

SOUTHERN AFRICA

REGIONAL PROGRAMMES

CHF 2,254,000

Programme no 01.18/99

Introduction

The 10 countries covered by the Harare Regional Delegation - Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe - are widely different in wealth and standard of living. Five are in the lowest quartile of the UNDP Human Development Index, while South Africa remains the economic powerhouse of the region. Malawi has the highest child mortality rate in the world. Angola and Mozambique are among the countries with the highest maternal mortality rates. HIV is widespread, with over 20% of the population infected in some countries. Cholera became a killer when it reached epidemic proportions in 1998. The lack of adequate health services, safe water, high unemployment, high population growth rates and the consequence of the continued population drift from rural areas to overcrowded towns are all increasing the vulnerability of the region's population. Drought is one of the region's prevalent disasters. The Regional Disaster Preparedness, Health and Water and Sanitation Programmes reflect the Red Cross priority to combat the impact of drought. Population movements from the Great Lakes Region and Angola constitute another risk. In all, National Societies in the region are assisting 1.5 million beneficiaries. However, they need greater capacity to cope with the widespread needs. One of the tools to achieve this is the CIDA-funded Information Systems Management Programme, which aims at improving information management throughout the region through electronic mail services, volunteer data bases and records management.

Objectives

- To assist National Societies in the prevention and mitigation of major health threats in the region such as HIV/AIDS and cholera through health and water and sanitation intervention programmes.
- To co-ordinate all relief assistance in the region (except Angola) with the National Societies and help reducing the impact of disasters through better management of information and communications systems through disaster preparedness and response programmes.
- To foster growth in the capacity building of National Societies through continued training in good governance, management and reporting, promotion of financial

self-sustainability and expansion of the local human resource base within the region through Basic Training Courses and databases.

- In the spirit of the 1997 Seville Agreement, to expand functional co-operation with ICRC in the region, in order to harmonise activities and ensure maximum use of available resources, resulting in coherence and consistency in working with partner National Societies.

Programmes

Regional Health Programme

- Community Health

The Southern Africa regional health programme has been in place since 1991. After a shift to community-based approaches to prevention and education and a strengthening of the National Societies' health delivery systems, the 1999 programme will focus on technical and geographical support to National Societies. A major objective is to draw up a new three-year regional health programme during 1999.

Specifically, the programme aims at strengthening activities to reduce HIV/AIDS transmission risks in Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa, which have been particularly AIDS-prone. In the same countries, the programme calls for reinforcing sustainable home-based care activities for the terminally ill, as well as community-based orphan support.

Meanwhile, the regional delegation will work with selected National Societies to strengthen their capacity to combat water and sanitation related diseases, and to develop and implement community training in the prevention and treatment of diseases such as diarrhoea. The goodwill generated by the construction of water supply points will be used to introduce other preventive education activities, including HIV/AIDS control, safe motherhood, and nutritional issues.

In 1999, the regional delegation will provide technical assistance to bilateral co-operation projects, promote networking among National Societies and participate in planned reviews and evaluations. It will serve as a focal point for the assessment of and response to epidemics, especially cholera and meningitis. Also, community-based first aid components will be integrated into both the capacity building and disaster preparedness and response programmes.

Plan of Action

- Encourage community mobilisation for personal hygiene and safe water handling to prevent diarrhoea and other water-related diseases.
- Promote integration of community health into local communities in Malawi, Namibia, Mozambique and Zambia, closely linked to the construction of new latrines and water supply points under the water and sanitation programme.

- Assist National Societies with training in initial data gathering and interpretation.
- Undertake technical support missions on health baseline assessment, project development, monitoring and evaluation.
- Water and Sanitation

Lack of access to safe water supplies, as well as inadequate sanitation and hygiene practices are among the leading causes of illness and death Southern Africa. Among children under five alone, 35% of the mortality is attributed to lack of water and sanitation facilities. In addition, people in the region are threatened by cyclical droughts. The water and sanitation programme seeks to provide vulnerable populations with access to safe water, and to promote community-based training in maintaining water sources and equipment.

In 1999, the programme will provide technical advice and support to National Societies. The regional delegation seeks to improve regional disaster response capacity by keeping an updated list of trained water and sanitation staff within each National Society. An annual workshop and field exercise will be held to maintain and build a stronger human disaster response capacity. In the same vein, the regional exchange of personnel will be promoted to share best practices and experience. A mid-term programme review is planned for 1999, with the final evaluation foreseen in 2000.

Plan of Action

- Lesotho: continuation of the drought mitigation programme, focusing mainly on community-based development of sources of drinking water.
- Malawi: rehabilitation of 24 water supply points for 12,000 beneficiaries.
- Namibia: finishing 140 water supply points for 10,000 beneficiaries, linked to the existing health education programme.
- Swaziland: continuation of the drought mitigation programme, focusing on small-scale irrigation projects managed by the community.
- Zambia: continuation of a project involving 25 boreholes for providing safe water to 7,500 potential drought victims in the Southern Province.
- Extension of technical advice and support to Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

- Strong integration with the community-based health programme, with an emphasis on training and skills development at the National Society level.
- Further development and expansion of the Regional Resource Data Base, with special attention to the deployment of regionally-recruited human resources.

Disaster Preparedness and Response

Although the regional disaster preparedness programme (DPP) has been in place since 1985, emergency response capacity is still in need of improvement. Skill training curricula must be developed. Better use of communications technology and training of National Society personnel will bolster the effectiveness of the programme. The DPP is closely linked with the regional community health, water and sanitation, and capacity building programmes.

The 1999 objectives of DPP are to establish clear National Society priorities leading to effective disaster preparedness policies and plans; to enhance staff and volunteer skills in the design, management and implementation of preparedness policies and plans through country-based training; to strengthen disaster management information systems, including the establishment of early warning and resource data bases; and to establish reserve stocks of frequently needed emergency response items and their strategic placement throughout the region.

Plan of Action

- Lesotho: assist to establish a community-based early warning system.
 - Malawi: advise on curriculum development, provide skills training and plan for material and other support in preparation of the 1999 elections.
 - South Africa: undertake needs assessment, provide skills training, support drought mitigation project design and implementation (integrating branch development), as well as support Red Cross efforts in preparation of the 1999 country elections.
 - Zambia: help the National Society to draw up a disaster preparedness plan, including activities for preparation of potential influx of refugees from the neighbouring countries; advise on curriculum development, provide skills training of volunteers.
 - Provide emergency relief and medical stocks such as cholera kits to be readily available for quick delivery when needs arise
- Institutional and Resource Development

Capacity building remains a key element in the improvement of Red Cross services in the region. Projects started in 1998 in Botswana, Malawi, Swaziland and Zimbabwe have seen

considerable progress. The experience gained will be shared through the Regional Delegation, as well as through regional focus groups and personnel exchanges. Branch development will be an important part of the programme. For 1999, the programme envisions to strengthen National Society governance, leadership and management capacity at both headquarters and branch levels and to build a stronger volunteer base; to work with National Societies in the development and adaptation of their institutional structures, systems and procedures to strengthen their capacity to provide services to the community; and to support National Societies in their efforts to broaden their resource bases and increase their levels of sustainable income from domestic sources.

Plan of Action

- Botswana: establish standards for branch capacity and performance. The goal is to increase the number of branches from 14 to 19 in 1999 and to double the 1997 membership. Design and test tools for introductory courses on branch and national level governance. Establish a medium-term strategic plan for presentation to the 1999 Annual General Meeting. Initiate an income-generating plan and establish a fund-raising committee.
- Malawi: set formal standards for branch capacity and performance (integrating activities including disaster preparedness and water and sanitation). Assist in the further development of a medium-term strategic plan for presentation to the 1999 Annual General Meeting. Review financial management systems and introduce new accounting software. A medium-term resource generation plan is to be drawn up, aiming at doubling the 1998 domestic income in 1999.
- Swaziland: continue to assist, monitor and report on implementation of pilot resource generation project.
- Zimbabwe: set governance standards at branch and national level; define and codify governance and management roles at the district, provincial and national levels. A self-assessment by the National Society will be supported with a view to clarify its vision and mission, as well as to agree on a medium-term strategic plan in 2000.
- Follow-up to assessment in South Africa as necessary and support for developing financial management in National Societies in the region.

The Regional Delegation

It is foreseen that in 1999, the Harare delegation will consist of seven delegates.