

NORTH AFRICA

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS PROGRAMME

CHF 337,000

Programme No. 01.46/98

The North Africa region comprises the countries of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt. The region is subject to a wide array of natural disasters but is particularly susceptible to drought, desertification, and flooding. In addition, earthquakes are not infrequent, especially along the mountainous coastal area stretching from northern Morocco to Algeria.

In the last few years there has been an increase in man-made disasters, in the form of industrial accidents, environmental degradation, and internal conflict. Some are a result of ethnic differences, volatile political environments due to the process of democratisation, and growing economic disparities.

By virtue of its volatility and the absence of a Federation presence there, the North African region is becoming an important area for Federation attention. The likelihood of natural, and especially man-made, disasters is great and, with the increase in challenges to the political order in the region, will probably increase in coming years.

All of the five Societies have disaster preparedness programmes, in varying degrees of sophistication and readiness. Moves to strengthen these programmes on a national and regional level began in 1996 when a Federation consultant visited the region. Based on the survey findings and after discussions with the leadership of the Societies concerned, a programme has been drawn up consisting of separate country-level projects and regional co-ordination.

Over a three year period, 1998-2000, the overall objective of the programme is to improve the ability of the National Red Crescent Societies of Morocco, Algeria, Libya, Tunisia, and Egypt to establish and maintain appropriate measures at their respective headquarters and branches for coping with the effects of natural and man-made disasters. Regional co-operation between the Societies in disaster preparedness, also an objective of the programme, will be fostered through regular meetings of the Disaster Preparedness Project Co-ordinators of each Society as well as the Regional Monitoring Committee. In order to achieve these goals, the Federation will designate a Disaster Preparedness Delegate to work in the region.

Objectives in 1998

- | To complete surveys in each of the countries to assess and identify areas where disasters are most likely to occur and the populations at risk;
- | to assess the existing capacities of the National Societies in each country and the region and their ability to cope with established disaster patterns and future trends;
- | to identify the role of the National Societies, governments, UN and other organisations in disaster preparedness and the institutional, resource and programme areas which require improvement;
- | to design, on the basis of the above studies and in accordance with Federation policies and guidelines, in collaboration with each National Society, disaster preparedness programmes for each Society, involving *inter alia*, national preparedness plans, early warning systems, stock pre-positioning, and training.

Plan of Action

- | To recruit and assign a Federation Disaster Preparedness Delegate for the region and nominate a Project Co-ordinator in each of the National Societies;
- | to conduct a training needs assessment to determine the training needs of different target groups, e.g. headquarters/branch staff, volunteers;
- | to begin training in disaster preparedness in local branches in disaster prone areas, and then at headquarters level;
- | to obtain access to data on risks, vulnerabilities, and capacity assessments in disaster prone areas in government and UN disaster management systems;
- | to establish a regional resource mobilisation component of the project which would support the country-specific disaster preparedness projects; it would target, for example, suppliers of relief items, international donors, external disaster management expertise, etc.;
- | to establish a Regional Monitoring Committee, composed of management representatives of the National Societies and supported by the Federation, to oversee progress of the project.

Capacity

The five National Societies have the necessary technical insight, experience and managerial capacity to develop and implement programmes. A Disaster Preparedness Delegate will be based in the region, attached to one of the National Societies. The Delegate's main function will be to ensure technical support to the Regional Monitoring Committee and to the country level projects and ensure co-ordination of the programme's regional component.

Co-operation

The ICRC has a Regional Delegation for North African countries based in Tunis, with which the Federation Disaster Preparedness Delegate will co-operate on matters of common interest. UNDP also has a Disaster Management Training Programme underway in the region.