

SOUTH EAST ASIA

REGIONAL PROGRAMMES

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Introduction

The Regional Delegation covers the following countries#: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. The Regional Information Programme also covers the countries in the Pacific region.

The collapse of financial institutions in Thailand in the second half of 1997 triggered an economic crisis in Asia which has since taken on global dimensions. After epitomizing unprecedented growth and steady social improvements, albeit with significant exceptions, the region saw the contraction of most of its economies in 1998. In the wake of the economic crisis, very significant gains in human development now risk being lost. People are losing their income as whole sectors of the economy shut down, and prices of food and other daily necessities are soaring. Governments can no longer maintain public health and social services, children are dropping out of school and the ill-health of poverty is reappearing. As usual, people who are already marginalised are most at risk.

Increasing social and political instability in the region is compounding the effects of natural disasters. In several countries, the crisis has inflamed ethnic tensions and xenophobia. This interaction between natural and man-made phenomena creates a highly complex pattern of vulnerability, which cannot be addressed in a standardised or uniform way. It constitutes a significant challenge to humanitarian actors such as the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

Besides undermining the concept of the Asian miracle, the impact of the crisis in different countries has underscored the very significant political, cultural and economic diversity in the region. Among the countries covered by the Regional Delegation, Singapore, Brunei, Thailand and Malaysia are found in the high segment of UNDP's Human Development Index, the Philippines, Indonesia and Vietnam in the medium segment, while Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia are among the least developed in the world in terms of life expectancy, literacy, school enrolment and per capita income. It should be noted, however, that the HDI ratings published in September 1998 have not yet registered the effects of the economic crisis.

In addition to diversity in human development, the region's countries differ greatly in terms of system of government, so that the auxiliary role of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is given different meaning in different countries.

In view of the diversity in the region, and its limited resources, the Regional Delegation is looking for ways of tailoring its assistance to specific needs and circumstances. The Delegation and its different programmes now work very closely with Country Delegations in countries prioritised for support because of their level of vulnerability. This means that Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Indonesia and to some extent Myanmar will receive co-ordinated assistance in the fields of institutional development, information and disaster preparedness in 1999, while components of the health programme will have a similar country focus. In order to ensure effective support in some of the listed priority countries, Country Delegations will also strengthen their role in co-ordinating bilateral and Federation support to the National Societies.

In conclusion, in a setting of reduced government and corporate funding, the millions of people exposed to drastically deteriorating standards of living constitute a new and daunting challenge for National Societies and the Federation. "Improving the situation of the most vulnerable" in 1999 will have very real meaning in countries that have seen a disastrous reversal of human development in 1997 and 1998.

Objectives

In the interests of continuity and consistency, the three main objectives of the Regional Delegation have been only marginally revised compared with 1998:

- To promote the mobilisation of the region's human, material and financial resources for a common humanitarian purpose.

The focus in 1999 will be on broadening regional participation in joint tasks. Regional recruitment of delegates will be given prominence, while the exchange of National Society staff and volunteers will be facilitated through a special programme. Efforts to mobilise institutional and corporate funding in the region with a focus on the social impact of the economic crisis will be intensified. More pronounced Red Cross Red Crescent advocacy will be sought in regional bodies.

- To assist National Societies in upgrading ongoing activities and developing new activities.

Important new initiatives in 1999 will be a water and sanitation programme with a combined public health and disaster preparedness focus, a wider approach to HIV/AIDS including the issue of discrimination, an effort to base learning for disaster preparedness more firmly on real-life, in-country experiences, and the promotion of the Millennium Campaign. The quality of support for organisational development will be improved through the addition of an Institutional Development Delegate.

- To maintain a high response capacity.

This continues to be an overriding and permanent task for the Regional Delegation. In 1999, the regional capacity to carry out this role will be strengthened by providing "on the job" assessment training to National Society staff.

Programmes

- Disaster Preparedness and Response

This programme aims to establish new skills for effective National Society disaster prevention, mitigation and response; achieve increased Red Cross and Red Crescent impact on disaster preparedness policies and practice through advocacy in regional fora and networking with other organisations; and promote harmonisation of National Society activities for stronger disaster preparedness.

Programme activities in 1998 concentrated on advisory services to National Societies and Country Delegations. In part as the result of discussions at a regional workshop, and a more general assessment of the limited impact of regional disaster preparedness initiatives, a slightly different approach will be used in 1999. Its starting point will be the great diversity in vulnerability patterns between and within countries in the region, compounded by interaction between natural disasters and local social, political and economic factors. Regional disaster preparedness will have an in-country focus, with the regional component providing opportunities for exchange of experience and learning.

Opportunities for human resource development corresponding to specific National Society needs will be sought within ongoing projects, not necessarily conducted by the Red Cross and Red Crescent. Focus will be more precise in terms of topics, e.g. learning of vulnerability and capacity assessment techniques should be tailored to carefully selected environments. "On the job training" in emergency assessment will be provided. Sub-regional or even smaller gatherings will be tried. In addition, a stronger advocacy and networking role will be sought in regional bodies and with other organisations. The Institutional Development Programme will play an important role in promoting a more holistic organisational and programme approach to disaster preparedness.

- Health

The health programme is divided into five sub-programmes.

Capacity Building in Health Programme Management

The programme aims to provide human resources in National Societies with adequate skills training in health management and technical fields; establish a network for information sharing and exchange amongst National Societies and between National Societies and the Regional Delegation and Country Delegations; and promote the effective use of existing human resources through mapping of expertise.

The social and health impact of the economic crisis is causing great concern. Improvements in critical areas such as maternal and child health, very recent in some countries, could be wiped out. The need for National Societies to identify new health trends and plan and implement activities has increased dramatically, as governments fail to maintain basic health services. Blood services and the prevention of HIV transfer from mother to child are typical areas of Red Cross Red Crescent concern suffering from funding cuts. The worst outbreaks for years of dengue fever in 1998 in several countries, the worrying spread of drug-resistant malaria and bouts of cholera in the region have added to the burden on National Societies.

In the Strategic Health Planning Workshop held in Beijing in April 1998, National Societies mandated the Regional Delegation to provide support for capacity building. Skills identified as of particular importance are planning, implementation and evaluation of health activities. Specific needs, such as vulnerability and capacity assessment, will be met through specialised training opportunities in close co-ordination with the disaster preparedness programme. Special efforts will be made to promote the exchange of experience between National Societies and to mobilise in-country expertise. A regional newsletter will strengthen networking between National Society health professionals.

Health Information System

The programme will provide a system for on-going health data collection, analysis and dissemination and a support system for assessment and evaluation.

Continuous surveillance of health trends is necessary for early warning of impending health threats and action by the Red Cross and Red Crescent. The Regional Delegation, which now has the basic capacity for surveillance and analysis, managed to predict the dengue trend in mid-98, and so was well prepared for the severe outbreak in Cambodia, which led to an emergency operation.

By following and analysing health trends, disseminating information and providing training to National Societies and other bodies, the Regional Delegation will contribute to a greater response capacity in 1999. National Society staff will also be provided with the opportunity for "on the job" emergency assessment training (see also Capacity Building and the Disaster Preparedness Programme).

Community Based First Aid

The programme aims to achieve improved quality of National Society first aid programmes; establish a network for information sharing and exchange in first aid among and between National Societies, the Regional Delegation and Country Delegations; and ensure the effective use of available expertise in Community Based First Aid in the region.

First aid is at the root of the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement. It is a low cost, simple tool for vulnerability reduction, providing people with coping skills to help them prevent and respond to common threats to their health on a daily basis as well as during crisis. In areas and situations where primary health care is not available or affordable, the Community Based First Aid (CBFA) package offers basic prevention of ill-health, giving it a poverty focus.

The Regional Community Based First Aid workshop in Nepal in February 1998 defined ways of improving first aid programmes in National Societies and noted great diversity in quality and relevance. In 1999, the programme will address current weaknesses by introducing training and evaluation standards for National Societies. Networking for more effective exchange of experience will be facilitated, while expertise available within and outside National Societies will be identified and mobilised for programme development.

Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS

The development of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the region is a cause of great concern. In Cambodia, almost 50% of sex workers test positive, and the situation in Myanmar and southern China is almost as serious. In late 1998 the core networking activities of the Asian

Red Cross Red Crescent Aids Task Force (ART), with its focus on prevention through youth peer education, will be evaluated. Although the ART secretariat moved to the Philippines National Red Cross in early 1998, the Delegation will continue its HIV/AIDS-related activities with a wider perspective. Besides continuing support, including fund-raising, for ART, which has its own plan and objectives, the Delegation will focus on the collection and analysis of STD data. This will be used to assist National Societies and Country Delegations in designing appropriate strategies and action in co-ordination with other in-country and regional actors. A new element will focus on human rights and gender aspects of the HIV/AIDS epidemics.

Water and Sanitation

The programme aims to establish a regional water and sanitation strategy; a network for information sharing and a human resource data bank. It will provide technical support to National Societies and Country Delegations.

This new regional initiative is being taken because a very large part of the region's population is at risk from diseases caused by contaminated water; at the same time the safeguarding of water supplies is a critical factor in many emergency operations. National Societies in the region have expressed an interest in training in emergencies, while others may include a water and sanitation approach in their PHC or CBFA programmes. The regional water and sanitation programme will start in late 1998 with an inventory of water and sanitation activities in the region, and will be followed up in a strategy workshop.

- Information

The programme seeks to empower National Societies by helping them to strengthen their information and fund-raising units; to advocate Red Cross and Red Crescent principles; and to mobilise support for Red Cross and Red Crescent work with the most vulnerable.

In the current economic, social and political climate in the region it is vital that the Red Cross and Red Crescent are seen to represent basic humanitarian values and action. Image-building is a vital element of institutional development and will contribute to mobilisation of resources as well as to realising the mandate of reaching out to the most vulnerable.

The programme will continue along its three well-established paths in 1999. Support to develop information activities will be given to four prioritised National Societies in coordination with Country Delegations – Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam and Indonesia, the latter in close collaboration with ICRC. Publications and the regional website will be complemented with media updates during emergencies. Emergency response capacity will be further developed by upgrading the Unit's technical equipment. The Millennium Campaign will constitute a framework for many of the Regional Delegation's information activities as well as for support to National Societies.

- Institutional Development

The objective of this key programme is the initiation of institutional change and development in selected National Societies. The strategy chosen is to use opportunities where institutional change is desired and already underway. With the appointment of an Institutional

Development Delegate, it has been possible to define a clear role for regional support to the Societies of Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos and Vietnam. Programme focus will be on human resource development, leadership induction and training, guidance on governance (using peer educators) and resource development, including intensifying contacts with potential institutional and corporate donors in the region.

The Institutional Development Programme will also manage a fund for exchange visits for staff and volunteers between National Societies (to be used within all programme sectors), ensure good development practice in other regional programmes and facilitate advanced training for National Society staff and delegates.

Complementing the formal ID programme, the Regional Finance Unit will continue to support the financial management of National Societies, which is also an appropriate entry point for institutional change.

- Strategic Planning

This programme continues to be the flexible framework within which the needs for change of direction of ongoing Red Cross Red Crescent programmes are identified, and where new humanitarian concerns and emergencies are discovered and planned for. The Regional Red Cross and Red Crescent Conference in November 1998 identified issues requiring follow-up within this and other regional programmes.

The programme provides resources for unscheduled assessment and fact-finding missions, and for meetings with National Societies where there is no Federation delegation. This is also where contacts and representation in regional bodies are budgeted.

In 1999, in addition to regular planning events and representational duties, a roundtable meeting for National Societies on humanitarian consequences of legal and illegal migration will be organised and funded jointly with the ICRC's Regional Delegation in Jakarta.

An important regional strategic task in 1999 will be to prepare for the 27th International Conference. Together with ICRC delegations, the Regional Delegation will actively sensitize National Societies and Governments to the preparation process and help publicise the Conference's objectives and its importance for the Movement.

Delegation Capacity

The number of delegates and national staff will remain the same as in late 1998, i.e. six delegates and twelve national staff. A vehicle purchase postponed in 1998 due to funding constraints will be made in 1999. Strategic Planning is budgeted under Delegation Management.

Cambodia

Objectives of the Operation

- To strengthen the capacity of the Cambodian Red Cross (CRC) through headquarters and branch support in the areas of management (including human resources), governance, fund-raising and public relations.

- To improve health conditions for specific rural and urban communities through support to the CRC CBFA programme.
- To minimise the impact of disasters and to strengthen response measures, through support to the CRC Disaster Preparedness programme.

Institutional Development (ID)

The 1998 General Assembly of the CRC and the adoption of a three-year development plan opened the door to expanded development efforts; emphasis in 1999 will, therefore, be on sustainability and the harnessing of resources. The co-ordination of external international support (largely PNSs), ensuring assistance is both integrated and is in line with the CRC's development plan, will continue to be central to development co-operation in Cambodia.

Key ID activities will include the establishment of a human resource development programme, the development of policy on the roles and functions of governance and management (through provincial assemblies, training workshops) and the strengthening of the finance department (clear budgeting procedures, holding an external and internal audit; defining and documenting fund allocation policy; and the evaluation of assets and stocks).

Support to the CRC information programme will help to facilitate an increase in awareness of the CRC, greater respect for the emblem and access to local donors. CRC Youth programmes (through an existing school scheme) will be further expanded in 1999.

Community Based First Aid

The CBFA programme aims to develop awareness and increase the use of preventive health care practices, including MCH care, immunisation, sanitation, use of clean water, improved nutrition, land-mine awareness and first aid, amongst 10% of women with families in targeted communities.

Disaster Preparedness and Response

Ongoing and future plans focus on capacity building in Community Based Disaster Preparedness and Community Based Flood Mitigation. Important activities include: clarification of CRC's roles and responsibilities with regard to national disaster management structures; development of a CRC Disaster Preparedness plan, policy, strategies and materials; further development of training courses for CRC staff and volunteers; and the strengthening of CRC's capacity to help RCVs in assisting local communities design and implement strategies to mitigate the effects of flooding.

Indonesia

Objectives

- To assist and provide guidance to the Indonesian Red Cross in strengthening its management and programmes.

- To enhance disaster preparedness and response capacity and establish a way of monitoring and evaluating the impact of the deepening economic crisis.
- To meet some of the needs of the Irian Jaya population by upgrading 10 branches and the provincial chapter.
- To strengthen the Society's information unit, in order to improve its advocacy role, its relationship with media and international organisations and its potential to generate funds.

Institutional Development

While these activities are still being formulated, the essence of the support will draw on RD Kuala Lumpur expertise, to make technical advice on governance and management readily available. Specific training in institutional change as well as the roles and responsibilities of management and governance will be provided. Developing the Society's relations with international donors will also be a key role of the delegation.

Disaster Preparedness and Response

Rescue and emergency equipment will be provided to six chapters and to 50 branches. This will be complemented by six ToT workshops (190 trainers) for disaster management training in 19 chapters. In light of the size of the country and the current economic crisis, additional training in the collection and verification of data will be provided. This will facilitate an early response to a further deterioration of conditions and will enable a more effective use of the network of 27 provincial chapters and 308 branches.

Branch Development - Irian Jaya

Development activities in Irian Jaya are supported by ICRC; they will include the further identification and training of governing members, recruiting of one staff per chapter, training of staff in blood activities, needs assessment, and the development of an information and fund-raising strategy. Additionally a youth programme will be developed and management training given. Further opportunities for branch development in Sumatra, Sulawesi or Java will be studied.

Information

The National Society will draw up detailed communications plans, including plans for fund-raising through the Millennium Campaign. Headquarters and five selected branches will receive computer equipment and Internet access, allowing information officers to work more effectively, communicate with each other and with other members of the Movement at a low cost and to access the World Wide Web. The Society will have a website which will be updated regularly.

Laos

Objectives of the Operation

- To develop the operational capacity of the Lao Red Cross (LRC) through institutional support as well as through a strong role in co-ordination of external PNS assistance.
- To develop branch capacity through technical support and the co-ordination and consolidation of the existing branch development programme.
- To strengthen the services provided by LRC by supporting ongoing and developing programmes in disaster preparedness, blood, health, fund-raising and gender programmes.

Institutional Development

The plan will utilise existing and external resources (Regional Delegation) and will include a review of the statutes, two institutional development workshops, the production of 'guidelines' for branches, exchange visits and language and skills training. Human resource development will also be a key theme. The lessons learnt from the 1998 evaluation as well as from the 1997/98 audit have provided a basis for 1999 planning.

As 'architect for co-operation', the Federation will ensure that external support matches the needs and capacity of LRC. Tripartite meetings will be continued and the overall institutional development role of the Federation further developed. A development plan outlining a development co-operation strategy will be drafted.

Branch Development

To ensure common strategies and standards, and avoid branch development outstripping headquarters development, trilateral meetings will be supplemented by countrywide management training, exchange visits and development workshops. Steps to improve linkages between branches will also be taken.

Support to Programmes

A national workshop, three provincial workshops and the development of a handbook will be the main disaster preparedness activities. Work will also continue with the National Disaster Management Office on the formulation of a national disaster management strategy. Each of the 12 provinces will map their disaster profile and the three DP centres will be more fully utilised.

Complementing bilateral initiatives, steps will be taken to consolidate the range of health activities, chiefly through a national health 'priority setting' workshop plus an externally supported review (MoH and UNICEF). CBFA will be further promoted as a core activity. The blood programme (nine year plan) will concentrate on blood donor mobilisation.

Revenue generation will focus on drawing together provincial experience (rice banks, poultry farming, etc.) and strengthening the women's small scale projects programme.

Myanmar

Objectives

- To continue facilitating the change processes that will strengthen the operational capacity and image of Myanmar Red Cross.
- To improve the quality and coverage of basic health care, through support to a CBFA programme targeting marginal rural populations.
- To develop an integrated approach to addressing the medium to long term needs of 18,000 vulnerable families in three districts of Rakhine State.

Institutional Development

After the January 1999 General Assembly, high level technical support (including a joint ICRC/Federation workshop) will be provided to ensure that key individuals have a sound knowledge of management and governance practice. The operational capacity will be assessed, roles and job descriptions will be reviewed and six general, financial and project management workshops will be held. While computer and English language training will be continued, two new training workshops in resource development will be offered. Linkages with ICRC supported health programmes will also be strengthened.

Community Based First Aid

Less than adequate rural health services mean that people must be equipped with the knowledge and skills to meet the bulk of their own basic health needs. The CBFA programme, ongoing since 1996, will focus on more remote States/Divisions and will target community volunteers and Red Cross brigade members for training. Refresher training will be offered to 30 core trainers and six further ToT courses will be held for 180 people in six States. While materials will be produced and 1,000 FA kits distributed, emphasis in 1999 will be on an assessment measuring the impact of the training on the rural population.

Integrated Programme - Rakhine State

A three year community based programme in three districts (18,000 families in 900 villages), building on the UNHCR supported returnee operation, will focus on CBFA and Disaster Preparedness for returnees and residents. It will provide health education, construct 18,000 pit latrines and implement practical disaster preparedness measures to mitigate the impact of cyclones and floods. This programme, which will also develop MRCS branch capacity, will serve as a model for integrated approaches in both Myanmar and the sub-region.

Vietnam

Objectives of the Operation

- To strengthen VNRC operational capacity through developing management at headquarters and at branch level.
- To enhance health and social welfare services at the community level through an integrated CBFA and social work outreach programme.

- To mitigate the impact of disasters and to enhance response, through the consolidation of the VNRC disaster preparedness programme.
- To increase efficiency of VNRC services through integrating social work, CBFA and disaster preparedness programmes, through a common training strategy.

Institutional Development (ID)

Consolidation, ownership and partnership are central themes for 1999 in Vietnam. This will involve a review of the VNRC 2000 programme leading to concrete steps in developing management, structural issues (such as linkages with branches and co-ordination of donors) and resources (particularly emphasising human resource development and consolidating training capacities). Financial management and planning will also be addressed. Branch development programmes in six provinces of the central region, the two northern provinces and one central highland province will continue; further possibilities in the Mekong Delta provinces will be studied.

CBFA & Social Work

The existing CBFA and SW training programmes will be continued; emphasis will be on integration and developing home based care. Assistance to the VNRC Agent Orange programme will focus on supporting the development of the Fund, programme definition, establishment of fund management systems and support in promotion and fund-raising. VNRC micro projects targeting specific needs will also be supported (e.g. a school for the deaf).

Disaster Preparedness (DP)

Following on from recent disasters, activities will strengthen the network of DP centres, continue a UNDP supported school education programme and further develop flood mitigation through mangrove planting projects in six provinces. Consolidation and integrated training (using regional skills) will be fundamental to a strong national programme.

Training Capacity Development

Training currently provided under the three key programmes of disaster preparedness, social work and CBFA and training in PHC and HIV/AIDS will be integrated into a single training package for grass roots programming.