cross have offices in Quito.

Partner	Health	Relief	DPP	Humanitarian values	Organization Development	Other
ICRC				Dissemination	Communication	
Federation	Amazonico		CBDP		Statutes, NDP	CAS
American Red Cross	Yes	Yes			Yes	
French Red Cross	Yes	Yes	Yes			
Netherlands Red Cross		Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes
Swiss Red Cross	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
Canadian Embassy		Yes				
UNHCR	Yes	Yes				

## 5. Priority Programmes for Secretariat Assistance

### Health and Care

- ÿ Community health.
- ÿ Environmental sanitation.
- ÿ HIV/AIDS.
- ÿ Amazonico Programme.
- ÿ Quality programme in blood bank network.

### Disaster Management

- ÿ Contingency planning; development of risk maps.
- ÿ Creation of national intervention teams (NITs).
- ÿ Community based disaster preparedness.

### Humanitarian Values

- ÿ Regional youth plan. Education towards tolerance and non discrimination of persons living with HIV/AIDS.

### Organizational Development

- ÿ Support the reform of the National Society through governance and management training and the revision of Statutes.
- ÿ Strengthening of the youth department.
- ÿ CAS process.
- ÿ Distance education for communicators.