

# UGANDA

## **SUPPORT TO REFUGEES, DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE**

CHF 3,678,000  
40,000 beneficiaries

Programme no 01.13/99

### The Context

Uganda, one of the poorest countries in the world despite significant economic progress, continues to be plagued by man-made and natural disasters. At the last count, three internal conflicts are having a devastating impact on the country and its people. In the North, the Lord's Resistance Army has been active for a decade. In north-western Uganda, the Nile Liberation Front is a destabilising force, while the Allied Democratic Front is fighting the government from bases in the western Rwenzori Mountains and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Meanwhile, the regional conflict in the Great Lakes area and the civil war in Southern Sudan play their part in keeping up tensions in Uganda, not in the least by causing constant population movements across the region.

At the same time, the country is prone to natural disasters such as floods, droughts and earthquakes. Last but not least, the people of Uganda are among the primary victims of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which has affected practically every family in the country.

### The Operation

Against this backdrop, the Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS), assisted by the Federation, runs a refugee relief operation in South-western Uganda. Nakivale and Orukinga refugee camps are now housing approximately 10,000 refugees, 6,000 from Rwanda and 4,000 from Somalia, DRC, Kenya and Ethiopia. The refugees are supported with food, non-food, social services, and water and sanitation projects.

Another important component of Red Cross programmes in Uganda is disaster preparedness and response. The focus will be on prepositioning and management of emergency stocks, support and training of URCS staff and volunteers, and technical support to the government ministries involved in disaster response. A strategic support programme seeks to strengthen five key branches in the South-west in their response capacity to developing disasters, including potential population movements.

## Objectives of the Operation

- Continue to provide care and maintenance programmes for 10,000 refugees in Orukinga and Nakivale camps.
- Continue to support URCS in its capacity to respond to any new refugee influxes in the region or any other emergencies that may arise.
- Strengthen and support strategic branches in South-western Uganda.
- Provide technical support for the URCS institutional and development programmes and fund-raising activities.

## Plan of Action

- Refugee Programme

Provide food and non-food items to 10,000 refugees in Nakivale and Orukinga based on rations established with WFP/UNHCR.

Repair and maintain refugee shelters and existing infrastructure.

Continue to provide essential health care services and safe drinking water to refugees and members of the local communities.

Maintain vector control, solid waste management and latrine construction.

Enhance refugee self-reliance through income-generating activities, education, and community and social services.

- Disaster Preparedness and Response Programme

Strengthen preparedness and response programmes and structures at the national and branch levels and prepare a contingency plan.

Preposition emergency stocks for 30,000 persons and ensure their effective and efficient management.

Train URCS staff, volunteers and the public on disaster prevention, mitigation and identify coping mechanisms; develop appropriate first aid training material and programmes to address daily emergencies and common disasters

Formation and re-activation of Red Cross Action Teams in the strategic branches to effectively respond to disasters in a timely fashion.

Identify the role of URCS in the national disaster preparedness framework; continue active participation in the Government and UN Disaster Preparedness committees at national and

branch levels; establish effective relations with the relevant government ministries and develop agreements where appropriate.

- National Society Support

Provide technical support to the National Society to improve programme management, financial management and logistics systems. Ensure that a framework for co-operation between URCS, Participating National Societies and other bilateral donors is put in place.

Provide Federation support to URCS to increase the professionalism of its fund-raising efforts.

### Resource Planning

As in the past years, the Federation expects UNHCR to fund part of the refugee operation. URCS has established a fund-raising department while actively promoting the National Society and developing a local resource base. The Federation will pursue local funding opportunities with UN agencies, embassies and other humanitarian organisations active in Uganda.

### Capacity

- The National Society

URCS has more than 40 branches and over 700 well-trained, active volunteers with considerable experience in running, among others, relief operations and nation-wide health education campaigns.

- The Federation

The Federation will maintain a four-strong delegation in Kampala, as well as a sub-delegation with two

full-time expatriates in Mbarara in the South-west. Two additional delegates are expected to divide their time between the refugee operation and programme support for URCS. The Regional Delegation in Nairobi will provide technical support.

### Co-operation

URCS, the Federation and the Participating National Societies are expected to sign an agreement defining co-operation in the field by early 1999.

Relations between URCS, the Federation and ICRC will be maintained in the spirit of the 1997 Seville Agreement. The Federation and the ICRC will co-ordinate their support to URCS branches in their respective regions of responsibility. The disaster preparedness and response programmes of the three components of the Movement will be closely linked in both planning and implementation.

Finally, the Federation and URCS have close ties with UNHCR, which has been co-financing the refugee programme for several years.