

Plan 2009-2010



Turkmenistan

Executive summary



Turkmenistan has a highly specialized economy, which largely depends on the export of natural gas, oil and cotton. No recent estimates of poverty levels are available.

The country is prone to natural disasters like earthquakes, floods and fires. It also faces the problem of land desertification, much of it caused by salination of the soil. The desiccation of the Aral Sea poses problems for public health: the quality of drinking water in the Dashoguz region is extremely low and leads to higher than average rates of infant mortality and diseases. The incidence rates of Tuberculosis (TB) and viral hepatitis are high in Turkmenistan.

There is only one HIV case and one death case of AIDS reported in the country. But the fact that nowadays there are more than 33,000 drug users officially registered by state health services suggests a possibility of a high number of non-reported HIV cases as injecting drug use is the main way of HIV transmission in other countries of central Asia.

The Turkmenistan Red Crescent is the longest established humanitarian organization in the country providing needs based services to the most vulnerable communities. The Red Crescent Society is recognized as a unique public organization that carries out its activities based on the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Acting as auxiliary to the public authorities in the humanitarian field, the National Society has been making a difference to people's lives through preventive campaigns and support in health and care, disaster risk mitigation and response operations, tracing services and the promotion of humanitarian values.

The goal of the Red Crescent Society – as stated in its current strategy – is to decrease the vulnerability of the population of Turkmenistan through effective humanitarian action and strengthened capacity of the Red Crescent in building a well-functioning National Society. The National Society programming in the coming two years will address the vulnerabilities arising from health and disaster risks, stigma and discriminative attitudes and progress towards a well-functioning organization. The Turkmenistan Red Crescent partners include the British and Netherlands Red Cross Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation.

The International Federation secretariat's key areas of support to the Turkmenistan Red Crescent in 2009-2010 will include health and care, disaster management, principles and values and National Society capacity-building. This is in line with the Global Agenda goals to reduce the number of deaths, injuries, and impact from disasters; to reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies; to increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability; and to reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity. The main outcomes to be achieved will be:

- reduced vulnerability of communities in disaster-prone areas of the country (community preparedness and risk reduction);

- strengthened capacity of the National Society in disaster preparedness and response (including planning and recovery);
- reduced vulnerability of communities to HIV, drug abuse and Tuberculosis and their impact, as well as to most common diseases and trauma;
- enhanced ability of the communities to oppose discrimination, intolerance and violence (including sexual and gender-based) and to promote respect for diversity;
- increased National Society capacity in effective governance and management, human resources and financial management, improved volunteer capacity; and developed Red Crescent law;
- the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values are promoted.

Target beneficiaries directly benefiting from the programmes will be people most vulnerable to disaster risks and illnesses (including groups at a higher risk of HIV infection and its transmission), stigma, discrimination and violence; Red Crescent staff and volunteers and the general public.

The total 2009-2010 budget is CHF 2,472,760 (USD 2,260,292 or EUR 1,575,006).

[Click here to go directly to the summary budget of the plan.](#)

Country context

Turkmenistan is located in central Asia and borders with Afghanistan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and the Caspian Sea. Its territory is 488,100 square kilometers, of which approximately 80 per cent is desert. Because the Amu Darya, central Asia's longest river, and the Tedjen are on Turkmenistan's borders, just 3.5 per cent of the country is classified as arable land. It has a subtropical desert climate, with hot, dry summers and mild, dry winters.

Ashgabat is the capital of Turkmenistan located in the southern part of the country. The country is divided into five administrative regions (*velayats*): Ahal, Balkan, Lebap, Mary and Dashoguz each consisting of several districts (*etraps*). The main port is Turkmenbashi on the Caspian Sea.

According to government statistics, the population of Turkmenistan is 6.7 million (2006). Of the total population, 47.4 per cent live in urban areas.

Turkmenistan declared its independence in October 1991 and following the dissolution of the Soviet Union it became the member of the Commonwealth of Independent States. In December 1995 the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on the status of permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan, which has become the guiding principle of Turkmenistan's foreign policy.

Turkmenistan has a highly specialized economy, which largely depends on the export of natural gas, oil and cotton. The country is a major exporter of natural gas, oil and oil products, and electricity. The agricultural sector is the largest employer, engaging about 50 per cent of the workforce, followed by industry, with about 12 per cent¹.

No recent estimates of poverty levels are available. Rapid economic growth in recent years, and the continuation of subsidies for food, electricity, housing, water and transport, should have improved the average standard of living. However, there is evidence that the availability of these benefits is not always guaranteed. There have been reports of housing and water shortages, for example, and in late 2006 shortages of bread and flour were also widespread, following the poor harvest.

The Human Development Index (HDI) for Turkmenistan is 0.713, which gives the country a rank of 109th out of 177 countries with data.

¹ Here and further: Country Profile 2007, The Economist Intelligence Unit.

Development indicators		TURKMENISTAN	
GDP per capita (PPP USD)	3,838	Life expectancy at birth	62.6
HDI value	0.713	Adult literacy rate (% ages 15 and older)	98.8

Table 1: Development indicators for Turkmenistan

The country is prone to earthquakes; a major quake in 1948 destroyed Ashgabat and killed as many as 180,000 people according to official estimates. Another type of disaster common for the country is floods.

Intensive agricultural practices, year-round pasturing of animals and the lack of an effective system of crop rotation have led to the contamination of the soil and groundwater through the overuse of chemical fertilisers and pesticides. The rate of desertification, much of it caused by salination of the soil, is one of the most rapid in the world. The UN has estimated that about 96 per cent of Turkmenistan's irrigated cropland is affected by salination, compared with an average of 48 per cent across central Asia.

The desiccation of the Aral Sea poses problems for public health: the quality of drinking water in the Dashoguz region in northern Turkmenistan is extremely low, leading to higher than average rates of infant mortality and diseases such as hepatitis.

The incidence rates of TB and viral hepatitis are high. In 2007, 66 new Tuberculosis cases per 100,000 were reported. The mortality of TB is reported at 8 per 100,000 population in 2007 according to the Ministry of Health.

Official statistics on HIV are quite poor and seem to be unrealistic; there is only one HIV case and one death case of AIDS reported in the country. On the other hand, the number of drug users is growing and nowadays more than 33,000 people are officially registered by the relevant health services. This fact suggests a possibility of a high number of non-reported HIV cases in Turkmenistan, as injecting drug use is the main way of HIV transmission in other countries of central Asia.

There are no national data available for the under-five mortality rate and difficulties in accurately measuring mothers' mortality rate. The data as old as 1996s suggested possible signs of deterioration rather than improvement comparing with 1990s. Based on the experience of the Turkmenistan Red Crescent Society's ongoing safe motherhood programme 95 per cent of pregnant women have different levels of anaemia and 45 per cent have different diseases.

National Society priorities and current work with partners

The Turkmenistan Red Crescent Society has a long history of cooperation with the local authorities and governmental ministries. The key ministries are defence, health, social welfare, justice, interior and education ministries (and their structures at regional and local level). Coordination of the National Society's work in communities with state bodies helps to achieve a good level of complementarity, increases the likelihood of support and promotes an understanding of the role of the Red Crescent. However, the near future holds little perspective of financial support from the government.

The Red Crescent Society comes up to disaster response, preparedness and risk reduction with the aim of achieving a holistic approach to disaster management. This is in line with the National Society strategy for 2007-2010. The Red Crescent works in close collaboration with the State Commission on Emergency Situations. The International Federation has been supporting the Turkmenistan Red Crescent to build its institutional capacity to meet the society's disaster management obligations as well as its community-based initiatives in the most vulnerable communities, including mitigation. These two main directions will continue. The partners contributing to the International Federation's annual appeal are Norwegian and Swedish Red Cross. Community-based work of the National Society in rural areas and youth preparedness are also supported bi-laterally by the Netherlands Red Cross; a project with a focus on earthquake preparedness for schoolchildren in cooperation with UNDP is also planned for

2009. The National Society is discussing possible support from the Red Crescent Society of the United Arab Emirates to upgrade its central warehouse in Ashgabat.

Despite the progress in the Red Crescent response capacity-building the needs remain, for instance, in developing the skills of the disaster response teams and equipping them with necessary tools including transport and communications means. The key areas of recovery require even more attention. This includes increased capacity in livelihoods, shelter, public health in emergencies, water and sanitation. The National Society will also consider smoother and more effective approaches to early recovery so that communities are assisted in effectively restoring or improving their pre-disaster conditions. This approach links relief, recovery and development. The Red Crescent will need the support of the International Federation secretariat to address those capacity-building needs in the coming years. Besides, special attention should be paid to the promotion and dissemination of the International Disaster Response Laws (IDRL).

The main components of the Turkmenistan Red Crescent's health and care programme are HIV and TB prevention and community-based health and first aid (CBFA), including safe motherhood with an emphasis on rural areas. This is in line with the National Society strategy and the International Federation's health and care strategy. Considering the existing needs in the country work in these directions will continue. The National Society has always included the drug abuse prevention elements in its community-based health but is currently expanding the activities in this area and linking more closely with HIV.

Most of the funding for the health and care programme of the National Society is channeled through the International Federation's annual appeals multilaterally. Partner National Societies currently supporting the Turkmenistan Red Crescent HIV and TB prevention within the framework of the appeal are the British and Swedish Red Cross Societies. The community-based health and first-aid activities are supported by the Finnish Red Cross, also multilaterally. The US State Department will be funding the drug abuse prevention in the country through the International Federation over two years starting in 2008. Among bilateral partners are the Netherlands Red Cross that is covering the CBFA and safe motherhood in the Aral Sea area until the end of 2008 and the British Red Cross that supports the preventive health.

The organizational development programme of the National Society is supported by the International Federation with contributions from the Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish Red Cross and the Capacity Building Fund to the regional appeal.

Strengthening the capacity of the Red Crescent Society of Turkmenistan so as to become a well-functioning National Society is part of and a prerequisite to achieving the National Society strategic goal: to reduce the vulnerability of the population through effective humanitarian action. Following the adoption of the new statute dividing governance and management functions this year, the Red Crescent has moved to statute implementation, i.e. elections to governing bodies at the headquarters and branch levels and senior management appointments. In the coming years the National Society will proceed to clarifying the interrelations between the governance and management structures and between branches and the headquarters.

There is a shift observed in the mindset of the National Society leadership towards improved finance management; finance management development is also an integral part of the National Society strategy. To improve the human resources management, the Red Crescent developed staff recruitment procedures and its Code of Conduct; a system for staff remuneration and motivation is also being developed. However, the National Society requires further guidance in assessing the needs in human resources management before defining the next steps.

In 2008, under the guidance of the British Red Cross, the Turkmenistan Red Crescent developed a concept of organizational development services that includes the enhancement of current services (policies, strategies and structures development) and introduces new approaches that will be further explored in the coming period. For instance, strengthening programme monitoring and evaluation will be among major responsibilities of the National Society's organizational development department.

The adoption of the Red Crescent Law has become another priority for the National Society to strengthen its position and image in the country and help with resource mobilization (benefits, tax exemptions).

Developing the capacity to promote the fundamental principles and humanitarian values so as to prevent discrimination and stigma is one of the objectives set by the National Society's strategy. The principles and values programme is implemented in partnership with the International Federation. This function in the Red Crescent Society is combined with the communications function. The work is also closely linked with the dissemination of the International Humanitarian Law (IHL). The ICRC is cooperating with the Turkmenistan Red Crescent in the fields of IHL and the dissemination of fundamental principles, institutional capacity development, tracing and building capacities for assistance to conflict-affected populations.

Secretariat supported programmes in 2009-2010

Disaster Management

a) The purpose and components of the programme

Programme purpose
To reduce the number of deaths, injuries, and impact from disasters.

The disaster management programme budget is CHF 807,842 (USD 738,430 or EUR 514,549).

Programme component 1: Disaster management planning
Component outcome 1: Improved ability to predict and plan for disasters to mitigate their impact on vulnerable communities, and respond to and effectively cope with their consequences.

In this component the National Society will update its national disaster response plan, test the standard operating procedures and make relevant changes. Besides, the five regional disaster response plans will be updated and tested. Introduction of necessary amendments to the central Asian regional contingency plan and its testing is foreseen.

Programme component 2: Organizational preparedness
Component outcome 1: Strengthened capacity of the National Society in disaster preparedness and response through increased skills and knowledge of Red Crescent staff and volunteers, strengthened financial and technical resources, effective mechanisms for emergency response and recovery assistance.
Component outcome 2: Improved understanding and application by the National Society of the International Federation's standardized guidelines for effective response.

To achieve these outcomes the National Society will recruit, train, retain and manage a diverse, gender balanced volunteer network, and conduct refresher training for national and regional disaster response teams (DRTs). The Red Crescent will also maintain and seek to expand available material resources (e.g. fleet) to meet their disaster management obligations and replenish the emergency stock.

To ensure improved understanding and application of the International Federation's standardized guidelines for effective response the National Society will regularly participate in the regional disaster management working meetings and get involved in the development and/ or updating of disaster preparedness/ disaster response methodologies, materials and tools, including issues of recovery and climate change. Workshops on shelter and relief and/ or lessons learnt from possible relief operations will be also arranged for staff incorporating the Sphere standards. Ways to develop an approach and a strategy for the integration of shelter in future National Society activities will be explored. The National Society will also work on the development of standardized criteria for emergency stock and emergency first-aid kits and disseminate information about such criteria.

To promote IDRL a working group comprising representatives of central Asian National Societies and the International Federation was formed. The group is expected to analyse the legal environment of disaster response operations in the region. Based on the results of such analysis a work plan will be developed with concrete steps to be taken at country level by all parties involved. The advocacy will primarily target relevant government agencies.

Programme component 3: Community preparedness/ Disaster risk reduction
Component outcome 1: Strengthened capacities of communities in disaster-prone areas to respond to future disasters through community-based disaster preparedness.
Component outcome 2: Strengthened capacities of secondary school students and teachers to respond to future disasters through integrated disaster preparedness and first-aid trainings.
Component outcome 3: Reduced vulnerability of communities in disaster-prone areas through the implementation of mitigation projects.

Under this component the National Society will establish and train local disaster committees that will further work with wider communities to build local disaster response capacities. Schools will be used as access points for disaster preparedness education for youth; volunteer information groups will be formed and information materials disseminated among schoolchildren. The risk of vulnerable communities will also be reduced through small-scale mitigation projects.

Programme component 4: Recovery
Component outcome 1 Increased capacity of the National Society to restore or improve pre-disaster living conditions and reduce the risk of future disasters.

The capacity of the National Society to assess the recovery needs, plan and implement quality recovery programming will be improved through training and raised awareness of good practices. In case of response operation the lessons learned will be shared during subsequent working meetings at national or regional level.

b) Profile of target beneficiaries

The disaster management programme responds to the needs of communities vulnerable to disasters, and its direct beneficiaries are people living in high disaster risk areas, both rural and urban. Among these the priority is given to people who are more vulnerable to disasters due to their social status, age, gender or health condition such as single mothers, housewives, multi-children families, elderly people living alone, schoolchildren and people with disabilities; and who are not covered by the government disaster preparedness training plans at workplace.

The National Society will establish, train and equip local disaster committees consisting of more than 300 members from communities including volunteers from medical staff, social workers, local authorities, elderly people, and communal service workers, who will further share their knowledge with 30,000 fellow community members. The training for local disaster committees and their communities includes first aid, rules of behaviour in time of a disaster, disaster risk mapping, development of community disaster response plans and simulation exercises. About 6,000 schoolchildren will be targeted at schools and will have the improved skills to cope with disasters as a result. Technical resources and support services will be provided to more than 70,000 people through small-scale risk reduction projects. Beneficiaries from the general population will be targeted through awareness campaigns and information materials. Affected populations will also receive relief items and assistance in rehabilitation during potential response operations.

Red Crescent staff and volunteers (520) are to receive new or refresher training and practical exercises that will develop their professional skills and result in better services to the vulnerable populations. These may include courses in disaster preparedness/ disaster response and first aid, emergency and recovery assessment, shelter, risk mapping and vulnerability and capacity assessment (VCA). The DRTs will be equipped with communication and transport means. Improved disaster management coordination systems and enhanced response plans will benefit the National Society as an institution.

c) Potential risks and challenges

Among the factors influencing the successful implementation of the disaster management programme is funding – sufficient and regular financial support is vital to allow longer-term planning. The National Society depends on external support for the programme but funding for disaster management is provided by a limited number of donors and usually on a year by year basis.

Health and Care

a) The purpose and components of the programme

Programme purpose
To reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
The health and care programme budget is CHF 1,249,104 (USD 1,141,777 or EUR 795,608).

Programme component 1: HIV and AIDS
Component outcome 1: Vulnerability to HIV and its impact reduced through preventing further infection and reducing stigma and discrimination.
Component outcome 2: Awareness of the harmful effects of drug use to human health increased and healthy lifestyle promoted.

The main activities under this component will include peer education by Red Crescent volunteers for groups at a higher risk of getting and transmitting the infection and awareness-raising among the general population. Education and awareness-raising include sessions and public campaigns on HIV, sexually transmitted infections (STI) and drug and alcohol abuse, the dissemination of information materials, and mass media campaigns.

To prevent drug abuse peer education will be provided by trained Red Crescent staff and volunteers and information campaigns will be arranged. Also, video clips promoting healthy lifestyle will be produced and rotated. The distributed information will link the problem of drug abuse with HIV and Hepatitis.

Programme component 2: Tuberculosis
Component outcome 1: Vulnerability to TB and its impact reduced through preventing further infection, rendering social support to TB patients, reducing stigma and discrimination and integrating with HIV prevention.

Activities under the TB programme component will aim at improving treatment outcomes by developing treatment adherence. For that purpose Red Crescent visiting nurses will provide education and social support in the form of food parcels and hygiene kits to TB patients and their family members. The programme will also carry out information, education and communication (IEC) activities among the general population to increase TB awareness and mobilize the community to oppose the epidemic. This may include mass campaigns and TV and radio broadcasts.

Programme component 3: Community-based health and first aid
Component outcome 1: Population health improved through diseases prevention, health promotion, trauma reduction and basic first-aid training.
Component outcome 2: Reproductive health improved through education and the promotion of women's health and antenatal care.

The community-based first-aid (CBFA) activities are focused on populations living in rural areas and aim at improving their health status. The beneficiaries will acquire basic first-aid skills through training

and their awareness of the most common diseases and ways to prevent them will be increased through explanatory conversations and information materials provided by the Red Crescent volunteers.

To achieve the second outcome the Red Crescent staff and volunteers will target pregnant women, women of reproductive age and schoolchildren, both girls and boys, through IEC activities on reproductive health. At schools peer Red Crescent volunteers will be involved in the activities.

b) Profile of target beneficiaries

The **HIV and AIDS** component targets sex workers, injecting drug users (IDUs), military men, schoolchildren aged 15-17 and the general population in Ashgabat, Abadan, Turkmenbashi, Turkmenabat, Mary, Dashoguz and Balkanabat. The total number of beneficiaries planned to be reached is 45,000. As a result of peer education, trainings and information campaigns awareness of the beneficiaries of HIV will increase. The most active beneficiaries, i.e. those who are later recruited as Red Crescent peer-educators, will receive incentives such as hygiene items and condoms.

The drug abuse prevention will target in total 16,300 people: 8,100 schoolchildren aged 14-17 years and 8,200 adults. Women will make about one-third of all beneficiaries. Activities will be implemented in one district of each of the five *velayat* centres: Mary, Dashoguz, Lebap, Akhal and Balkan.

The **TB** prevention will be carried out in Ashgabat, Turkmenabat, Mary, Dashoguz and Tedjen. Social support and education will be provided to 1,650 TB patients and their families on the continuation phase of treatment. The IEC activities will reach 20,000 people from the general population in different organizations and secondary schools.

The support provided by the National Society contributes to decreasing the default rate and to better treatment outcomes in people with TB. Besides, IEC activities improve the population's knowledge about the disease, resulting in timely referral for medical check-up and treatment. Awareness campaigns contribute to the reduction of stigma among the public.

CBFA will be implemented in rural areas of the country, namely in Ahal, Balkan, Lebap, Mary and Dashoguz *velayats*. The programme will provide training and will disseminate information to 17,300 schoolchildren and 38,490 community members, with an equal number of men and women, to help prevent the most common diseases and trauma or trauma complications. The information on safe motherhood and reproductive health will target 21,000 beneficiaries including 4,800 pregnant women, 9,600 women of reproductive age, 4,000 schoolgirls and 2,600 schoolboys. Pregnant women will also receive hygiene sets and vitamins (folic acid).

c) Potential risks and challenges

Discrepancies in official statistics do not allow getting a real picture of the health situation in the country. Health issues and priorities are considered as similar to those in the neighbouring countries of central Asia. For the same reason it will be difficult to measure the impact of the programme based on the official data. To overcome this problem, baseline and end-of-year surveys will be carried out.

Significant inflation and unstable exchange rate of the national currency increase the running costs of the whole programme. This can result in a lack of funding. Predictable and regular funding is a challenge for the health and care programmes because only long-term interventions can lead to meaningful results. Shortcomings in the implementation of the directly observed treatment short-course strategy at country level and resistance of medical staff may negatively influence the impact of Red Crescent interventions in TB prevention. Inadequate quality of TB medications, shortcomings in TB and HIV registration practices and laboratory control deficiencies affect the results of TB treatment and are out of the Red Crescent control.

Organizational Development/Capacity Building

a) The purpose and components of the programme

Programme purpose
To increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.

The organizational development/capacity building programme budget is CHF 366,415 (USD 334,931 or EUR 233,385).

Programme component 1: National Society organizational development and capacity building (headquarters and branches)
Component outcome 1: Governance and management bodies at all levels established; the system of their interrelations established.
Component outcome 2: Branch capacity increased through the introduction of human resources management system, improved finance management and the implementation of branch development projects.
Component outcome 3: Volunteer capacity improved through relevant training and participation in core activities.

The main activities for the first outcome will be consultancy, training of staff, development of relevant policies and guidelines to clarify the interrelations between governance and management bodies.

Improvements in the National Society human resources and finance management will be sought through guidance, consultations and possible training for relevant staff at headquarters and branch level. An external financial audit will be agreed during the consultations between the National Society leadership and the International Federation secretariat's regional representation to be carried out in 2010 (preliminary).

In volunteering the National Society will be guided by an idea of a more holistic approach to have a diverse and sufficient network of people through attracting and training new volunteers in accordance with specific needs of the programmes carried out at branch or headquarters level. Young people from vulnerable families will be involved in the National Society activities to prevent them from social isolation. The Red Crescent will also pay attention to gender balance and recruit and involve in its programming more female volunteers through youth clubs at regional level.

Programme component 2: National Society legal base development
Component outcome 1 Red Crescent Law developed and promoted for adoption.

The development of the Red Crescent Law will involve the study of existing laws as examples, the drafting of the law and advocacy in front of the government and the parliament.

b) Profile of target beneficiaries

The target beneficiaries of the programme are the members, staff and volunteers of the National Society. Among them is a group of newly elected governing board members at the headquarters and branch levels. In total, the estimated number of beneficiaries is 130,000 with approximately 55 per cent of them being women and 45 per cent men.

c) Potential risks and challenges

Lacking knowledge and experience in practising the new structure (i.e. divided governance and management), the National Society will have many questions in the process of statute implementation. The issues raised will need to be addressed through consultations and if funding is unavailable for that the whole process of division will be under serious threat of suspension.

The International Federation has no status agreement in Turkmenistan and this hampers the implementation of the programmes funded through the International Federation secretariat's plan. Currently, the National Society has to register all International Federation-funded programmes with the Ministry of Justice on an annual basis and the process may take up to three months.

The National Society is becoming less attractive for skilled personnel due to low salary levels comparing to other non-governmental organizations, and there exists a risk of losing the staff.

Principles and Values

a) The purpose and components of the programme

Programme purpose
To reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

The principles and values programme budget is CHF 49,399 (USD 45,154 or EUR 31,464).

Programme component 1: Promotion of humanitarian principles and values
Component outcome 1 Fundamental principles and humanitarian values of the Movement promoted.

The programme will inform the general public about the Movement's components, its principles, values and commitments through public actions conducted by different programmes of the National Society and mass media sources.

Programme component 2: Anti-discrimination and violence prevention
Component outcome 1: Ability of communities to combat discrimination, intolerance and violence and to promote respect for diversity enhanced.
Component outcome 2: Understanding of the necessity to prevent and fight sexual and gender based violence within the communities increased.

Under this component the programme will raise awareness of the needs of marginalized groups, such as people with TB, vulnerable women and children, blind people with focus in rural areas where their abilities are even more limited; and of the value of respect for diversity and non-discrimination through thematic sessions and public actions organized by National Society programmes. The Red Crescent will involve representatives of marginalized groups, for instance people with TB, into its activities to decrease their social exclusion and to promote understanding of their situation among government bodies and partners when such activities are carried out in partnerships. Gender equity trainings will be carried out for target communities by trained Red Crescent volunteers in the branches.

b) Profile of target beneficiaries

The principles and values programme targets populations served by National Society programming and the general public. The number of those targeted through media is difficult to calculate; the estimates count few thousands people. About 16,000 people covered by National Society programming will be reached through thematic sessions and public actions on the needs of vulnerable groups and diversity and non-discrimination.

Gender equity trainings will target women in urban and rural areas identified during the survey to be conducted in 2008. Men and wider public not involved into the specific survey will be covered through public campaigns of the National Society and mass media sources.

c) Potential risks and challenges

Continuous lack of funds remains the main constraint of the principles and values programme. The effects of this can be mitigated by integrating selected activities under other core programmes. Besides, staff turnover at the National Society headquarters and branch levels can affect the implementation.

Role of the secretariat

a) Technical programme support

The International Federation secretariat's regional representation for central Asia based in Almaty, Kazakhstan will provide core membership services and technical and advisory support for the National Society in planning, implementation and monitoring of the programmes, as well as general supervision at the regional level. This will be achieved by means of regular visits, meeting at regional level and communication via electronic mail or telephone. Under the guidance of the regional representative, the available programme functions within the regional representation reflect the programme structure along the International Federation's Global Agenda goals, namely disaster management, health and care, organizational development and principles and values. The regional disaster management function was recently filled with a programme officer; the recruitment of a disaster management delegate is in process. The health and care programme will be supported by the health delegate and assistant; organizational development will be supported by the regional coordinator and finance development delegate and principles and values programmes – by an information officer. Relevant technical support in the areas such as shelter, recovery, and IDRL will be requested from the zone and the Geneva secretariat.

The supporting functions of the regional representation like human resources, finance, planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting (PMER) will be used for the capacity-building initiatives within the regional organizational preparedness programme as well. More attention will be given to improving quality control, effectiveness and accountability for all programmes with technical support on developing relevant tools and mechanisms from the PMER focal points at the regional and zone level.

For expertise on issues related to good governance, good management, human resource development and possibly resource mobilization systems a locally/ regionally recruited consultant can be engaged. The main requirements for the consultant will be the knowledge of the local/ regional legislation, available training opportunities, and language skills.

Still a big constraint for the National Society is the lack of English language skills for the majority of the senior programme staff precluding access to materials in English and participation in international meetings. All regional programme and technical staff working with the National Society are Russian/ English speaking, which allows regular and accurate communication and work. The regional representation will ensure that the most important materials and documents have been translated into Russian working in cooperation with other regional or country representations from the Europe zone operating in Russian.

b) Partnership development and coordination

The Turkmenistan Red Crescent Society relies heavily on international support for its programming and largely this support is coming from the Movement. The only significant local support exists on the level of good relationships with the local authorities in the areas where the National Society branches implement the programmes. The planned work on IDRL will contribute to improving the quality of coordination with the national government in the area of disaster response at all levels as well as with other partners.

In the area of capacity development already this year the regional representation plans to approach the Movement partners (British Red Cross and ICRC) to agree on the scope of partnership and contributions within the human resources development. Participating National Societies already working bilaterally with the Turkmenistan Red Crescent will be involved in discussions on the plan of action on financial development and will be requested to contribute funding to future finance management development. The regional representation will also seek for funding from sources like the Capacity

Building Fund and involve external partners to support organizational development initiatives. The National Society itself will be encouraged to raise funds for an external audit's expenses.

The strategy of the National Society for 2007–2010 prioritizes international cooperation and the creation of an effective mechanism of coordination of the humanitarian assistance to people in need. Taking into account that the strategy also highlights attracting and retaining the partners further work has to be done to ensure efficient coordination of partners' support starting already at the planning stage.

The majority of the National Society's partners have their own partnership strategies or guidelines that to some extent contribute to building capacities of the Turkmenistan Red Crescent. It is recommended, as a first step, to have an inclusive planning meeting in 2009. The meeting will be conducted at the country level, in appropriate time for all interested bilateral and multilateral partners. The ownership and organization of the meeting will stay with the Turkmenistan Red Crescent that will be assisted by the regional representation. The existing Memorandum of Understanding between the Turkmenistan Red Crescent, the ICRC, the International Federation secretariat and the Spanish Red Cross on cooperation in supporting the development of the National Society and strengthening its capacity to effectively deliver quality programmes and services will be a basis to build on and improve cooperation and coordination during this meeting. That will be an appropriate forum to address problems that the National Society constantly faces such as the exchange rate fluctuation, availability of official statistics needed as a basis for different programmes' design, and difficulties with in country traveling.

Coordination and cooperation between the International Federation's regional representation and the regional ICRC delegation has strengthened over the past years due to the harmonization of support to National Societies in the areas of Red Crescent Law development, human resources systems and financial management development and joint planning. This will continue in the coming two years through further harmonization of the two organizations' planning processes, regular monthly meetings between the ICRC and Federation regional representation key staff, work through and with the National Societies Leadership Forum and trilateral meetings (Turkmenistan Red Crescent, ICRC and the regional representation).

c) Representation and Advocacy

The regional representative and where relevant programme managers will continue to represent the Turkmenistan Red Crescent at meetings, conferences and events where the National Society has no access to or to strengthen its representation. At such occasions the International Federation will further advocate for the National Society's auxiliary role, promote the value of its community-based approach when addressing the needs, volunteers work and the value of partnerships and independence of the Movement components for the vulnerable people.

Special attention will be given to the Red Crescent Law development starting from an initial dialogue with the government and following with advocacy in front of relevant government bodies. The regional representative will accompany the National Society leadership during meetings with government representatives and will promote the benefits of having the Red Crescent Law for both parties.

Turkmenistan is the only country in the region where there is no agreement on the status of the International Federation. The regional representation will make additional efforts to develop preconditions for signing such an agreement with the government of Turkmenistan. This will be done through regular visits to the National Society and joint meetings with the government to lobby the agreement.

Promoting gender equity and diversity

Traditionally women in central Asia, especially in rural areas, are engaged with households and children, which leave them with little access to information on disaster preparedness. With this in mind, the disaster management programme spotlights disaster awareness of women and children in communities. The SPHERE standards guide the Red Crescent disaster response and the fundamental principles and the value of respect for dignity and equality are at all times promoted in disaster management awareness materials, during training and work with the communities.

Similarly, limited access to health related information for girls and women make them more vulnerable to diseases including STIs and HIV. Health issues like reproductive health and safe behaviour are never discussed at the household level. Polls² revealed that 90 per cent of parents do not talk to their children (especially to girls) about sex and drug use. The community-based health and care component will address the issue by concentrating on health education for women.

Promoting gender equity and diversity is always in the heart of the humanitarian values programme. In 2009-2010 the programme will continue to address the issue of gender based violence seeking to change behaviour within the communities, building on the results of the community survey and initiatives of 2008.

The statute of the Red Crescent Society envisages equal opportunities for the participation in the governing bodies for women and men.

Quality, accountability and learning

The National Society will carry out routine monitoring of the programmes through regular field visits, observations, interviews, meetings with local authorities and community leaders, internal staff meetings with branch staff and progress reports. The participation of representatives of partner organizations and local community members in monitoring will be encouraged. The International Federation's regional representation will also undertake monitoring trips to programme sites.

Relevant information will be gathered from branch reports to the headquarters, budget analysis, statistics and meetings with donors. The results of monitoring will be analysed, discussed at national and regional meetings and follow-up actions will be undertaken to improve the effectiveness of interventions. Best practices will be promoted among colleagues and exchange visits between branches and sister National Societies will be arranged to allow learning from experience.

The programmes actively share information on the progress and cooperation opportunities during coordination meetings with partners, round tables and presentations at national and regional level. Progress is also reported through the web-sites and media. The National Society publishes annual reports that reflect major developments; the reports are distributed among local partners including the government, international NGOs, local NGOs, and business structures targeting both current and potential donors.

The SPHERE standards make up an integral part of the Red Crescent training for its disaster response teams and are applied by the National Society in its disaster response operations. The International Federation guidelines on national disaster preparedness and response mechanisms, containing standards and key indicators of effective preparedness and response, will advise the capacity building efforts of the Red Crescent Societies.

The initiative in community-based projects on disaster preparedness and risk reduction belongs to local communities and Red Crescent branches. National Society volunteers at local level participate in the project development and involve community members in the implementation. The programme also provides beneficiaries with the opportunity to participate in the monitoring of projects to achieve greater transparency.

In its capacity building efforts, the National Society is guided by the characteristics of a well-functioning National Society, particularly to the balanced development of the three key elements – foundation, capacity, and performance. The focus for the next years will be on achieving the characteristics of a well-functioning governing board (governance self assessment).

² In 2006 the National Society carried out a mini-survey among the population under the HIV prevention programme.

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:

- **In the Turkmenistan National Society: Zuhra Yelliyeva, Chairlady; email crescentinf@online.tm; phone +99312 35 17 50; and fax +99312 39 43 49.**
- **In the Regional Representation for Central Asia: Drina Karahasanovic, Regional Representative; email drina.karahasanovic@ifrc.org; phone +7727 291 80 63; fax +7727 291 42 67.**
- **In the Europe Zone Office: Anitta Underlin, Head of Zone, Budapest, phone: +36 1 8884 501; fax: +36 1 336 1516; email: anitta.underlin@ifrc.org**