

International Federation overview

In 2001, the International Federation continued to focus its work on activities in the four core areas defined in *Strategy 2010*: disaster response; disaster preparedness; health and care in the community; and promotion of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values.

There were 711 disaster events in 2001 and the International Federation, through its regional and country delegations and in collaboration with National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, was on hand to respond to many of them. Some, such as the earthquakes in India and El Salvador, received much media coverage; many others were hardly noticed by the outside but wrought extensive disruption on the lives and livelihoods of the vulnerable people affected.

During the year, the International Federation took part in a number of health initiatives, including vaccination campaigns against measles and polio, in collaboration with a number of other organizations. It was also active in encouraging greater openness and more engagement in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

The United Nations (UN) proclaimed 2001 as International Year of Volunteers (IYV2001). As the largest volunteer organization in the world, the International Federation took an active part in IYV2001, helping national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies to improve their work of recruiting, selecting, training, organizing and rewarding volunteers, and to promote the volunteering environment in their countries.

From 1990 to 2000, the number of beneficiaries targeted for International Federation support was ever increasing: from 5 million in 1990, 30 million in 1999 and 50 million in 2000. In 2001, the number of people in need of assistance as a result of floods, droughts, earthquakes displacement and health emergencies dropped to 34 million. To assist these people in need, the International Federation launched relief appeals for 480 million Swiss francs, of which 343 million Swiss francs was sought for the annual appeal covering long-term operations and 137 million francs was requested for emergencies. The biggest emergency appeal of the year, for some 28.7 million francs, was in response to the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan.

The International Federation remains committed to improving the quality of humanitarian assistance and accountability. In 1994, along with seven other humanitarian agencies (Caritas, Internationalis, Catholic Relief Services, International Committee

Photo opposite page
Working with national
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Howard Davies/Exile
Images, Nepal 1997.

Box 9.1 IDRL development continues

laws requiring and guiding rapid and efficient cross-border relief can save lives.

Consultations with governments, national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies and other experts have made clear a widespread wish to establish coherent links between the various pieces of "hard" and "soft" law that exist to guide international relief for natural disasters, as well as to identify gaps and the best ways of filling them. The International Federation maintains its leadership role in the development of this major initiative. Governments and international organizations, as well as academics and field practitioners, see a body of international disaster response law (IDRL) as having the capacity to ensure far more effective humanitarian assistance and protection to affected communities, who suffer from the consequences of natural and technological disasters, and improved efficiency in the delivery.

Since the first presentation of IDRL in the *World Disasters Report 2000* and the update in the 2001 report, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's Council of Delegates took up the issue at its session in November 2001. In an important resolution it endorsed the International Federation's initiative to advocate for the development and, where applicable, the improvement and faithful application of IDRL. The work at the international level will concentrate on, but not be limited to, the compilation and publication of existing international laws and regulations, and the evaluation of their actual effectiveness in humanitarian operations.

Work done since then has included an important study, commissioned by the International Federation's secretariat, which compiles existing law.

First outcomes of the study clearly show that a considerable body of law exists in one form or another. It is also evident that different law exists in different regions of the world. An important element in International Federation planning is therefore to involve comprehensively in the project, governments and experts, including universities, which represent regional perspectives. The plan is to complete an analysis of existing law and publish a first compilation of legal texts at the end of 2002. A first practical step could be to produce a compendium in a form that could be used for easy reference in field situations. But coherence is absolutely necessary and there appear to be many gaps.

Parallel to, and complementing, this legal study, the International Federation is seeking support from a number of governments and National Societies to undertake field studies to gain a better-documented understanding of the problems practitioners can face that could be addressed through the mechanism of IDRL. This will provide a sound basis for further consideration of options for action.

The International Federation plan envisages detailed work on options during 2003, involving governments, National Societies and experts. The outcome should be a full report presented to the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Conference in December 2003, with recommendations for work beyond 2003. ■

of the Red Cross, International Save the Children Alliance, Lutheran World Federation, Oxfam and World Council of Churches), it developed the *Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-*

Governmental Organizations in Disaster Relief. The voluntary code sets out universal basic standards to govern the way signatory relief agencies should work in disaster assistance. As of 31 March 2002, 198 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) had become signatories to the code, and had agreed to incorporate the code's ten points of principle into their work. For more information, visit the *Code of conduct* page on the International Federation's web site at <http://www.ifrc.org/publicat/conduct/>

The International Federation continued to support a number of projects including:

- Sphere, an international interagency effort which provides humanitarian agencies with a framework for rights-based humanitarian assistance and adherence to minimum standards. More information about the Sphere project can be found at <http://www.sphereproject.org/>
- The Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP), whose mission is to increase the safety on the roads in developing countries using a partnership approach where stakeholders from government, civil society and business work together and contribute, in the most appropriate way for each organization, to the improvement of road safety. <http://www.grsproadsafety.org/>
- Reach Out, a joint initiative of several international humanitarian agencies on refugee protection training. A three-year programme, it aims to disseminate basic refugee protection knowledge among members of NGOs and the Red Cross Red Crescent. <http://www.reachout.ch/index.htm>

The International Federation is also a member of the task force of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), which was adopted in 2000 by the UN General Assembly as a framework for action in support of disaster reduction activities. To support its actions, ISDR will publish a *Global Review of Disaster Reduction* in 2002. The review presents indications of global trends in disaster risk reduction practices, through an overview of disaster reduction-related initiatives, programmes and institutional structures. ISDR intends to initiate a structured process to maintain and disseminate periodically information on disaster reduction. For more information, visit the ISDR web site (<http://www.unisdr.org>).

The International Federation continued to follow up on an issue raised in the *World Disasters Report 2000* on the necessity for an international disaster response law (see Box 9.1).



Section Two
Tracking
The System