

IRAN

REHABILITATION, DISASTER RESPONSE CAPACITY

CHF 193,000

Programme no 01.53/99

The Context

Iran is located in one of the most disaster prone areas in the world. It has suffered several major disasters in the last decade, including floods and powerful earthquakes in 1990, 1996 and 1997 that caused serious damage to the infrastructure of the affected areas.

Besides natural disasters, Iran has also felt the effects of crises in neighbouring countries: in the past 20 years it has received the largest number of refugees in the world. Today, it is host to some three million refugees, mainly from Afghanistan and Iraq, who are receiving assistance from various governmental and non-governmental institutions.

This large displaced population and the growing number of natural disasters make it essential to reinforce the relief management capacity of the National Society - which is Iran's main relief organisation. Specifically, increased capacity will assist the National Society in its supervision of a number of rehabilitation and reconstruction projects, co-ordinated by the Federation, that are being financed by donor Societies in affected areas after the earthquake in the eastern province of Khorasan in May 1997.

The Operation

In terms of disaster preparedness and relief, the Iranian Red Crescent has gained valuable experience from the many relief operations it has undertaken. To co-operate with the Society in developing new operational standards and expertise, a series of Workshops on disaster preparedness and relief will be held for its relief staff. A Federation office will be established in Tehran to facilitate co-ordination of the Khorasan projects and to expand co-operation in favour of vulnerable people at both national and regional levels.

Objectives of the Operation

- To provide the most vulnerable people in the earthquake affected areas in Khorasan with health care, educational facilities and relief stores
- To strengthen local disaster relief capacity by providing disaster relief and preparedness training
- To support the standardisation of Iranian Red Crescent disaster relief management.
Plan of Action
- Co-ordination of Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Projects/ Federation Office in Tehran

The Federation assisted the Iranian Red Crescent with the large-scale disaster relief operations that followed the three major earthquakes in 1997. After the third and largest earthquake in May 1997 in the Khorasan region, a group of National Societies, meeting under the auspices of the Federation and the IRCS, presented a plan of action to rehabilitate some of the infrastructure destroyed by the earthquake. In February 1998 the consortium made a selection of projects with the IRCS, mainly involving the reconstruction of orphanage dormitories, school and health facilities, and two logistics bases.

It has been agreed that a more permanent Federation presence is needed in Iran order to follow this reconstruction work and to organise a series of training workshops (see below). A Representative will be designated by end 1998 or early 1999, to be based for one year in Tehran.

- Environmental Health and Disaster Preparedness Workshops

This programme will provide for a series of workshops on environmental health and disaster preparedness, introducing some of the Secretariat's standard procedures, in order to strengthen co-ordination between the Federation and the IRCS during emergencies. The project also includes the recruitment of a Staff-on-Loan (Officer level) to work in the Secretariat to support this programme for a one year period.

Resource Planning

The rehabilitation and reconstruction programme in the earthquake affected area of Khorasan is funded by eight PNSs in co-ordination with the Federation.

The Federation will provide the human and material resources for both the Federation office and for the Disaster Preparedness Workshop in Tehran.

Capacity

- The Operating National Society

The Iranian Red Crescent Society is one of the strongest National Societies in the world in terms of disaster relief. It provides services throughout the country through its 280 branches at

local, provincial and regional levels. In recent years it has trained and organised 400,000 volunteers who are an important resource for its relief operations. The Society has also been very active in providing assistance to refugees and IDPs. It undertook assistance programmes for hundreds of thousands of Iraqi Kurd refugees in 1991 and for Azeri displaced people in 1993 and 1994, in co-operation with the Federation. The Society's services for the vulnerable are not limited to disaster relief; they also include various medical and social services.

Co-operation

The Federation and the National Society have well-established and long-standing co-ordination measures in times of disaster. They will develop together the future direction of such co-operation for disaster preparedness and relief and training.