

Revised Plan 2011



Belarus

Executive summary



Belarus is bordered by the European Union on one side and the Russian Federation and Ukraine on the other. The challenges it has faced since the break-up of the Soviet Union have been compounded by the still lingering Chernobyl legacy, continued political isolation, the growing incidence of trafficking in persons, especially women, TB and HIV, and a serious demographic crisis, marked by declining life expectancy, high mortality and morbidity, rapid population ageing and deteriorating health. The recent oil and gas price hikes, and the relationship with Russia has posed new challenges for Belarus, with wide-ranging macroeconomic and socio-political implications. Vulnerability is increasing in the country as the global recession continues to impact.

At its General Assembly in 2009, the International Federation adopted *Strategy 2020* to guide its work and that of National Societies both domestically and globally. Focusing on “saving lives and changing minds”, *S2020* and calls on national societies, as effective auxiliaries to the public authorities in the humanitarian field, to provide high quality services within the core mandates of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, to influence behaviours, promote changes in attitudes and mindsets, and for the Red Cross and Red Crescent to play a lead role in advocating for meeting the humanitarian needs of vulnerable people and communities. The overriding purpose of this programme support plan is to strengthen the Belarus Red Cross capacities in terms of increasing its role in the civil society to effectively address local vulnerabilities and to meet the humanitarian challenges facing Belarus today. These include the spread of infectious diseases – primarily HIV and AIDS – violence and trafficking, discrimination and marginalization of socially excluded groups.

Already in the drafting process, Belarus Red Cross leadership and management at all levels have taken the most active role in the discussions on *Strategy 2020*. The adopted Strategy was then presented to the National Society staff and volunteers, including through the biannual Red Cross bulletin, and will be soon disseminated through the new Belarus Red Cross website. The National Society strategic plan for 2012-2017 to be adopted by the General Assembly in 2011 will be based on *Strategy 2020*.

The total 2011 budget is CHF 1.1 million.

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

Country context

Belarus is a landlocked state bordering Poland, Lithuania and Latvia to the west; Ukraine to the south and Russia to the east. The name Belarus was adopted in 1991 when the country became independent. Previously it had been known by the name Belorussia, or White Russia. Before becoming a republic of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in December 1922, there was a brief period of independence. Occupied by the Nazis between 1941 and 1944, Belarus was one of the war's

most devastated battlefields, losing 2.5 million people, or 25 per cent of the population, including most of its large Jewish community. The country is a founding member of the United Nations along with Russia and Ukraine. Post-war reconstruction converted Belarus into an industrially, scientifically and militarily advanced Soviet Republic.

Development Indicators		BELARUS	
<i>Population, geography and environment</i>		<i>Economy and labour</i>	
Total population (millions)	9.48 (2009)	GDP per capita (PPP in USD)	7,918
Surface area (square km)	207,600	GDP real growth (%)	10 (2008)
Carbon dioxide emissions per capita (metric tons)	6.6 (2004)	Unemployment total (% of labour force)	0.8 (2008)
Population growth %	-0.6	Inflation %	14.8 (2008)
<i>Social indicators</i>		<i>Health indicators</i>	
Adult literacy rate (% aged 15 and older)	99.7	Infant mortality rate (per 100,000)	5.2
Gender-related development index rate (GDI)	56 (2005)	Life expectancy at birth (female/ male)	75/ 63
Human development index value (HDI)	0.826 (2007)	HIV prevalence (% aged 15-49)	0.2-0.4
Human development index rate (HDI)	68 (2007)	People living with HIV aged 15-49	20,000 – 47,000 (est.)
Population below national poverty line (%)	18.5	Prevalence of Tuberculosis (per 100,000)	55.15 (2007)
		Health spending as % of GDP	6.5 (2007)
Sources: World Health Organization; World Bank; Economic Intelligence Unit			

Table 1: Selected development indicators for Belarus

Belarus remains one of the least reformed countries in the pre-1990 eastern bloc, according to the World Bank. Its state-dominated economy has depended heavily on cheap oil and gas from Russia, a benefit that has been cut as relations between the once-close allies have soured. Latest report from the IMF forecasts that the total external debt of Belarus in 2010 would reach the highest level in history to take up some 52 percent of its GDP. Belarusian state foreign debt would also reach its highest level this year to take up 24 percent of the total GDP, compared to last year's 18 percent. The Economist Intelligence Unit forecasts that the government's statist economic model will remain under considerable strain in 2010-11 as external demand remains below pre-crisis levels, and as Russia continues to raise gas prices and to wind down concessions on terms of trade in the oil sector, which formerly bolstered government finances.

The life standards of population in Belarus have been continuously worsening with poverty and unemployment problems becoming more acute as a result of the global recession. Poverty is widespread among unemployed, rural population, pensioners, and children in large families, families with unemployed and single parents. The Red Cross is receiving many requests for used clothes, money and food support, for the first time in several years. The number of victims of trafficking presenting themselves at the five Red Cross "Hands of Help" centres in the country has also increased.

There are also long-term challenges caused by progressive ageing of the population resulting in higher demand for healthcare and pension services. These challenges are to be addressed by the government – so far, no meaningful policy changes are implemented in this direction.

Unhealthy lifestyles are a serious issue. In 2008, 27.5% of the population aged over 15 years reported smoking regularly and annual per capita alcohol consumption is estimated to be 11.74 litres, making tobacco and alcohol the most important health risk factors in the country. They contribute particularly to premature mortality in males from diseases of the circulatory system (866 deaths per 100 000 population), which is higher than the average for the European Region.

Environmental health is an important issue for Belarus. About 1.5 million Belarusians live in areas polluted as a result of the Chernobyl accident in April 1986. An increase in the incidence of thyroid cancer has occurred among people who were young children and adolescents at the time of the accident and lived in the most contaminated areas. The accident has had a negative impact on the mental health of the population, resulting in overuse of alcohol and tobacco.

Country disasters		BELARUS	
Type of Disaster	Date	Affected people	
Storm	June 1997	21,390	
Flood	March 1999	2,000	
Extreme temperature	January 2006	1,820	
Epidemic	November 1997	605	

Source: EM-DAT: The OFDA/CRED International Disaster Database

Table 2: Natural disasters in Belarus since 1990 including dates and the number of people affected

Although not at high risk of major disasters, every year Belarus experiences between 13,000 and 19,000 emergencies across all six regions of the country. Of these, 75 per cent are technological, with domestic and industrial fires taking the lion's share. Wild fires prevail among natural disasters constituting about 92 to 95 per cent. As a result 1,100-1,300 people are killed annually, and 500-600 people are injured. Furthermore, over the last ten years more than 17,000 people died and over 70,000 were injured in accidents on the roads of Belarus. Every day sees an average of 21 road accidents, killing 5 people and injuring 20¹.

There has been a dramatic increase in sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV and AIDS, TB, trafficking in human beings, drug abuse and violence. Likewise labour migration is increasing as is the social exclusion and abuse that is linked to it. Among other humanitarian challenges in Belarus are the ageing population, multi-child families and people with disabilities.

Due to its location between the CIS and European Union, Belarus is a regular transit route for irregular migrants moving westward. The general increase in irregular migration worldwide along with migratory flows towards the new EU borders, have had a pronounced impact on Belarus – creating new migration challenges for an already-strained system in the area of interception, reception or detention, care and services, registration and return. As in other Eastern European countries, trafficking in persons, especially women, to the Russian Federation, Middle East, and EU countries is another major challenge for Belarus. The human dimension of migration needs particular attention of government bodies responsible for migration management. Development of legal channels of migration, access of potential migrants to information about migration possibilities, migrants' rights, and threats of illegal employment, specialized juridical and consultation services for migrants, penalties for unscrupulous employers hiring migrants illegally can reduce the sphere of human trafficking and increase human security of migrants. In this context, efforts to cultivate non-tolerance of a society towards exploitation, violence, and forced labour at the national level and by NGOs can play an important role. The Government of Belarus has demonstrated its commitment and made visible efforts to counteract illegal migration, trafficking in human beings and related crime. However, the country's capacity to respond to existing migration challenges is limited and additional efforts and support to address these issues is needed.

The situation of women in Belarus also reflects the political and economic conditions in the country. The problems include women's poverty and employment discrimination; deterioration of women's health including reproductive health; presence in the society of traditional gender stereotypes; domestic violence and trafficking. There are worrying signs of a feminisation of poverty, with a higher number of women unemployed- 63 per cent among those officially registered as unemployed. The national statistics finds that women earn just 80 per cent of men's wages. The number of children born and raised by single mothers is increasing and the problem of trafficking in women is also very acute. According to the IOM office in Belarus, a typical Belarusian victim is a woman from a low-income family in a small provincial town.

¹ <http://rescue01.gov.by>

In a report released in November 2006 Amnesty International claimed that thousands of women in Belarus have experienced domestic violence, whilst benefiting from little legal protection and support services. According to the report, about 3,000 women were registered as home violence victims in Belarus in 2005. Amnesty International says the issue of ensuring safety for victims of home violence must be a matter of priority. It calls on the government of Belarus to fulfil its obligations under international law especially the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against women.² In April 2007, Amnesty International observed that despite some progress, measures to protect women from violence in the family remained inadequate.

Now that the European Union shares a border with Belarus, it is becoming more vulnerable to potential political and economic instability across that border. The EU's new central and eastern European member states have pushed the EU to give greater attention to Belarus, and in 2007 contacts between Belarus and the EU became much more intense. The EU announced a new strategy towards Belarus for the period 2007-2013 that implies increased assistance to support the needs of the population, to directly and indirectly support democratisation and to mitigate the effects of the self-isolation of Belarus on its population. Although Belarus has joined the EU's "Eastern Partnership" and has become eligible for new sources of grant funding, it still does not enjoy advanced contacts with the West and does not benefit as much as other countries of the region from the international development cooperation.

An interesting statistic was uncovered in a recent report by the Swiss Development Cooperation. It showed that there are 2,221 NGOs in Belarus, almost half of which are in Minsk. However, the number of NGOs working in the social protection and rehabilitation sphere has halved since 2004 (18.3 per cent now compared to 36.3 per cent five years ago.) Most new NGOs are in the sport, culture or education field. The report also found that the operating environment for NGOs was made difficult due to the legal system, competition between NGOs, lack of impetus by NGOs and lack of funds. The phenomenon of what is termed GONGOs (Government Organised Non Governmental Organisations) was identified as a negative factor in the report, as was the current aversion among Belarusian NGOs to promote a culture of volunteerism.

The UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI) shows a very disparate picture of the country's health and education situation. Whereas education is a factor that greatly improves Belarus's standing in the HDI, life expectancy is low and significantly below its GDP per capita ranking. The health situation is not encouraging despite rapid growth and high spending on healthcare. Although this spending as share of GDP is comparable to Poland, life expectancy has declined by 3 years over the last decade for men and is now around 63 years while for women it is around 75 years.

Although the incidence rate of HIV is relatively low in Belarus, the situation has the potential to deteriorate, largely due to a lack of knowledge and information about the disease. According to official statistics released in May 2010, more than 11,000 infection cases have been registered and more than 2,000 people have died. There is a steady increase in the sexual way of HIV transmission with 63.4 per cent of all cases in 2006 and 77.6 per cent in 2009, though most of these cases are reported as involving a high-risk partner, mainly an injecting drug user, and rapid increase of the share of women in the overall HIV-incidence rate being around 35.4 per cent. The most vulnerable to HIV infection are young people aged 15-29, with workers and employees accounting for more than 20 per cent of all HIV infected. Widespread risky behaviour among young people is largely responsible for driving the AIDS epidemic in Belarus. According to National Centre for Hygiene, Epidemiology and Public Health, for the first four months of 2010 about 74.6 per cent of all new HIV cases (264 cases) were transmitted sexually. Therefore, the promotion of safe behaviour among vulnerable groups, including young adults at workplaces, is becoming increasingly critical. Belarus Red Cross has made significant progress with harm reduction, managing delicate and inter-linked relationships between drug users, the police and the wider public effectively.

² The report can be found at <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGEUR490142006?open&of=ENG-BLR>.

National Society priorities and current work with partners

The humanitarian environment in Belarus is partly defined by the increasing spread of HIV and TB, as well as by social exclusion experienced by older people, migrants and children. These are the direct results of the structural vulnerability that the Belarus Red Cross strives to address through active advocacy, service delivery and raising awareness. In 2010-2011 it will continue to address a range of vulnerabilities that affect socially excluded groups, primarily poor access to healthcare, isolation, lack of access to decision-makers and material poverty.

The economic crisis took longer to bite in Belarus, but hit with a savagery which saw a 20 per cent devaluation of the currency concomitant with a 20 per cent rise in prices at the end of 2008. An International Monetary Fund (IMF) mission in May 2009 confirmed this view, underpinning its 2.5 billion US dollar loan to the country.

Diseases like TB and HIV often intensify the needs of vulnerable groups. Therefore, the National Society will address the needs of key populations at higher risk through activities to prevent these diseases and to promote healthy lifestyles, as well as meeting the needs of people living with HIV that arise from stigma and discrimination. Recognizing the need to scale up both its activities and capacities to better tackle HIV in the country, at the end of 2007 the Belarus Red Cross joined the Red Cross and Red Crescent Global Alliance on HIV and TB. The Red Cross's country-wide efforts to counter the spread of HIV are currently being supported by GTZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit) and the Danish Red Cross in strengthening prevention work and reducing stigma and discrimination and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in the treatment and care of people living with HIV.

HIV prevention and anti-discrimination activities in the field of labour will continue at the three biggest national enterprises – Belarusian Auto works (BELAZ), Belarus Steel Works and Belarus State Railways. The objective is to organize prevention and anti-stigma information sessions in the workplace during working hours. They benefit from the advice and guidance provided by peer educators, some of whom are openly living with HIV. The first results are encouraging as more companies are willing to join the project. In 2010, the activities mentioned above resulted in the adoption of policies on HIV prevention and prohibition of discrimination towards people living with HIV at the target enterprises. For the first time in Belarus, enterprise managers approved the regulations based on ILO basic principles that among other principles include important articles such as: prevention of discrimination on the basis of health status (including staff recruitment and dismissal) and HIV prevention trainings for the staff of an enterprise during working hours (as agreed with enterprise managers). The presence of enterprise managers and staff on the training is part of their job duties. In the framework of HIV policies and implementation plans, activities on the development of tolerant attitude towards PLHIV were held and further attracting PLHIV to enterprise activities remains a priority for 2011.

Together with Italian Red Cross, the Belarus Red Cross plans to pilot a project targeting female injecting drug users (IDUs). The project aims to increase access for female IDUs to HIV prevention, harm reduction and social support services through introducing gender-oriented approaches.

The Belarus Red Cross also regularly participates in ERNA meetings and is sharing its knowledge and experience with sister National Societies

An increasing number of older people need nursing care and support in their daily lives and many require palliative care; the numbers are also set to rise in Belarus' ageing society. There is, therefore, a need to break the loneliness and isolation that often affect the elderly people and children with disabilities. These humanitarian challenges are being addressed by the Red Cross through its Visiting Nurses Service, supported bilaterally by the consortium of the Austrian, German and Swiss Red Cross Societies and special activities towards families with children with disabilities in Grodno oblast, supported bilaterally by the Austrian Red Cross with financial support from the Austrian Development Agency. Red Cross nurses also provide palliative care to HIV-patients.

Needs arising from the trafficking of women and children, which the National Society is addressing through raising the awareness of potential victims and the general public of the risks, and providing reintegration assistance also remain the focus of the attention of the Red Cross. The National Society is a full member of the national referral mechanism in Belarus and is also part of the European Red Cross Red Crescent Cooperation in Response to Human Trafficking, which helps the society to exchange experiences and develop new ideas. While the reintegration services are being supported by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), there is a funding gap in the field of prevention of domestic violence and trafficking in humans. The Belarus Red Cross principles and values programme in 2010-2011 will specifically focus on marginalized or excluded groups directly seeking to reduce the existing discrimination and exclusion that they face. Reintegration assistance to victims of trafficking is ensured by the Belarus Red Cross through health examinations, medical, legal and psychological treatment and counselling and assistance in vocational training. Prevention activities are intended to be developed in educational institutions to improve the understanding of the dangers of trafficking, the awareness of preventive support mechanisms that are available for youngsters and to inform them about organizations which provide support to trafficked persons inside and out of Belarus. The principles and values programme also intends to improve access of migrants to psychosocial, health care and legal counselling services.

A joint refugee programme is run by the Belarus Red Cross together with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). For a number of years the Belarus Red Cross has been an important partner of UNHCR and the government in the area of social assistance to refugees and the National Society has established extensive expertise in the field.

Another important priority is to foster volunteering in local communities as a way to develop new initiatives, build partnerships and strengthen capacities of the branches. Furthermore, volunteering contributes to the reduction of vulnerability and social exclusion and is an instrument to promote community involvement and empowerment, particularly in remote areas. The Red Cross has extensive experience in coordinating volunteer activities thanks to the volunteer capacity building programme now ongoing in four out of the six regions of Belarus with the support of the Danish Red Cross and the International Federation. The programme has already proved its replicability through the successful extension to another geographical target area and holds great potential for further development and cross-country learning within the CIS countries. The programme plan for 2010-2011 seeks support to institutionalize the already tested methodologies and practices for youth involvement and to replicate the successful approaches in one newly selected regional Red Cross branch with a focus on up to 20 communities.

In terms of organizational development needs, matters of human resources and financial management, branch infrastructure and management, legal base including statutes, resource mobilization linked to communications and image issues, are considered as areas requiring first and foremost improvement. During 2007-2008, the Belarus Red Cross has received various types of consultancy support, such as on the revision of statutes, strategic planning, and optimization of its organizational structure. A revision of the Belarus Red Cross law has been initiated by the by Belarusian lawmakers. However the revisions proposed by the National Society, mainly related to tax benefits and financial support from the government, have not been included in the draft law. The Belarus Red Cross and the Federation will continue lobbying for fiscal concessions from the government. The Belarus Red Cross strategic development plan will also be reviewed in 2011 in order to reflect the Federation *Strategy 2020*.

The work was done in close cooperation with the International Federation's representation in the region, with the secretariat's governance support unit, as well as other partner National Societies interested in this activity, particularly the consortium of the German and Swiss Red Cross Societies, the Danish and Norwegian Red Cross Societies. In the coming years the consortium, the Austrian and the Danish Red Cross Societies, the International Federation will continue supporting the Belarus Red Cross capacity building and organizational development processes, ensuring synergy and complementarity between their *Visiting Nurses, Youth Participation and Volunteer promotion and development programmes*.

The increasing number of deaths and injuries on the roads also prompted the Belarus Red Cross to revitalise its first-aid education activities. The first-aid programme is designed to incorporate aspects of

accident prevention, HIV prevention and promoting healthy lifestyle within Belarusian communities. In 2009-2010 with the support from French Red Cross and European First Aid Reference Center 42 first aid instructors participated in refreshment courses as well as training for 12 first aid trainers was organised. The sustainable training system will be developed through introduction courses for community and first aid trainers and further improvement of FA manual. Additional funding is, however required for further guidance and support to accomplish the National Society's new goals in the first-aid field. The International Federation and the Belarus Red Cross try to ensure complementarities through the coordination of potential inputs by various partners.

Ensuring efficient delivery of emergency response and recovery assistance for high-risk communities will remain the primary area for 2010 - 2011. The recruitment of disaster response voluntary teams has started in Vitebsk and Railway Red Cross organisations through the establishment of cooperation links with the Vicaginas branch of Lithuanian Red Cross. Eight regional branches are now equipped with medical vehicles donated by the Swiss Development Agency for disaster preparedness and response activities. The cooperation agreement signed in 2007 between the Belarus Red Cross and the Ministry of Emergencies defined the Red Cross's auxiliary role as providing social support, such as distributing basic items and setting up first-aid points, to people affected by disasters. The ministry ensures that the Red Cross participates in its disaster response trainings and makes its warehouses available for its supplies, as well as inform it about disaster forecasts. To meet its disaster management obligations, the Belarus Red Cross will maintain its disaster relief fund and emergency stocks pre-positioned in each region, as well as ensure that a sufficient number of trained staff and volunteers are on standby in case of disaster. The International Federation will support the National Society with emergency stocks, staff training and relief assistance to the most vulnerable including those affected by the socio-economic transition. The Swiss Red Cross, who over the years has supported emergency relief activities carried out by the Belarus Red Cross to assist the most disadvantaged population groups, will also continue its support through winter assistance by supplying supplementary nutrition and *Twice Christmas* campaigns (gifts collection). In terms of response to technological disasters, the Belarus Red Cross continues to provide medical, social and psychological assistance to targeted individuals in the six regions affected by the Chernobyl nuclear disaster (*please refer to the CHARP plan - MAA67002*), and remains on standby for the provision of shelter, food and first aid in case of evacuation of people from risk zones, such as an accident at a chemical enterprise.

Good partnership was established with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) office in Moscow in the field of dissemination activities, tracing service and assistance to illegal migrants. The financial support for the Exploring Humanitarian Law (EHL) activities in schools was modified for dissemination activities, aimed at Red Cross youth volunteers and staff, local authorities and mass media.

The Belarus Red Cross approached the Polish and Ukrainian Red Cross societies to elaborate a joint EU application for a cross border cooperation project. The first working meeting has been held in Lvov recently with the support of Austrian Red Cross, where the proposed concept note have been discussed and agreed upon. The second meeting will be held as soon as the Call for Proposals will be announced.

In the framework of the EU call "Non State Actors and Local Authorities" the Danish, Austrian and German Red Cross Societies in partnership with Belarus Red Cross submitted Concept Notes for volunteer services development and the Netherlands-based non-profit organization Stichting Yanos Public Health in partnership with Belarus and Lithuania Red Cross Societies submitted a Concept Note for enhancement of the quality of life of elderly people.

The identified priority areas and actions of the Belarus Red Cross in the given circumstances remain fragile, in that while communities are being served and the National Society's role is being recognized, programming remains heavily reliant on international support. At the same time, there is little evidence to suggest major donor interest in the country, with the exception of relatively small project funds. Therefore, failure to secure continued support at this critical moment would mean certain core capacities would be lost. Further investment is required over the next few years to strengthen the capacities of the Red Cross to increase its role in civil society and deliver on the Global Agenda goals.

The transitional support phase in 2010-2011 would lay some important groundwork for a more comprehensive approach to establishing a more sustainable support structure for the National Society through funding partnerships with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the budget, as well as a raised profile leading to greater public support.

It should also be noted that in 2009-2010 the Europe zone office gave considerable support and advice, directly via visits from the Head of Zone and Head of operations for Europe, and through the country office, to emphasising the Red Cross's mandate with government and in particular assisting with the drafting of a new Red Cross law. Advice and assistance was also given on how to improve fundraising and how to approach the government to get a decree allowing different methods of financing.

Secretariat supported programmes in 2010-2011

The primary target group of the Belarus Red Cross programmes in 2010-2011 are the most vulnerable and marginalized people in local communities, including children from multi-child and disadvantaged families, people living with HIV (PLHIV), elderly people, people with disabilities, migrants, and victims of trafficking and domestic violence. The secondary target group are youth leaders, volunteers, as well as National Society headquarters and branch staff in all six regions of Belarus. Some 589,900 people will be reached by activities planned for 2010-2011.

Plan 2010-2011 – Belarus		
Programme	Target groups	People to be reached
Disaster Management	People affected by disasters	2,000
	Elderly people living alone, people with disabilities, homeless, multi-child families with low income, people released from prisons	88,000
Health and Care	Young people (aged up to 31 years mainly from urban but also from rural areas) at high risk and the general public	310,000
Organizational Development	Vulnerable people, including orphans, people with disabilities, elderly people, unprivileged youth	16,400
	Young people	16,000
Principles and values	Young people, schoolchildren and their parents, students of universities and teachers	40,000
	Elderly people (aged 65 and older), potential risk groups to violence including youth and unemployed people from low-income families in small provincial towns, children who live in marginalized families and PLHIV, victims of trafficking and domestic violence, community members and the general public	117,000
	Migrants and victims of trafficking	500

Table 3: Target populations of Belarus Red Cross programmes in 2010-2011

Disaster Management

a) The purpose and components of the programme

Programme purpose:

Reduce the number of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters

The disaster management programme budget for one year is CHF 194,066.

Programme component 1: Disaster response

Component outcome: Improved disaster response assistance to meet the needs of those people affected by disasters and socio-economic transition.

The component aims to mitigate the impact of socio-economic changes on the most vulnerable. The Belarus Red Cross will support those in need through securing supplementary nutrition for three

months, providing second-hand clothes, improving access to quality social services and raising awareness of the local community and mobilizing local resources for the assistance.

b) Potential risks and challenges

In Belarus for every project that involves foreign donors, all the money and supplies received from abroad must be registered as humanitarian cargo with the department for humanitarian aid under the presidential administration. The Belarus Red Cross has extensive experience in dealing with international projects and the system of getting money registration certificates runs smoothly. Nevertheless, the procedure can last up to one month, leading to delays in project implementation.

Another risk is international isolation of Belarus which, if continued, may further aggravate the already worsening socio-economic situation, whereby the number of people in need would increase and without a matching increase in social support this would lead to deteriorating conditions for vulnerable people.

Health and Care

a) The purpose and components of the programme

Programme purpose:
Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from disasters and public health emergencies

The health and care programme budget for one year is CHF 510,356.

Programme component 1: HIV and AIDS
Component outcome 1: Vulnerability to HIV and its impact reduced through preventing further infection.
Component outcome 2: Vulnerability of PLHIV decreased through reducing HIV stigma and discrimination.
Component outcome 3: The capacity of the National Society to deliver and sustain scaled-up HIV programmes strengthened.

With its 480 volunteer educators, the Belarus Red Cross will continue peer interventions in educational institutions in 18 towns across the country, but will also expand to factories with the focus on workers' HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) knowledge, sexual negotiation skills and condom efficacy, risk perception and stigmatizing attitudes. Recognizing the need to scale up both its activities and capacities to better tackle the problem, the Belarus Red Cross joined the Red Cross and Red Crescent Global Alliance on HIV and TB. The National Society thus works in accordance with the established principles of the Movement to support national HIV policies and programmes. The specific scope of the component activities in this plan is based on the Global Alliance's core approaches and principal indicators which derive directly from the global indicators for HIV and AIDS that have been agreed by UNAIDS, major international organizations and the Belarus national AIDS programme.

The HIV prevention activities in 2010-2011 will thus focus on peer education and community mobilization, information, education and communication for targeted vulnerable groups, voluntary counselling and testing, skills for personal protection, including condom use.

The National Society anti-stigma efforts will seek to develop tolerant attitudes and an enabling environment for people living with HIV and their family members, to foster partnerships with PLHIV organisations, and to ensure that HIV in workplace policy and programmes for all staff and volunteers are in place and are being effectively implemented both in the Belarus Red Cross and at target enterprises. In 2010 the Belarus Red Cross adopted its HIV in workplace policy which corresponds to the policy of the International Federation on HIV and AIDS, now it will be delivered to Belarus Red Cross staff members and volunteers. Belarus Red Cross management will also encourage distribution of the policy among National Society partners at international, national, and regional levels, in other public and state organizations in order to effectively introduce the policy and to consolidate efforts on the prevention of HIV and reduction of stigma and discrimination towards PLHIV.

Strengthening Belarus Red Cross capacities to deliver and sustain the scaled-up HIV programme requires improving staff and volunteer support and management, continued training and experience exchange, further support to youth initiatives, widening partnerships, expanding resource mobilisation and pursuing greater ownership and sustainability at local level. All of these will be priority areas in 2010-2011.

Programme component 2: Community-based first aid

Component outcome: Capacities of communities and households to prevent and cope with individual and small-scale emergencies (e.g. household and road accidents) have increased.

The first-aid component will aim at increasing the capacity of individuals, households and communities to prevent and cope with individual and small-scale emergencies, e.g. household and road accidents, and to mitigate their impact. The Belarus Red Cross will further work towards strengthening its first-aid programme by improving the quality and relevance of the training, increasing the number of trainers and increasing the programme coverage. The programme is designed to incorporate aspects of accident prevention, HIV and AIDS prevention and promoting healthy lifestyle within Belarusian communities.

b) Potential risks and challenges

The challenge in HIV and AIDS component is that the interest of administrations of educational institutions cooperating with the Belarus Red Cross is often occasional (as a rule on the eve of the World AIDS Day and World AIDS Memorial Day). Another challenge is integration of the full cycle of the six-stage peer education model into the educational process. In order to support regional coordinators and peer educators, recommendations were developed on how to organize meetings with school administrations so that agreements could be reached on hosting the full cycle of the activities.

One of the challenges of the first-aid component is retaining sufficient volunteer trainers to help in the target communities. These positions will be really important in making sure the programme survives long after external support has ended. The National Society also needs to approve its revised first-aid manual and training curriculum with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Emergencies to assume its leading role in the provision of first-aid training throughout Belarus.

Overall, the health and care programme's success is reliant upon the continued commitment of the National Society leadership to improve its human resource management, in particular the system of recruitment, training, support and motivation of staff and volunteers.

Organizational Development/Capacity Building

a) The purpose and components of the programme

Programme purpose:

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 for one year is CHF 110,689.

Programme component 1: Improving the Belarus Red Cross's leadership capacities to develop and implement strategies, to ensure good performance and accountability

Component outcome 1: Implementation of the revised statutes.

Component outcome 2: Continuous training of National Society governance and management at all levels.

Programme component 2: Ensuring a well-functioning organization with sustainable systems, procedures and staff with desired level of managerial and technical competencies.

Component outcome 1: Effective and transparent human resource management.
Component outcome 2: Proper and effective financial procedures and guidelines.
Component outcome 3: Proper and effective accounting and reporting systems.
Component outcome 4: Well-functioning internal communication and effective external communication.

Programme component 3: Developing a nation-wide coverage of grass-roots units and services
Component outcome 1: Develop a nation-wide service run by volunteers organized by branches/units at grass-roots level.
Component outcome 2: Support branches/ units at grass-roots level with a suitable volunteer policy and simple volunteer management procedures.

The first two components of the programme are supporting the third component which has the most direct impact on communities. All three components together support the work of the National Society; primarily the disaster management, health and care and principles and values programmes.

The second component is a continuation of the change process started in 2007 aiming to further develop systems of human resource management (adoption of human resource policies and procedures, including a unified salary system and the system of appraisal and motivation of staff), finance management (adoption of internal controls and procedures, use of computer software for maintaining its financial records and analysis) and communication (greater accountability to stakeholders, improved visibility and image building).

With the third component the International Federation will continue to build the Belarus Red Cross capacities both at the national and local levels, enabling the National Society to provide youth with opportunities and adequate support to participate in organizational decision-making and to take social initiatives to serve and advocate for vulnerable people in their communities. This will be done through the development of community-based youth volunteer initiatives where youth are responsible for the whole project cycle from needs assessment and project proposal to implementation and evaluation; and improvement of volunteer management. Thus, the component support will build capacities at the individual, branch and headquarters level. In order to ensure proper dissemination of the gained experience as well as to present the impact of youth initiatives on local communities, round-table meetings with the participation of local authorities and NGOs will take place in each community where the project activities are undertaken.

b) Potential risks and challenges

The Belarus Red Cross is facing several risks outside the organization. Uppermost is that the legal base is far from perfect, with no law on volunteering and the absence of a system for state grants to NGOs working in the social field. Furthermore, there is increasing competition between NGOs working in the social field, which can be construed as positive spur to raising standards. However, due to low institutional capacity and limited in-country funding possibilities, the National Society is not yet ready to take over projects which have been supported by the external donors now withdrawing from the CIS.

Principles and Values

a) The purpose and components of the programme

Programme purpose:
Promote respect for diversity and human dignity, and reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion

The principles and values programme budget for one year is CHF 131,412.

Programme component 1: Promotion of Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values

Component outcome 1: Enhanced knowledge, understanding and application of the Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values (including non-discrimination, non-violence, tolerance and respect for diversity) within the National Society and the society in general.

Component outcome 2: The target population is sensitized to humanitarian values and changing behaviour.

Programme component 2: Anti-discrimination and violence prevention/reduction programmes

Component outcome 1: Vulnerable communities are empowered with enhanced ability to combat discrimination, trafficking, intolerance and violence.

Component outcome 2: Improved access to psychosocial support, healthcare and legal counselling services for migrants and victims of trafficking.

The first component is focused on improving the integration and understanding of the Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values within the National Society as well as on bringing the message of principles and values into the community.

The second component sets out the Red Cross message of non-discrimination and offers practical tools for communities to use to combat discrimination, such as legal awareness and self-help mechanisms. The Belarus Red Cross will continue to apply social inclusion and empowerment approaches towards the discriminated and marginalized people, providing access to information and communication, conducting educational trainings, organizing self-support groups and creating favourable public opinion towards elderly people, victims of domestic violence and trafficking. Red Cross staff and volunteers from the selected branches will receive basic training on participatory community development and participatory rapid appraisal methodologies as a tool to develop the civil society by equal partnerships between the local communities, the Red Cross, the local authorities and the local NGOs. The programme activities will help the social reintegration of the target audience and create an environment for their active life in the society.

Under the second component the Belarus Red Cross will increasingly develop trafficking prevention activities in schools, colleges and other educational institutions in order to improve the understanding of the danger of trafficking, the awareness of available preventive support mechanisms among youngsters and to inform about organizations which provide support to trafficked persons in and outside of Belarus. Newly developed information and education materials will address the issue of family violence. The programme plan for violence and trafficking prevention seeks for innovative approaches by introducing new forms of activities designed to building high self esteem (e.g. art therapy and social theatre), carrying out more workshops, experience sharing seminars and meetings of self-support groups, as well as more active involvement of Youth Red Cross representatives to introduce peer education principles. The awareness raising activities will be organized above all in rural areas and are aimed at the entire general public with a particular focus on groups at higher risk. This component envisages that the Belarus Red Cross will ensure that undocumented migrants have access to psychosocial support, healthcare and legal counselling. Contact with relatives through Red Cross messages and telephone calls will be also provided. The Belarus Red Cross will also become a reference point for migrants who need information on their legal, medical and social rights.

b) Potential risks and challenges

The main constraint today is the lack of funding for the Principles and Values programme, in particular for the components targeting migrants and victims of trafficking. The Federation and the National Society continue to explore new funding opportunities, including participation in EU thematic calls. The joint application of IFRC and Icelandic Red Cross to the Icelandic Foreign Ministry resulted in a three-year funding for the Belarus Red Cross anti-trafficking activities in Gomel region. The Belarus Red Cross has also become part of a joint grant application prepared by IFRC and IOM under the EU thematic programme of cooperation with third countries in the areas of migration and asylum. If the application is successful, it will help to strengthen national mechanisms of reintegration and rehabilitation of victims of human trafficking in Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine.

Role of the secretariat

The secretariat's budget for its support role is CHF 121,195 for one year.

In line with Strategy 2020 and other policy decisions made by statutory meetings and bodies³ as well as reviews undertaken by Europe Zone Office of its approach to provision of support to national societies, the Federation will provide core membership services and technical support to the Belarus Red Cross.

In addition, the Federation will provide support to the Belarus Red Cross to roll out *Strategy 2020* and integrate it into its new strategic plan. It will also contribute to the development and data input for the Federation-wide planning and reporting system.

The established set-up, consisting of International Federation offices in Budapest, Moscow, Kiev and Minsk works with the Belarus Red Cross and along with membership services provides comprehensive technical and programme support, using tried and tested methodologies, to help the National Society design the programming that addresses the needs of socially excluded groups, scales up the activities in HIV and AIDS and TB, addresses the increasing humanitarian needs arising from trafficking, as well as addresses the capacity building needs in disaster management.

International Federation staff in Minsk will liaise with the technical departments located within the Europe zone structure, sharing information on needs, achievements and plans of the Belarus Red Cross and mobilizing technical assistance when needed from the zonal and regional hubs. However, it remains the primary responsibility of the National Society to lead on its own strategic and income generation plans.

With the adoption of *Strategy 2020* and the strong focus on National Society planning and country-based support provided via National Society integrated assistance, an analysis of the present support structure and visions for optimal use of available expertise is foreseen in close dialogue with the National Society.

a) Technical programme support

- providing tailor-made organizational development interventions as required. This may include strengthening the governance and management or statutes revision, through a network of organizational development practitioners bringing knowledge from sister societies or consultants from within or outside the Red Cross, an approach already successfully tested in Belarus;
- facilitating cross-learning and exchanges between all European National Societies and regional offices, thus facilitating the building of knowledge-sharing networks that would better support and complement a broad range of capacity building needs;
- facilitating cross-learning between different programme areas and building links into more integrated programming;
- facilitating national and regional disaster management training;
- facilitating access to the International Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to finance small-scale disaster response operations;
- supporting the National Society in coordinating the assessment needs for disaster response, preparing, launching and assisting in the management of international appeals;
- facilitating discussion for sustainable solutions for the Chernobyl programme;
- disseminating humanitarian/ training materials in English and Russian;
- supporting grants applications and assisting in identifying funding opportunities;
- ensuring financial and budget management service in support of the existing programmes;
- ensuring adherence to the International Federation's policies and standards;
- supporting the Belarus Red Cross in developing its technical capacity to report to donors in accordance with recognized standards.

Five main cross-cutting capacities would be built across the National Society's programmes:

- advocacy skills;

³ The International Federation's General Assembly, the Governing Board committees, the Council of Delegates, the International Conference and the European Red Cross and Red Cross Conference

- public awareness-raising;
- building psychosocial support skills of the National Society to assist people affected by disasters;
- planning, monitoring and evaluation with emphasis on impact monitoring, reporting and assessments;
- development of human resource/ volunteers capacities.

b) Partnership development and coordination

Alongside the overall support to the existing portfolio of programmes, the Federation office will continue to facilitate partnerships with specific groups of National Societies, government structures and humanitarian organizations (e.g. GTZ, USAID, Global Business Coalition on HIV, tuberculosis and malaria), as well as to support bilateral initiatives through its coordination functions. Special emphasis will be placed on forging operational alliances with partners working in Belarus.

In its partnership development and coordination efforts the International Federation promotes coherent and unified programming by various partners in Belarus, firmly based on the new *Strategy 2020* and the National Society plans and priorities. Effective coordination with partners in programme planning and implementation will eventually result in maximizing the resources available for Belarus Red Cross programmes, improving relevance and efficiency of activities, as well as impact on beneficiaries.

c) Representation and Advocacy

International representation and advocacy will be grouped around the zone office in Budapest, with active involvement of the offices in Moscow, Kiev and Minsk, using the International Federation's diplomatic status agreements to network with the international community and to raise the profile of the Red Cross.

The Belarus Red Cross is respected by the government but needs more direct support from the secretariat in its relations with the government. It is intended that representation with governments, donor missions, banks, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations (EU, IOM, UNDP, WHO, UNAIDS, OSCE, USAID, GTZ, etc.) will lead to new funding opportunities and influence policies for enhancing programming and capacity building.

d) Supplementary Services to National Societies operating bilaterally

The International Federation has a legal status agreement with the government of Belarus which affords to all Red Cross members the benefits of its international mission status. In agreement with the National Society the Danish Red Cross has established, through the International Federation's representation in Minsk, a regional presence to provide support to both the Belarus and Ukraine Red Cross Societies. To ensure effective coordination, shared learning, quality support and improved monitoring and evaluation and to limit the national administrative and legal structures, in 2010-2011 the Danish Red Cross will continue its activities in Belarus and Ukraine through the International Federation, with the representation providing support functions.

Promoting gender equity and diversity

Recognizing that the empowerment of women and the integration of a gender perspective will increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization, the Belarus Red Cross emphasizes gender balance in all its projects and activities. This revolves particularly around the participation of women in decision-making processes, project implementation, planning, international conferences and workshops and equal mobilization of volunteers and educational opportunities (HIV and AIDS, TB and other activities). It is also starting to develop systems to collect and analyse sex-disaggregated data on membership, volunteers, staff and beneficiaries.

There are several programme components in the International Federation's secretariat plan especially targeting women, in particular health programmes, but also prevention of violence and trafficking in human beings and community-based initiatives. In each programme, as far as possible, the interests of every group, gender equity and social status are taken into consideration.

Quality, accountability and learning

The Belarus Red Cross has set up reporting systems for programme activities with monthly narrative and financial reports for management purposes. Accountability to stakeholders, donors, the general population and beneficiaries will be ensured through regular reports posted on the International Federation's web-site and submitted to donors. Operational monitoring and evaluation will be carried out on an ongoing basis through beneficiary interviews, weekly staff meetings and field visits. Staff will regularly meet with partners, donors, mass media and the beneficiaries. In 2010-2011 more attention will be paid in the National Society to quantitative and qualitative data collection methods such as interviews with beneficiaries and events participants, questionnaires and surveys. Efforts will be put into making the reports more results based, demonstrating where appropriate the longer-term impact of the programmes and presenting lessons learned. This is to provide feedback to partners and to be accountable and transparent to donors and beneficiaries, but also to assist programme managers in improving the quality and reach of their work.

A newsletter and articles will be shared within the Red Cross to foster information exchange across programme areas and with key partners; and forums will be organized within different programmes. The International Federation will continue to promote good practices and facilitate cross-learning and exchanges between the National Societies in the region, thus building knowledge-sharing networks.

How we work

The IFRC's vision is to:

Inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.

Contact information

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