

# Plan 2009-2010



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## Legal Base Support

### Executive summary

The programme will support the National Societies by providing global guidance and in-country support to the revision process of the legal base of National Societies. The programme seeks to provide this support by Secretariat staff and by peer-to-peer support. The programme further provides technical support to zones when needed e.g. on information initiatives and workshops for the National Societies.

Legal base support provided to the zones and National Societies is dedicated to the development and sharing of legal base information and experiences globally in ensuring a shared vision and perception of the organisational set-up of National Societies. The knowledge and information collected will initially be shared through FedNet in alignment with action nine and ten of the Movement strategy.

National Societies will be provided access to relevant legal base material, including examples of best practices and will through various platforms be able to share knowledge and experiences with other National Societies. To encourage skills sharing and development focusing on legal base support a global peer-to-peer seminar will be organized for National Societies.

The 2009-2010 budget for the Legal Base Support plan is included in the Organizational Development Support plan 2009-2010 budget. [Click here to go directly to the summary budget of the plan.](#)

### Context

Like other organizations, National Societies must develop to stay dynamic, relevant and effective. One of the issues that they must work on is to review the legal base of the organization, that is, the statutes and the Red Cross Red Crescent Law. The statutes are important both because they give the organization the needed structure for its decision making and work, and because they are the legal fundament for all relations with external partners. Each National Society has different levels of technical knowledge and capacity to plan and manage organizational change. Sound, updated and relevant statutes, rules of procedure and related legal texts are necessary in order to achieve strong and sustainable National Societies that can grow and deliver effectively on the goals set out by the International Federation and National Societies themselves.

Increasingly the Movement has since 1999 set focus on the legal base of National Societies. In 1999 the International Conference adopted a resolution providing for a plan of action for National Societies "reviewing their legal base and statutes to determine whether they need to be updated...". In 2000 the Governing Board pursuant to a General Assembly decision adopted recommendations and minimum requirements for National Society statutes (these are set out in the document *Guidance for National Societies statutes*) and in 2001 the Counsel of Delegates adopted Resolution 3 (*Strategy of the Movement*) setting out in the first objective to strengthening the components of the Movement that;

*"all National Societies examine their statutes and related texts, in accordance with the "Guidance for National Society statutes" and relevant resolutions..."*

The focus on statutory revision and related texts has continually increased from the side of the National Societies and hence placed a responsibility on the Secretariat for this development. In 2001 when this priority was set out more than 33 per cent of the National Societies statutes had not been revised for 8

years or more. The strengthening of National Society's legal framework and basis is an essential requirement for the success of achieving the activities and goals set out in the Movement and maintain our credibility.

## Priorities and current work with partners

One third of National Societies have revised their statutes since 2000 and one third are in the process while the remainder have not yet embarked on the process. In the Sahel sub-region two National Societies are planning to revise their statutes. As for the Central African regional representation and West Africa, a number of National Societies require extensive review and revision of their statutes. In the Eastern Africa Zone most of the National Societies have revised their statutes. In the Asia Pacific Zone, two National Societies have requested legal base development support and two National Societies are in the formation process. In the Americas, Europe and Southern Africa zones, National Societies are in different stages of the statutes review process.

The legal base support programme will support the field staff in pursuing the outcomes, liaise with each zone on how best to provide concrete support to National Societies on the statutes revision process. More than 17 National Societies in Africa and 6 in the other zones have planned on revision of their statutes in 2009 -2010. The programme will focus on assisting the African zones.

In eastern Europe, many National Societies in the former Soviet Union countries are in urgent need to work with their governments to create relevant Red Cross Red Crescent laws. In that context it will also be a priority to update National Society statutes. The OD department will pay special attention to supporting the zone in that latter process.

The programme support will be closely coordinated with the zone staff carrying out the country and regional plans in consultation with the Governance Support dept. of the International Federation, Geneva.

## Secretariat supported programmes in 2009-2010

### Organizational development/Legal base support

#### a) The purpose and components of the programme

<b>Programme purpose</b>
To support National Societies in strengthening their legal base with the aim of enhancing the sustainability, integrity and ability to achieve the goals and aims set out globally by the International Federation and those set out nationally by the National Societies. Ref. Strategy of the Movement objective 1, action 3.
<b>Programme component:</b> National Societies are provided with a consistent and coordinated in-country support by sister National Societies and the International Federation. Experiences and knowledge of National Societies are shared with sister National Societies.
<b>Outcome 1:</b> National Societies have access to technical information resources relevant to statutory and legal text revision.
<b>Outcome 2:</b> National Societies have access to technical support for statutory and legal text revision.
<b>Outcome 3:</b> Support to National Societies legal base development effort is effectively supported and coordinated by the International Federation. Special focus will be on assistance to National Societies regarding the Statutes of the National Societies related to the OD component.
<b>Outcome 4:</b> Ensuring that at the end of the programme relevant material is available to conduct assessment for the basis of future programme planning.

#### b) Profile of target beneficiaries

The key target group for the programme is National Societies. The National Societies should have access to knowledge, experience and support. Also the Secretariat staff will be a secondary target group, as access to legal base information is relevant for the staff supporting National Societies. National Societies have revised their statutes against the guidance document (about 33 per cent).

However some National Societies still face challenges and need support - the latter comes in two variants. The first is the group that have commenced the revision and needs support to complete it. The second group is those that despite the fact that the revision should be finalised in 2010, have not yet begun this activity.

Revision against the guidance document began in 2001 and the number of National Societies embarking on revision and the awareness of this is increasing. It is a separate goal to ensure that the experiences already obtained in one zone should be collected and shared with other zones in a cross-zone knowledge sharing network.

### **c) Potential risks and challenges**

Resistance to change and delay to undergo the statutes revision process may be a challenge in National Societies. Due to traditions between some National Societies and their governments certain changes set out in the minimum requirements might be beyond the control of the National Society to change or would take time to delay the process of the revision process.

In the past it has proven to be a challenge to identify the persons to implement the peer-to-peer system. The strategy to overcome this is to begin with the National Societies that have already been conducting a participatory revision process of their statutes and in the future ensure that National Societies revising their statutes will have persons attached to the peer-to-peer group.

Language is a challenge both in the capturing of experiences and sharing of information (in four languages). However, this challenge is mainly of a financial character.

## Promoting gender equity and diversity

Gender and diversity issues or obstacles are often country specific. Each in-country support will need to individually assess the gender and diversity challenges. Promoting gender equality and diversity amongst the workshop participants, revision groups and in governance structures are an integral part of all approaches and will further be promoted.

Another specific focus is to ensure that the statutes reflect that youth is represented in the governance structures, and promote equality of the sexes and representation of groups in governing bodies.

## Quality, accountability and learning

On a regular basis, the progress of the programme is reported to an advisory group consisting of the partner National Societies and the International Federation. The issues expressed at the gathering of the peer-to-peer roster members is a further platform against which the relevance of the programme activities can be measured.

A major component of the programme is about direct in-country support and about capturing, developing and sharing the knowledge National Societies have from their revision process for the benefit of other National Societies. How a National Society overcame whatever challenges they might have met in the process is important knowledge which needs to be shared. National Societies presenting their revision process are encouraged to elaborate on the process and provide the IFRC Secretariat in an effort to improve the process.

## How we work

The International Federation's activities are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

### **Global Agenda Goals:**

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

## Contact information

For further information specifically related to this plan, please contact:

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