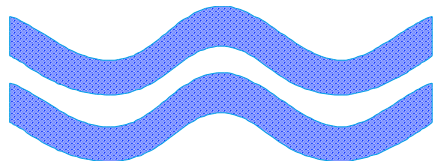


BRITISH RED CROSS SOCIETY

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PROGRAMME 2001 – 2002 REVIEW

**DPR of KOREA
NATIONAL RED CROSS SOCIETY**

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Disaster Preparedness and Response department within the DPRK-Red Cross National Society was formed in 1998 and has received support from the IFRC since 1999. In late 2000 the British Red Cross Society participated in a review of the existing DP/DR programme and assisted in developing a two year work plan, which sought to address key areas in capacity building and training amongst others. Following this review a proposal was developed and funding was secured from the UK government's Department for International Development of £200,000 to support DP/DR activities over a two-year period from 2001 to 2002. In early 2002 further financing was provided by DFID, bringing the total funding for the programme to just under £327,300 (or approximately Chf 802,767) over two years.

The overall goal of the BRCS-supported DP/DR programme is to minimise the impact of natural disasters on vulnerable populations of the country. This goal is to be achieved through four specific objectives: improving systems and structures underpinning the National Society capacity to respond to natural disasters, human resource development, community level interventions to reduce vulnerability, and development of a regional system of pre-positioning of key relief items. The BRCS support is now nearing the end of the intended two-year period. Therefore, an independent consultant was contracted to carry out an assessment of the progress and impact of the programme and to make recommendations for future scope and direction of activities. He visited the DPRK from 10 to 17 of September, together with a regional IFRC Delegate based in Beijing.

Summary Conclusions

In overall terms the review team considers that in the last two years the DP/DR programme has made a significant contribution to the capacity of the DPRK-Red Cross National Society to respond to disaster events. The programme has been successful in defining a clear role for the Red Cross in preparedness and response, which is both acknowledged and appreciated by the government and the main international humanitarian actors in the country. The RC is now considered to be the leading agency in this field, concentrating on clearly defined competencies, including search and rescue, first aid and non-food aid assistance, all of which complement the role of government authorities during a disaster response.

The review team considers that the objectives and activities of the DP/DR programme are generally appropriate and well designed in terms of achieving the stated programme goal, with the exception of one or two sub-activities. However, the team does have some concerns about the direct application of community-based approaches in the context of the DPRK, without a better understanding of how they may need to be modified to allow for country-specific conditions. In broad terms, the team concludes that there has been an effective use of resources and that activities have been carried out in a reasonably efficient manner, given the operational constraints.

In quantitative terms, not all of the stated targets have been met in the work plans covering the two-year period and in some areas there has been very slow or no progress at all. This situation is reflected by the fact that there is a still significant

under-spend in the overall budget. Given these constraints the team considers that the targets set in the first two years have been overly ambitious and that the pace of implementation has not been realistic or sustainable. In spite of these short-comings in meeting output targets, the team still considers that much hard work has been done and that the open and generally productive working relationship between the IFRC and the National Society has been vital to the progress made to date.

Future Direction for the Programme

There is no doubt that the DP/DR programme is on the right track and that the main objectives will remain relevant and appropriate for the near future, with only some further refinement of certain activities. Progress has been made on a number of important issues; however, there is now the need to consolidate these achievements and to make sure that the momentum generated by capacity building and training activities is not lost. A number of important challenges and constraints remain, such as staffing, the need to learn from what has been already achieved (particularly for community level interventions) and to improve the sharing of information between the National Society and the IFRC. The detailed recommendations included in the body of this report seek to address these issues and concerns.

Lastly, the review team considers that it would now be an opportune moment to capture much of what has been achieved and learnt and to bring this together in the form of an over-arching disaster preparedness and response strategy. This topic was flagged during the BRCS mission in late 2000, but little progress has been made since then. In part this may have been because the department itself has been growing and learning at such a fast pace. It would seem that many pieces of the puzzle are now in place and that staff at all levels have had a good deal of direct, practical experience in DP/DR issues in the last two years.

Summary of Recommendations

The recommendations presented below are intended to address the most important issues and constraints facing the DP/DR programme in the coming year; more detailed recommendations, including reference to specific activities, are included in the main body of the report.

- Continue with all four main objectives during the next year of programming, but with a much greater emphasis on improving systems and capacity at provincial and branch levels, in order to complement the work already carried out at national level.
- Revise and reduce the targets for activities within each of the main objectives to more realistic and achievable levels, taking into account the workload and staffing constraints of both the IFRC delegation and the National Society.
- Concentrate on a process of consolidation and refinement of the main initiatives developed over the first two years of the programme. To achieve this a systematic follow-up and monitoring plan needs to be put into place, including practical and measurable indicators, to assess the impact of the various

programme components at provincial, county/city and *ri* levels. However, care must be taken to avoid making this system overly complex or burdensome.

- For next year carry out a concentrated programme of support to the key province of South Pyongan to ensure proper follow-up, monitoring and lesson-learning across all main objectives. Additional, but less intensive, follow-up should be given to North Pyongan, Jagang and Kaesong provinces. The warehousing and stockpiling activities should continue at national level for all accessible counties and provinces. The BRSC-supported programme should not expand any further during 2003/2004 in geographical terms.
- Improve the communication and transparency in relations between the National Society and IFRC on the issue of information sharing and reporting on *all* training and capacity-building activities, irrespective of funding source. Where problems in information sharing are due to systemic weaknesses in the National Society, these should be addressed in a comprehensive manner through the IFRC Organisational Development programme.
- Continue to engage with the government's Flood and Disaster Relief Committee both at national and provincial levels, but at the same time, strive to maintain the operational independence currently enjoyed by the National Society.
- In reviewing and refining training materials, particular attention should be paid to providing simple, clear and focused messages that can be readily put into practice by both RC staff and community members.
- Greater efforts should be made with regard to community-level interventions (such as the CBDP pilot project) to learn more about indigenous structures and mechanisms. Lessons learnt should be used in finalising the design of such interventions and modifying "off the shelf" approaches in order to make them more applicable to the DPRK context.
- The National Society should be encouraged to address the issue of staffing, which has constrained progress in some areas, by ensuring that there are at least three full time desk officers at all times in the DP/DR department to manage both IFRC-supported and regular National Society programme activities.
- Continuing efforts should be made to integrate DP/DR components and activities with other, on-going, IFRC initiatives, particularly the Community-based First Aid and Water and Sanitation programmes.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION TO THE REVIEW

Introduction to the BRCS-Supported Programme in DPRK

The Disaster Preparedness and Response (DP/DR) department within the DPRK-Red Cross National Society was formed in 1998 and has received support from the IFRC since 1999. In late 2000 the British Red Cross Society (BRCS) participated in a review of the DP/DR programme and assisted in developing a two year work plan, which sought to address key areas in capacity building and training, amongst others. Following this review a proposal was developed and funding was secured from the UK government's Department for International Development (DFID) of £200,000 to support DP/DR activities over a two year period from 2001 to 2002. In early 2002 further financing was provided by DFID, channelled through the BRSC, bringing the total funding for the programme to just under £327,300 (or approximately Chf 802,767) over the two years.

Background to the Review

In its role as funding support agency, the BRCS recognised the need to assess the programme and incorporated this into the planning for 2002. This document presents the findings of a review visit that was designed to look at the impact of the activities implemented since January 2001 and to make recommendations with regard to future development of the programme.

In order to carry out an objective assessment of the programme the BRCS contracted an independent consultant who visited the DPRK from 10 to 17 of September, together with the regional Disaster Relief and Preparedness Delegate who is based in Beijing. Whilst these two external people formed the core review team, and had final responsibility for drawing conclusions regarding the programme, they worked closely with key resource people including the IFRC Disaster Preparedness Delegate in DPRK and his National Society counterparts in the DP/DR department.

This review was not designed to be a formal evaluation of the programme in the DPRK, but rather a rapid assessment, aimed at having a positive impact by highlighting strengths and weaknesses and identifying key constraints. In addition the review team was tasked with assessing the relevance and appropriateness of programme activities and to draw lessons in order to contribute practical recommendations for the future scope and focus of the programme.

Review Process and Methodology

This review was constrained by the very short duration in country, the unique working conditions of the DPRK and the time required to carry out field visits. Therefore, the review cannot be considered as being entirely comprehensive, although every effort was made to address all thematic areas of the programme. The approach taken by the review team was to combine a quantitative assessment of progress towards achieving stated targets, with a qualitative appraisal of the impact of programme activities. The latter was achieved largely through interviews and open discussions with key stakeholders from the National Society, the Federation, individuals affected by recent

flooding events, recipients of RC relief assistance, relevant government officials and various international agencies engaged in the area of DP/DR. Wherever possible, anecdotal evidence and preliminary inferences were triangulated with interviews from a range of different stakeholders before arriving at final conclusions.

Prior to the review team arriving in the DPRK it was also agreed that the recent flood response operations carried out by the DPRK-RC with support from the IFRC (in early August in South Phyongan province) should be used as a benchmark, or reference point, for assessing changes and improvements in disaster response and preparedness. Visits were made to a total of four flood-affected communities and several local RC branches involved in these responses.

Structure of the National Society and the DP/DR Department

The DPRK Red Cross National Society secretariat is made up of nine departments, four of which are supported directly by the IFRC; namely Social and Medical Services, International, Logistics and Disaster Preparedness and Response. Next year the Finance department will also receive technical assistance from IFRC. The detailed history of the DP/DR department is well documented elsewhere (Peppiatt and Galperin, 2000). The department is still relatively new within the National Society, but there is clearly an interest in, and internal political support for, an expanded role for DP/DR, not least because of the high profile it affords the National Society during successful relief operations.

The DP/DR department at national level is comprised of one director and three further posts including one desk officer, one training officer and one logistics officer. In practice, the department has never been fully staffed during the two years of the BRCS-supported programme and for part of 2002 it was reduced to one or two individuals only. Recently a new officer has been assigned bringing the actual total to three staff, although this new appointee has little DP/DR experience. The department director is currently on other RC business and will not return until the end of this year.

It is important to note that the national level DP/DR department is responsible for both the IFRC supported programme (focusing on four provinces) and all other regular National Society DP/DR activities which cover all provinces and counties, including those which are not accessible for foreign organisations and nationals. It is apparent that the IFRC programme in these four provinces is more intensive and complex and therefore requires a disproportionate amount of management input from the National Society. In spite of this there is a clear appreciation on the part of the National Society for the work of the IFRC DP delegate and the innovative approaches (and resources) which the programme brings.

At lower levels the DP/DR department relies on the National Society structure, which is comprised of three main levels: provincial, county or city and *ri* (rural administrative areas) or *dong* (urban administrative areas) branch offices. Below the *ri* or *dong* level the RC network is comprised of volunteers from individual communities. Prior to the drastic cut in government funding to the National Society which occurred in early 2002, there were an average of seven paid positions at provincial level and in some strategic county or city branches. This funding crisis,

combined with the devaluation of the *won* currency, has forced the National Society to re-structure itself and down-size to only three paid technical staff at provincial level; this reduced team includes health, finance and DP officials.

Outline of the DP/DR Programme in DPRK, 2001 - 2002

The overall goal of the BRCS-supported DP/DR programme is to minimise the impact of natural disasters on vulnerable populations of the country. This goal is to be achieved through four specific objectives as follows:

1. To further improve disaster response and preparedness structures and systems at national, provincial and county level;
2. To improve the human resource base needed for disaster preparedness and response in the DRPR-RC;
3. To increase awareness of disaster risks and the coping mechanisms of the population in high-risk areas; and
4. To develop an effective warehouse system and to pre-position relief items in strategic locations to assist up to 30,000 people.

Whilst individual activities within these broad objectives have been modified and adapted somewhat over the two years of the programme, the broad objectives have effectively remained constant. In 2001 activities primarily focused on capacity building at national level and the development of the emergency response capacity of the National Society and in establishing linkages with the relevant government authorities. In 2002 the programme has extended much more down to provincial and county levels, as well as working on a pilot community-based disaster preparedness (CBDP) project in selected communities. The details of all activities, by objective, are given in tabular form in Annex 1.

Co-ordination Between the Red Cross and the Government

The National Society works with the government's Flood Damage and Rehabilitation Committee (FDRC), which has a role in co-ordinating international assistance at national level and a more internal co-ordination role at lower levels between different government ministries. The FDRC is in fact part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is effectively a non-operational agency, although it is extremely important and influential in its role of dealing with international humanitarian and development organisations. These functions are well documented in previous BRCS reports (Peppiatt and Galperin, 2000).

Over the last two years there has been a growing level of engagement between the two organisations built up through a series of confidence building exercises and meetings. The FDRC is giving increasing recognition to the role and importance of the Red Cross, especially with regard to DP/DR issues. Most significantly, the Red Cross now enjoys a relatively high degree of independence in terms of operational decision-making and geographical access. In this respect it is unique amongst all international agencies in the country, which continue to be highly dependent on FDRC guidance.

The British Ambassador to the DPRK describes the Red Cross as “(the) closest thing to an NGO existing in the country today”.

3.0 REVIEW OF DP/DR PROGRAMME, 2001-2002 (September)

3.1 SUMMARY OF IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

As part of the review process the team investigated the achievements of the programme against actual targets as set down by the DP delegate in the last two IFRC Annual Appeal documents. Certain new community-based objectives were added for the 2002-2003 appeal, however for the sake of consistency these have been incorporated into objective number three, which addressed similar activities in the first year of the programme. The results of this qualitative assessment are presented in tabular form at the end of this document. The targets are evaluated within each activity and, where necessary, comments are included to explain specific issues or constraints.

When assessing the programme in quantitative terms, it is clear that not all targets have been met over the two year period; in some particular activities there has been very slow, or no, progress. Clearly, some of this lack of progress is linked to the special working environment in the country. This situation is reflected by the fact that up until August 2002, only 41% of BRCS funding has been disbursed from the total budget. However, significant expenditures are planned for the remaining quarter of the year, which should improve the situation.

3.2 ASSESSMENT OF PROGRAMME IMPACT

The following sections present the assessment made by the review team with regard to the impact of activities within the individual objectives in qualitative terms. In carrying out this analysis the team took into account the relevance and appropriateness of the activities, the effectiveness of their impact on the National Society itself and to what extent they have contributed to reaching main objectives. Each of the following sections includes a summary of the findings and a series of recommendations for the programme in the coming year.

Objective 1: DP/DR Structures and Systems

The activities under this objective relate both to national and provincial levels and address issues such as improved co-ordination, the development of roles and responsibilities, recruitment of DP officers at provincial level, contingency planning and the development of DP/DR procedures and a guidance manual. In addition, it was planned to distribute bicycles and telephones to improve communication at provincial level.

The DP/DR department has worked hard to engage with key government authorities, principally the FDRC, but also the Ministry of Environmental Protection (MoEP) and has successfully facilitated fairly regular meetings. The aim of these quarterly meetings at national level is to improve co-ordination and define roles and responsibilities and the position of the RC vis a vi the government during an

emergency response. With time, the focus of these fora has been expanded to consider other relatively new topics such as community-based approaches to DP. In late 2000 a Memorandum of Understanding was drawn up to clarify some of these issues.

There is no question that progress has been made in this respect, but the meetings have produced more in the way of commitments and good intentions, rather than concrete actions and real information sharing. Nonetheless, the importance of this process itself should not be under-estimated as a critical part of confidence building and transparency. At provincial and county levels there has also been significant improvements in relations between the two organisations, with greater direct (horizontal) communication and sharing of resources, even to the extent that a few FDRC staff have been invited to RC training events. However, to date the planned provisional level DP working groups have not materialised.

Several important elements of the DP/DR programme have been finalised over the past two years, including national level hazard mapping, reviewing historical response efforts and the development of standard procedures in the form of a relief manual. All of these achievements can be considered as important first steps, but they must be built upon, re-visited and refined over the coming year. The relief manuals have been distributed and an initial training provided, The review team has some reservations about how readily this tool has been understood and is being used, especially at lower levels within the National Society network.

Progress in the recruitment of provincial DP officials was problematic during 2001 and has been further complicated by the enforced downsizing in personnel at branch level by the National Society. There are now DP officials in all four provinces where the IFRC is fully operational and, in theory, one DP official in every other province supported by the National Society without any assistance from the Federation. It was evident during the review mission itself that there is a gap in the flow of information between the DP delegate and his national counterparts about staffing at lower levels and what type of activities are being carried out, where and by whom.

There has been no progress in regard to improving communications by providing bicycles, which were rejected by branch officials as impractical and too slow during a disaster event. The team largely agrees with this assessment. In other respects the speed of information flow has improved through increased access to FDRC radio equipment during responses.

Objective 1: Conclusions

The DP/DR programme has made significant progress and has had a positive impact on the systems and structures used by the National Society, particularly in responding to disasters. Procedures for field assessments and information gathering have been improved and distribution of relief items seems to be well-organised with clear operational guidelines. Improved working relations with FDRC have allowed for faster response times and relaying of damage assessment data. Despite the fact that beneficiary selection is ultimately carried out by political authorities, there have been attempts by the RC to verify the selection process. Red Cross staff and volunteers in the focus provinces would appear to have benefited from training in DP/DR issues

and staff at provincial, county, city and local levels are now generally more aware of their roles and responsibilities during a disaster event.

However, problems and challenges still exist for the RC in disaster response, particularly relating to the lack of reliable communication channels for rapid transmission of data and the results of field assessments. There tend to be significant variations in damage assessments between the RC, government and other international agencies, which can prove to be problematic. Although the situation is improving, the RC still has very little control over beneficiary selection.

Most critically for the review team, it is apparent that the National Society is running a parallel and quite separate programme of capacity building (and training) in various areas, including DP/DR, which is not being fully shared and co-ordinated with the Federation DP delegate. This is despite the fact that the National Society is promoting materials and messages developed through the Federation. This trend appears, to some extent at least, to have undermined the considerable progress made in confidence building and collaboration between the DP delegate and the National Society DP/DR staff over the last two years. In addition, this situation creates obvious confusion with regard to understanding the true extent to which IFRC support is positively impacting on the National Society.

Objective 1: Recommendations

- Continue with all core components under this objective, except the plan to distribute bicycles and telephone sets, but focus most heavily on provincial and branch levels, to complement the work carried out at national level to date.
- Improve the communication and transparency in relations between the National Society and IFRC on the issue of information sharing and reporting on *all* training and capacity-building activities, irrespective of funding source. Where problems in information sharing are due to systemic weaknesses in the National Society (such as poor information management systems, reporting procedures etc.), these should be addressed in a comprehensive manner through the IFRC Organisational Development programme.
- Continue to engage with the Flood and Disaster Relief Committee both at national and provincial levels, but at the same time, strive to maintain the operational independence currently enjoyed by the National Society. In particular push for a formal agreement on access to, or use of, government radio communications systems during emergency situations.
- Review and refine damage assessment and beneficiary selection criteria and procedures in conjunction with FDRC and local level People's Committees to minimise inconsistencies in reporting.
- Monitor the use of the relief manual and procedures and fully assess their impact at different levels within the system; revise these materials as necessary.

Objective 2: Human Resource Development

As with objective one, activities under human resource development are aimed at both national and provincial levels. As well as training of trainers, the DP/DR programme has trained a group of provincial and county staff and developed both curriculum and training manuals in disaster management and community-based disaster preparedness (although the latter is only just now in the process of being translated). In addition, exchange and educational visits were arranged for more senior staff from national headquarters. The Sphere standards have been translated into Korean and distributed throughout the RC system in the country.

The review team was genuinely impressed by the calibre of staff working at national level (although they are few in number), and it is clear that these individuals have a very sound understanding of the concepts and principles behind IFRC initiatives. They have obviously benefited from the overseas training and exchange visits. There is also clear evidence that training is having an impact at lower levels and that the training of provincial and county branch staff is being replicated by staff at lower *ri* and *dong* level. However, the review team also came away with the impression that, whilst training events are taking place, the impact of these activities is not always consistent. For example, when the team asked a city branch DP officer (who had received training) to describe what DP actually means in very practical terms, the individual was unable to offer any kind of definition.

Obviously, the review could only take in a very limited sample of staff that had undergone training, but it is significant that there has been no plan drawn up to monitor and follow-up training activities. Time and staffing constraints will always play a role, but this fact would suggest that the DP/DR programme has put relatively little emphasis on finding out how effective their own training has been.

The training manuals and documents seen by the review team seem to be appropriate and contain some very useful formats and procedural guidance on assessment, reporting and warehouse management amongst other topics. However, the guidance document on CBDP seems to be overly complicated and lengthy. The review team considers that this key document will need to be assessed carefully and refined further. The DP/DR programme has made efforts to co-ordinate with the IFRC-supported Health programme, both in curriculum development and in actual delivery of training components. For example, the Health programme now includes a day-long session on first aid in emergencies when training community-based first aid (CBFA) volunteers.

Objective 2: Conclusions

In general terms the DP/DR programme has made a good start in the area of human resource development, particularly in training at various levels and in producing a number of key documents, which staff can continually refer back to. However, there is little evidence of follow-up or monitoring to assess the impact of the various training activities. If further progress is to be made on the basis of this sound beginning, this must be a top priority in the near future.

The training programme has included a number of conceptual approaches such as CBDP and Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA). These are relatively new

to the DPRK context, and whilst they are readily understood by more senior (and sophisticated) staff at central level, the review team has concerns about how well they are understood by staff and volunteers at lower levels. This is particularly the case where training materials are lengthy or complex and do not focus on very practical and concrete messages.

Objective 2: Recommendations

- Continue with all core components under this objective, with an emphasis on consolidation, follow-up and refinement; focus most heavily on provincial and branch levels, to complement the work carried out at national level to date.
- Design and implement a systematic follow-up and monitoring plan, including practical and measurable indicators to assess the impact of the training components at provincial, county/city and *ri* levels.
- In reviewing and refining training materials, particular attention should be paid to including simple, clear and focused messages that can be readily put into practice by both RC staff and community members.
- Didactic materials, such as flipcharts, should be made from more durable material (i.e. printed by silk-screening on cloth, rather hand-painted on paper).

Objective 3: Community-level Activities

The activities under objective three focus on community-based interventions and raising awareness about disaster preparedness. During the programme period there were three principal activities: a public information and awareness campaign, the launch of a CBDP pilot project and the application of the IFRC's VCA tool to better understand DP/DR issues and as a basis for strategic planning.

Despite the efforts of the DP delegate, little progress has been achieved in public awareness campaigning activities. Largely because of political sensitivities there has been reluctance on the part of the government authorities to allow the development of radio or TV spots by the RC with support from the IFRC. A poster promoting DP and mitigation methods was designed and produced with 4,000 copies distributed throughout the RC system; the review team saw a number of them at RC institutions and health posts across the three provinces visited. However, according to the DP delegate, the original messages and image was modified considerably.

The planned CBDP pilot project has only just started in a limited number of *ri* in South Pyongan province (nine *ri* in three separate counties). It is apparent that this pilot has already created awareness of DP amongst local RC staff and selected members of the community, despite the limited resources made available to date. It is still too early to determine the full impact of this pilot at community level and whether or not the concept of a CBDP approach is viable in the DPRK without some modification. In two of the pilot *ri* visited by the team, RC volunteers had developed local risk maps and had identified key points in the *ri* where mitigation and protection works could be carried out. They also had developed a "wish list" of material inputs, most of which seemed to be reasonable and appropriate. Since the initial training in June and July, no further follow-up has been given to the pilot projects to date and

there is a clear need to provide some material inputs in order to motivate the RC volunteers and to show tangible results to the broader community.

The VCA component of the DP/DR programme has been delayed, in part due to some resistance from the National Society about the scale of the initial exercise; a final agreement has been reached to start in only one province, rather than the planned two. Little progress has been made to date apart from initial training events for staff who will be expected to carry out the assessments. A limited VCA exercise was carried out under the O.D. programme last year in six branch offices; however, this focused on branch development issues only.

Objective 3: Conclusions

Mass public awareness and information campaigning is an important and complementary activity for highly localised interventions such as CBDP. Therefore the lack of progress in this area is of concern. However, it is clear that the DP delegate alone cannot be expected to engage with the appropriate ministry (Communication) in order to find a way to take these activities forwards.

Despite the signs of positive progress with the start up of the CBDP pilot project, the review team has reservations about how fully some of the concepts have been understood, as oppose to people merely carrying out what is expected of them. On the other hand, the DPRK is a well-organised society, with a long history of self-reliance, and so that communities may, in some respects, be better prepared to confront emergencies than would otherwise appear to be the case to outsiders.

The review team considers that there is still insufficient understanding on the part of the IFRC of how communities function in the DPRK, who the key stakeholders and leaders are, and what type of disaster preparedness systems and procedures have been established historically. Until there is greater insight into these types of issues, and an improved standing of the RC in general terms, it is unlikely that the RC would be in a position to address wider vulnerability issues at the community level, such as gender, in the near future.

At present, it appears that the IFRC delegation does not have a clear strategy regarding the application of the VCA as an analytical tool. Rather, the review team has the impression that use of the VCA is being promoted almost as an end in and of itself. In terms of DP/DR, the review team considers that more thought should go into what exactly a VCA exercise can contribute. In addition, there is an obvious danger that the VCA process may be duplicated by different IFRC programmes, working in the same areas or provinces, but with differing thematic or institutional levels of focus. In order to make effective use of limited resources, all of these issues should be addressed prior to embarking on the VCA exercises in the field.

Objective 3: Recommendations

- Consolidate the existing Community Based Disaster Preparedness pilot project and do not expand beyond South Pyongan province during 2003/2004. Carry out a systematic plan of support and lesson-learning in all pilot *ri* to assess the pilot design and modify as necessary. Provide practical, material inputs for the target communities as an incentive to continue with DP efforts. Investigate the possibility of establishing local level, limited DP stocks at *ri* level.
- In developing community-based approaches further, work in close co-ordination with the Health Department's Community Based First Aid programme, particularly in the identification of trainers at both county and *ri* levels, and in the delivery of complementary themes and messages.
- If a VCA exercise is to be carried out by the DP/DR Department, it must be as part of an integrated IFRC effort, preferably co-ordinated by the Organisational Development department, to avoid duplication and repetition in the field.
- Address the issue of public awareness campaigns with the appropriate government authorities at the most senior levels to determine a way forwards in allowing the RC to develop a mass communication campaign.

Objective 4: Warehousing and Pre-positioning

The National Society, with support from the DP and Logistics delegates, has made tremendous progress in warehousing and pre-positioning of non-food relief items. All targets under this objective have been met in the programme period to date. The review team was impressed by physical conditions in all the warehouses (both regional and central levels), the management and accuracy of stock keeping, and the competency of the warehouse managers (most of whom are women). Audits and physical counts of the warehouses are undertaken every two to three months. Whilst the warehouses are located in government compounds, they are clearly under the control of the RC and the guidelines set out for disbursement of relief items appear to be respected by the government authorities.

With the establishment of the new regional warehouse in Chongjin in the north-eastern province of North Hamgyoung earlier this year, the RC now has almost full coverage across the country, except for a central swathe of territory, which is for the most part inaccessible for international agencies. All the feedback received by the review team about the manner of distribution and speed of access to prep-positioned stocks was very positive. The recent responses in South Pyongan were considered to be timely and well organised, with items arriving within several days of the flash flooding.

The IFRC managed to reach its target of stockpiling 12,000 family packs earlier this year, but has since distributed some 7,400 of these over the summer. The search for funding support for re-stocking of these supplies is on-going and ECHO looks to be set to make a large contribution, however there will still be a shortfall. Financing for the re-stocking of relief items following the response to small-scale disasters is problematic for the IFRC and National Society. This arrangement would allow the National Society to respond quickly, without worrying about the need to issue an international appeal.

Objective 4: Conclusions

This particular component of the DP/DR programme has had a major impact on the capacity of the National Society to respond to small and medium scale disasters quickly, effectively and efficiently, on the basis of regional stockpiling. The RC is now in a strong position to respond almost anywhere in the country and in many areas is better equipped to handle emergency responses than the government.

For smaller emergency responses the RC can manage to move items in bulk with its own fleet of trucks. There are also cases (in the Kaesong city floods for example) where the FDRC has arranged for transport from other ministries to assist the RC distribution efforts.

Objective 4: Recommendations

- Continue with the warehousing and pre-positioning programme at national and regional levels to guarantee a minimum response capacity, covering at least 15,000 families; stockpiling of relief items for next year should be in place by the end of May 2003.
- The BRCS should consider favourably any request by the IFRC to use part of the under-spend from the 2002/2003 Appeal for re-stocking of non-food relief items in regional warehouses (anticipated request in the region of Chf 180,000).
- To avoid having to issue emergency appeals for relatively small events in the future, the BRCS should consider favourably any request in the 2003/2004 Annual Appeal to budget for a small quantity of relief items. These would be used to draw upon immediately and allow the National Society to respond to a limited number (up to four) of small-scale responses per year (for affected populations of up to approximately 1,000 families).

3.3 DP/DR PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT ISSUES

In addition to assessing the stated objectives and activities, the review team was tasked to investigate and address a number of cross-cutting issues or themes relating to the management of the programme that were identified as being of particular importance. It should be stressed that the review was not intended to make any type of appraisal of programme managers.

Pace of Programme Implementation

The two year programme has clearly not met all of the original targets. However, the team considers that the targets set in the first two years have been overly ambitious and have not allowed for a proper consolidation of progress in some of the key focal areas. Given the staffing capacity of the National Society and the context of working in the DPRK, with all its inherent constraints, the team considers that the pace of implementation over the last two years has not been realistic or sustainable. However, in spite of the fact that original targets have not been fully met, the team considers that considerable and significant progress has been made over the last two years.

Recommendations:

- Continue with all of the major objectives during the next year, but with an emphasis on consolidation of gains made to date and with lower, more realistic targets in all areas.

Geographic Focus

In terms of geographic focus, the BRCS-supported programme has managed to achieve near universal coverage in warehousing and pre-positioning of non-food items for all accessible provinces in DPRK. This is an essential and commendable achievement putting the RC in a position to respond rapidly to sudden on-set disasters nationally. Training and capacity building activities have included four provinces and were expanded to a further two following recent flood responses. The CBDP pilot project started in high risk areas of South Phyongan, but given that very predictable seasonal flooding occurs in at least two other areas (Kaesong/Kangwon and South Hwanghae), it would be expected that these would have also been included as part of the pilot.

When considering decisions regarding geographic focus, it is important to remember that the National Society has an obligation to serve the entire DPRK and should not be tied down to the four provinces receiving IFRC support. Many of the institutional capacity building activities of the DP/DR programme have been successful in supporting the National Society in this mandate. Nonetheless it is difficult to strike the right balance between these objectives and to avoid having two parallel, and disconnected, systems. Successful disaster response operations would appear to be an ideal (and possibly unique) vehicle for expanding activities in the medium term. This was evident by the training work carried out following the recent flood responses in South Hamgyong and Kangwon provinces, which are both so-called “non-operational” IFRC provinces, as historically defined under the IFRC Health programme.

Recommendations:

- For next year carry out a concentrated programme of support to the key province of South Pyongan to ensure proper follow-up, monitoring and lesson-learning across all main objectives. Additional, but less intensive, follow-up should be given to North Pyongan, Jagang and Kaesong provinces. The warehousing and stockpiling activities should continue at national level for all accessible counties and provinces. The BRSC-supported programme should not expand any further during 2003/2004.
- Any further expansion of the CBDP project beyond 2003/2004 should focus on counties in provinces where there are predictable, seasonal disaster events, namely Kangwon, Kaesong, South Hamgyong, South and North Hwanghae.

Staffing

As noted earlier in section 1.0, staffing at national level has been a consistent problem for the DP/DR department. Despite very positive messages about the importance of

DP/DR for the National Society as a whole, it is significant to note that progress has been slow in this area. These problems were readily acknowledged by senior management in the National Society, who explained that part of the problem is in finding individuals with the correct mix of technical and language skills.

Now that the internal re-structuring and down-sizing of the RC at lower levels has been completed the staffing situation should be normalised; it is encouraging to note that DP is one of only three remaining paid positions at provincial level. There seems to be a fairly wide variation in the competency of staff at these levels, but the training and capacity building work should continue to improve this situation. Lastly, it is clear that there are certain institutional weaknesses within the National Society which have an impact on the effectiveness of relations between field and headquarters. These problems and constraints impact upon a range of RC activities and are therefore beyond the scope of the DP/DR department.

In concluding, staff shortages (at national level) and the calibre of staff at lower levels have undoubtedly had an impact on IFRC-supported initiatives. In turn, this has had certain constraints on the final delivery of services and therefore on the impact of the programme more broadly.

Recommendations:

- The National Society should ensure that there are at least three full time desk officers at all times in the DP/DR department to manage both IFRC-supported and regular National Society programme activities.
- The BRCS should consider funding for one additional National Society salaried position in the DP/DR Department for the short term in order to guarantee appropriate staffing levels to implement the DP/DR programme properly.

Co-ordination and Linkages with other Federation Programmes

As noted in previous sections, efforts have been made to co-ordinate certain aspects of the DP/DR programme with other activities under IFRC's overall work. In particular co-ordination of training is underway with the Health programme regarding sharing of topics and curriculum development. However, the review team is of the opinion that there may be further opportunities for co-operation and synergy, as well as the potential for increased efficiencies, particularly in terms of target audiences for training within the National Society system. For example, the DP/DR and the CBFA training programmes has a mutually inclusive target audience.

In addition, there may be further possibilities to address disaster mitigation issues in the Water and Sanitation programme, particularly in areas such as the selection of water sources (where alternatives exist), the siting of intake structures, selection of materials and the design and construction quality of protection works.

Recommendations:

- Continue with efforts to integrate DP/DR components with other, on-going, IFRC programmes, with particular emphasis on CBFA and water and sanitation.

Follow-up and Lesson Learning

In many respects this would appear to be one of the weakest aspects of the DP/DR programme, with very little in the way of systematic monitoring and only modest attempts to learn lessons and feed these back into management of on-going activities. However, it is understandable that such follow-up has been ad-hoc at best, given the staffing situation and the demands on the DP delegate (as acting HoD for three months), as well as the fact that there were a number of important emergency responses during the last two years.

It is worthwhile to highlight the fact that this situation may, in some part, reflect weaknesses in IFRC approaches more generally to monitoring and impact assessment. This may particularly be the case for hard to quantify issues such as community based interventions, for example CBDP.

Recommendations:

- As stated in the recommendations for capacity building and training (objectives one and two respectively), more effort should be given to follow-up on what has already been done over the last two years. If implementation targets are moderated in 2003/2004, as recommended by the review team, this should free up more management time and resources within the DP/DR department to carry out these types of activities.
- The frequency of follow-up activities and visits to the field should be in the order of magnitude of once per fortnight for South Pyongan and once per month for the other three IFRC-supported provinces.
- Clear and simple to use indicators should be developed to monitor the impact of DP/DR work, both at community level and within the branch structures. However, care must be taken to avoid making the monitoring system overly complex or burdensome in terms of staff time required.
- Lastly, and most importantly, there should be a clear plan about what to do with the results of this monitoring and to ensure that the information is put to use in a timely and effective manner, to improve the work of the department.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

Overall Conclusions

In overall terms the review team considers that in the last two years the DP/DR programme has made a significant contribution to the capacity of the DPRK-Red Cross National Society to respond to disaster events. The programme has been successful in defining a clear role for the RC in disaster response and preparedness, which is both acknowledged and appreciated by the government and the main international humanitarian actors in the country. The RC is now considered to be the leading agency in this field, concentrating on clearly defined competencies, including search and rescue, first aid and non-food aid assistance, all of which act to complement the role of the government authorities during a disaster response.

The review team considers that the objectives and activities of the DP/DR programme are appropriate and well designed in terms of achieving the overall stated goals, with the exception of one or two sub-activities. These objectives and associated activities will remain relevant and appropriate for the near future at least. In broad terms, the review team concludes that there has been an effective use of resources and that activities have been carried out in a reasonably efficient manner, given the operating constraints of the DPRK.

Although not all physical targets have been met, much hard work has been done and the National Society is clearly in a much better position today than two years ago regarding disaster response and preparedness. It is particularly important to stress that working relations between the DP delegate and the National Society staff are generally open and productive, a factor which should not be under-estimated in terms of getting the job done.

Future Direction for the Programme

There is no doubt that the DP/DR programme is on the right track and only minor modification of activities will be necessary for the coming period. Progress has been made on a number of important issues and a firm base has been established; however, there is now the need to consolidate these achievements and to make sure that the momentum generated by capacity building and training activities is not lost. A number of important challenges and constraints remain, such as staffing, the need to learn from what has been already achieved and to improve the sharing of information between the National Society and the IFRC. The recommendations included in the body of this report seek to address these issues and concerns.

Lastly, the review team considers that it would now be an opportune moment to capture much of what has been achieved and learnt and to bring this together in the form of an over-arching disaster preparedness and response strategy to outline the future direction for the National Society. This topic was flagged during the BRCS mission in late 2000, but little progress has been made since then. In part this may have been because the department itself has been growing and learning at such a fast pace. It would seem that many pieces of the puzzle are now in place and that staff at all levels have had a good deal of direct, practical experience in DP/DR issues in the last two years.

Therefore, the review team strongly recommends that a coherent and feasible long-term DP/DR strategy for the National Society be developed focusing on the two most likely natural disaster scenarios in the DPRK, namely seasonal and predictable small-scale, localised events and the possibility of a much larger one-off event. This strategy should seek to address issues such as the criteria for responding to disasters, definitions of the necessary levels of preparedness, the role and comparative advantage of the RC and its working co-operation with the government amongst others. It is logical that the regional Disaster Relief and Preparedness delegate based in Beijing would provide some assistance and guidance in this process, as he has been involved in this review.