

mote their projects to potential Donor Societies. Some National Societies would also like to know what criteria are used in selecting projects to be included in the Appeal Document, and several consider the system generally too cumbersome and bureaucratic.

An analysis of donor responses to the projects presented in the Appeal Document of 1992 allows the following conclusions to be reached: The response to the 1992 document was slightly better than to the previous one, with an overall positive response of almost 33%, as compared with 26% in 1991. In this regard, the Americas region fell short of the average, with an 18% response. Looking at the kind of projects donors most readily responded to, disaster preparedness scores first with an almost 54% response, followed by community services (29%), health services (27%), and structural development (23%). The Federation's Secretariat was fairly successful in getting its projects funded, with an average of 41% covered. Among them the Strategic Work Plan fared best, with 67% coverage. As far as the Regional Delegations are concerned, including projects they presented, there is considerable variation in responses. Africa reached 85% coverage, while the Americas with 41% and Asia with 38% came next. Europe and the Middle East and North Africa received no support for regional programs. Within the Americas, the Costa Rica delegation had a very limited response (22%), and in the Caribbean most regional programs presented were not supported at all.

It is clear that the procedure represents great progress in the way the Federation deals with development support. The Appeal Document still has an essentially bilateral character, however, as it basically tries to make the bilateral process more efficient and orderly. For this reason it does not, for example, provide the Secretariat with much needed non-earmarked funds it could use to support programs that are considered vital for a National Society but do not attract donors. The absence of clearly defined development priorities, according to which projects would be selected and presented in the document, also limits the usefulness of this development tool.

Furthermore, there is room for improvement in the way project proposals are dealt with within the Secretariat. For example, the inclusion of Regional Delegations in the screening process, which has not been the case in the Americas region, is clearly needed.

Development reality in the Americas: limited support

Apart from relief assistance followed by reconstruction projects, and accompanied mostly by short-term delegates, the Federation has not made a systematic effort to analyze the development needs or to support the overall development of National Societies in the Americas region. During the early 1980s the Federation's Regional Office, working closely with CORI (the Inter-American Regional Committee), encouraged National Societies in the Americas to establish long-term development plans. This effort was not supported by enough technical assistance, however, and many of the plans established at the time were not adequately monitored or updated.

In most cases, the closest thing to long-term development support has come through bilateral action by sister Societies, normally on their own initiative. The Federation's role has varied from none to consultations or cooperation in assessments and evaluations, but it has generally not been decisive.

There is one field, however, where specific objectives and strategies for the Americas region were outlined by the Federation—health. The policy document "Strengthening Red Cross Health Activities in Latin America and the Caribbean: Contributing to Health for All by the Year 2000" aimed at stimulating and supporting the involvement of National Societies in activities directed towards vulnerable individuals and communities, with a focus on preventive health care. A number of National Societies have implemented programs with assistance from the Federation's Health Delegate. The focus has been on the Child Alive programs in Central

American countries, as well as on cholera prevention and AIDS education programs. Such support has been instrumental in creating a new form of activity and awareness in these National Societies, where the programs are gradually finding their place among the National Societies' normal activities.

In general terms, there is a striking difference between policies adopted by the Federation's General Assembly and the reality of how most National Societies in the Americas region perceive their role and carry out their activities. Preventive action, vulnerable people as the priority, and institutional development have long been the standard subjects of discussion at policy-making levels of the Federation, but translating these policies into practical action at the National Society level in the Americas region has yet to take place. An advocacy role for the Red Cross is not at all well understood. There is an urgent need for guidance as well as practical tools to help understand and carry out these new policies, as they address issues that are important for the region.

The National Societies in the region expect stronger input from the Federation in their institutional development efforts. Many would welcome technical assistance, short-term consultants, and regional or subregional training sessions. Simple, practical guidelines are also needed to help the Societies plan their activities. Several Societies show willingness to develop their institutions to respond to new challenges, but lack the necessary tools and experience. The newly initiated Institutional Development project, intended to assist National Societies in this area, is most welcome.

Special problem areas

The internal situation of some National Societies in the Americas region has become exceptionally difficult for intra-institutional and/or political reasons. On occasion this has reached the point of putting into question the credibility of the Red Cross Movement as a whole, and has

certainly prevented the organizations from performing their proper role in assisting their people. Recent cases are the National Societies of Peru and Guatemala. The Federation has not managed to find an adequate formula for assisting National Societies in such situations, but has concentrated mainly on the strictly formal aspects of the problem, allowing situations to worsen. Sometimes, as in the early 1980s in Nicaragua and in 1991 in Panama, a Federation delegate played an important role in stabilizing the situation. Mediation efforts have recently been initiated by Federation staff and consultants with encouraging results. This issue, also referred to as the integrity of National Societies, requires urgent attention.

National Society statutory contributions to the Federation

Some National Societies in the Americas express serious concern about their ability to pay their statutory contribution (barem quota payment) to the Federation. A few Societies consider it a matter of choice between carrying out their activities or paying the barem, and opt not to pay. Some others find it a heavy burden, but nevertheless make an effort to pay regularly; still others consider the amount correctly defined.

The barem is calculated on the basis of the United Nations quota system and financial volume of National Societies. Hence, it depends on the financial situation of the country and the core funding of the National Society, as reported to the Federation. If a National Society wants to claim a lower quota, it has to make and justify such a request. The Federation's total barem income in 1992 was approximately CHF 22 million.

Looking at the situation at the end of 1992, a total of 19 out of 33 National Societies in the Americas region (Antigua and Barbuda and St. Kitts and Nevis not yet being included) had paid their barem. Out of the 14 that had not paid, five had arrears of at least five years and four had arrears of three or four years. In other

words, somewhat more than one-quarter of the National Societies have serious problems in this regard. Among them are Societies with major internal problems (Guatemala, Peru), as well as ones that have had to cope with large relief operations in recent years (Haiti, Jamaica, Nicaragua). Finally, there are National Societies that have not been able to develop their fund-raising capacity to a sufficient level or for other reasons have opted not to pay (Argentina, the Dominican Republic, Guyana, St. Vincent and the Grenadines).

The need to increase the Federation's response capacity

Importance of communication and contacts

Within the Federation's administrative structure, it is the responsibility of the Americas Department to maintain contact with the National Societies in its region, promote understanding and implementation of Federation policies, provide technical assistance and other forms of support for the Societies' development efforts, and coordinate disaster relief.

The single most important issue that comes across from the National Societies concerning relations with the Federation is communication, or rather lack of it. This is especially true of the Societies in South America, which feel quite limited in their contacts with the Federation, whether with Geneva or the Regional Delegation in Costa Rica. There is a feeling of frustration about communications not being answered or, if they are, the generally very long time answers take. This applies both to projects that have been presented and other kinds of communication. More frequent and fluid contacts are demanded. Some Caribbean National Societies also express the same concern, expecting more frequent visits from Federation representatives. The Central American National Societies, on the other hand, are generally satisfied with the quality of commu-

munication between the National Society and the Federation, as they maintain regular contact with the Regional Delegation in San José. There are two exceptions, however: Guatemala, which feels abandoned by the Federation, and Belize, which does not consider its contacts with the Regional Delegation in San José satisfactory.

It is interesting to note in this context that until quite recently most communications between the National Societies and the Federation seem to have taken place by regular mail, and only in more urgent cases, such as disasters, by telex. This is true both ways, from the National Societies to Geneva and from Geneva to the National Societies. The Study coincided with the introduction of telefax facilities in a number of National Societies in South America and the Caribbean. This new means of communication will certainly improve the technical possibilities of communication. Changes in administrative procedures will have to ensure that frequent and fluid contacts are established and maintained, however.

The Americas Department: facing a different future

As noted above, most of the Department's activities have focused on providing disaster relief and monitoring reconstruction projects that have emerged after relief operations. Support of institutional or program development has been very limited. Because much of the Americas region is prone to various kinds of natural disasters, a capacity to provide quick and professional responses to these situations will always be needed. An equally important need, if not always an explicit demand, exists for development support, however. Until now, this support has not been forthcoming for various reasons.

The focus on acute disasters at the expense of long-term planning, a reactive as opposed to a proactive approach adopted by the Americas Department, reflects a more profound weakness in the Federation's Secretariat, which is only now being dealt with—a top-down system of

planning which did not encourage participation or develop the staff's planning skills. It was not until 1989 that the Federation as a whole adopted its first Strategic Work Plan, and only two years later that Departmental Work Plans were introduced at the Secretariat. As this is written, the preparation of the first Consolidated Plan and Budget is under way—an effort in activity-driven planning which requires everyone, starting with desk officers, to look ahead and establish projections concerning the future. This means that the staff is in the process of learning the necessary planning skills at the same time as it is expected to advise the National Societies on these questions.

For the Americas Department the situation has been aggravated, in the opinion of a number of National Societies, by the fact that for several years it operated without a permanent Department Head. All these factors have influenced the way the region's National Societies have perceived and carried out their functions and how they have viewed the Secretariat. In early 1993 there is reason for optimism, however: a Work Plan for the Americas Department for 1993 exists, a Development Plan for the Caribbean is under way, and a Strategic Plan for the Americas is on the agenda. Concrete steps have been taken to solve some of the most acute internal problems in the region's National Societies.

If the Americas Department is to respond adequately to the development needs of the National Societies in the region, it will have to raise its professional capacity concerning development issues, including the capacity to incorporate new Federation policies into its own activities. The National Societies need technical assistance in various non-traditional fields, such as strategic planning, community work with participatory methods, and identifying the most vulnerable. The department will have to be able to identify such needs in a professional manner and to provide the necessary support, using resources inside and outside the Red Cross. Other areas National Societies mention include institutional development, training in general and especially of leaders and specialized personnel, identification

of projects, Frameworks for Development Cooperation, income-generating projects, financial management, and fund raising

The new Federation policies also need to be well understood and actively promoted. This requires improved communication between the Americas Department and other departments, both technical and geographic. The situation and experience of the Americas region needs to become better known within the Secretariat, and policy issues more widely understood within the Department. Increased communication with other geographic departments could prove useful in helping to find practical solutions to policy implementation. The Americas Department also needs to address the language barrier issue if it wants to participate in policy making, as Spanish is hardly used and little understood outside the department.

A stronger role for the Regional Delegations

According to the Secretariat's concept of decentralization, the Regional Delegations are considered "extended arms" of their respective geographic departments. Their main functions, as defined in the Terms of Reference (ToR) for Regional Delegations, are to "listen, advocate, assess and assist, develop, and represent." In doing this they are expected to improve the Secretariat's understanding of the needs and concerns of the Societies in the region and regional issues, encourage National Societies to take an active part in Federation policy making and the implementation of those policies, assess needs and assist National Societies following disasters, encourage and support National Societies in planning, implementing, and evaluating their organizational development and service programs, and represent the Federation in relations with United Nations agencies, NGOs, diplomatic missions, and the media. The role of the delegations is thus defined as advisory, facilitating, and coordinating.

In practice, the main focus of the work of the delegation in San José has been on providing logistical and delegate support for a number of relief operations in Central and South America, and on following up the various Nordic development projects in Central America (blood programs and institutional development). It has also served as the base for the Study team. Less has been done to promote Federation policies with National Societies or to provide technical advice or support for development, including production of Frameworks for Development Cooperation. Contacts with other agencies, the United Nations system, and nongovernmental organizations have been very limited.

The National Societies do not have a very clear idea of the role and functions of the Regional Delegation. Opinions are divided about whether the Federation should have one or more delegations in the region. Some National Societies consider it impossible to cover the whole continent from one delegation (San José), while others look at the problem in terms of financial and human resources and feel that the delegation should be strengthened. Several Societies have smooth and frequent contacts with the San José delegation, while others have practically no contact with it at all. The latter is especially true of the National Societies in the Southern Cone as well as the English-speaking Societies in the Caribbean, which have their own subdelegation in Jamaica.

Some Regional Delegations in other parts of the world seem to focus more on regional-level programs (health, disaster preparedness, and fund raising, for example). The Regional Delegations in the Americas have concentrated mainly on assisting individual Societies. Exceptions are the Caribbean Disaster Preparedness Plan, the Central American Health Plan, and the support provided to the Central American Blood program. Efforts to obtain support for a number of regional training programs in the Caribbean were not successful.

The division of labor and lines of communication between the Americas Department in Geneva and the Regional Delegation in San José

have not always been clear to the delegation or to the region's National Societies, which have often observed that the delegation is not kept up to date about communications between them and Geneva. The delegation has also been concerned about the fact that it has had no role in processing project proposals to be included in the Federation's Development Appeal Document. It is understood, however, that this situation will be changing in 1993.

Three years of existence have not brought financial stability to the Costa Rica Regional Delegation. Dependent on donor National Societies for funding its delegates as well as its operational expenses, it has experienced frequent cash-flow problems. It has not been able to charge significant amounts of its expenses to regional programs for lack of such programs. The only exception has been the Health Delegate based in Guatemala. Neither has the delegation charged, any "service fees," apart from direct operational expenses, for services to operations, such as purchases of goods or recruitment of delegates. Regional and local sources of funding, such as United Nations agencies or embassies, remain an untapped possibility. It should also be noted that the Regional Delegation has not received any financial support from the National Societies in the Americas region itself.

The Regional Delegation in Costa Rica has not been in a position to plan its activities on a long-term basis or to maintain adequate contacts, including visits, with the National Societies in South America, mainly because of the financial constraints described above. For much the same reasons, the Federation has had problems in recruiting delegates based on professional experience and competence, including delegates from within the region, which has been a frequent cause of criticism by the National Societies in the Americas. The present practice leaves out competent individuals who do not want to plan their future on a short-term basis. It also creates long waiting periods and gaps between delegates, including loss of experience and lack of follow-up of on-going programs.

CONCLUSIONS CONCERNING THE FEDERATION'S ROLE

In conclusion, it can be said that the Federation and its Secretariat find themselves between tendencies and forces that are sometimes opposed to each other, though interrelated and complementary, and which all have to do with their role in relation to the National Societies, such as:

- a) The Secretariat is an organ that finds itself halfway between an operational agency and a simple support body to the federative structure. The National Societies' growing needs for assistance and support, the magnitude of the problems to be solved by the Red Cross Movement as a whole, and the similarity of the challenges that exist in Latin America and the Caribbean demand progressively from the Secretariat a greater capacity for direct intervention through programs, services, and assistance of various kinds, all of which tends to make the Secretariat more and more a directly operational agency. This is related to the "paradox of decentralization," according to which an organization that is very decentralized, as the Red Cross is because of its federative nature, needs a strong center. This tendency contrasts, however, with the limited role that the Secretariat is assigned by the statutes, and especially, by its limited resources for responding to demands from the National Societies, especially from those undergoing development.
- b) The Federation as a whole, and the Secretariat in particular, are caught between two poles of action: one, the traditional, represented by relief, and the other, more recent, that endeavors to deal with developmental needs. These are not opposing but complementary poles even if, as discussed in more detail above, restrictive and short-term concepts in relation to disasters persist, excluding other types of strategies focusing on problems of institutional and community development.
- c) Policy definition and planning have reached a certain degree of development within the Federation at the level of the General Assembly and, above all, the Secretariat. There are no major differences concerning concepts, and the degree of consensus is generally very high. Implementation by the National Societies of the agreed policies and plans is weak or nonexistent, however: evaluations are not performed and adequate follow-up mechanisms do not exist. This fact, which may create a distance between the discourse of the Federation and its daily practice in each country, and which may also create a distance between the Secretariat and National Societies, is a cause for concern insofar as it could weaken the cohesion and credibility of the Movement.
- d) Finally, there are instances when sovereignty and the principle of non-interference—the organization's cornerstones—may become an obstacle or an organizational weakness in the face of the need to provide assistance to a National Society with internal problems and whose crisis compromises the credibility and the image of the whole Movement. For the Federation to function globally, a minimum of common approaches and operational practices is needed. The actions of individual National Societies also reflect on the International Red Cross Movement, enhancing or undermining its credibility. Although the International Red Cross has clear criteria for recognizing National Societies as members of the Federation, no mechanisms have so far been developed to ensure that a National Society continues to meet those criteria. This is especially troublesome as the deterioration of a National Society may effectively prevent those in need from receiving assistance. Examples from the Americas region show that there is a clear need to adopt a more active approach to such situations. The administrative weakness that results from the different tendencies described above is reflected in the way in which the National Societies

see the Federation. The sharpest criticism concerns communication, which is perceived as lacking, extremely slow, and uncoordinated. Many National Societies in South America feel that they have very few contacts with the Secretariat and that their communications are not answered. The National Societies themselves are not clear about which channels of communication to use and point out that the Secretariat in Geneva often bypasses its own delegations and does not keep them informed. There is also a widespread feeling that the various departments in Geneva do not coordinate their activities in the region and do not keep each other informed. In the opinion of many National Societies, the overall administrative weakness was aggravated by the long vacancy in the position of the Department Head.

Another reflection of the system's weakness is the frustration that most National Societies in the region feel concerning the Development Appeal system. A source of misunderstandings and hence of unrealistic expectations, it has paralyzed activities in many National Societies, which have been waiting for information from the Secretariat in response to their projects.

The lack of clarity among the National Societies concerning the role of the Regional Delegation in San José also points to a gap between a policy decision and its implementation. Despite a strong stand expressed in the Federation's Strategic Work Plan in support of Regional Delegations, not all National Societies have been convinced of the Secretariat's intentions in this

regard. This has partly been caused by insecurity concerning its funding. While most Central American National Societies have worked closely with the Regional Delegation, certain National Societies in the South have criticized its existence. The delegation has in practice functioned mainly as a focal point for disaster operations, as has been the tradition in the region, and to a much lesser extent in support of matters related to development. The Federation's policy on Regional Delegations emphasizes their advisory and advocacy role, however.

The Red Cross in the Americas region has an image that should be of great concern to the Federation. The organization is perceived as not having a clear program to meet the new challenges facing the continent in the 1990s; it is thought to be an institution out of step with its time, bureaucratic in its structure, and lacking not so much in resources as in political will. Furthermore, action and assistance are seen as coming mainly from outside and not as a result of national efforts.

The relations between the Federation and the other international components of the Red Cross Movement in the region, the ICRC and CORI, are, generally speaking, good even if not always very close. There are certain areas where the Federation and the ICRC need to improve their coordination, especially in relation to support provided to National Societies. Practical means of cooperation between the Federation and the CORI also need to be better defined.

**RECOMMENDATIONS TO
THE FEDERATION**

- 1. Translate global policies into regional and local actions**
- 2. Improve communication with National Societies**
- 3. Increase National Society development support**
- 4. Strengthen the Secretariat's response capacity**
- 5. Diversify and update delegate profiles**
- 6. Increase cooperation with other components of the Movement**

- 1. Translate global policy decisions by the Federation's General Assembly into practical action at the regional and local levels, and communicate such actions as widely as possible to send a clear message that the Red Cross is a dynamic organization. To this end:**
 - 1.1 Produce practical guidelines and educational materials for National Societies to help them plan and implement Federation policies in their countries. Pay special attention to actions expected from them in relation to policies outlined in the Strategic Work Plan for the Nineties, such as activities oriented towards the most vulnerable communities, advocacy in their favor, and cooperation with others. Guidance on issues such as human rights and the environment is also needed.
 - 1.2 Based on clearly enunciated development priorities, establish criteria for identifying National Societies in most need of support, and of programs or fields of action that are most relevant in the context of their working environment.
 - 1.3 Based on the criteria above and in cooperation with the National Societies concerned, prepare a Strategic Work Plan for the Americas region, identifying National Societies in greatest need, priority areas of support, the main tasks to be accomplished, and potential partners in cooperation.
 - 1.4 Through the public media, National Societies, and contacts with other organizations, promote a renewed and updated image of the Red Cross's activities and priorities. Support National Societies in their communications efforts.

- 2. Ensure permanent and fluid communication between National Societies in the Americas region and the Secretariat in Geneva and its Regional Delegations. To this end:**
 - 2.1 Assume an active role in establishing and maintaining contact with each National Society in order to remain current about their situation and in a position to respond to eventual needs and inquiries immediately.
 - 2.2 Ensure that modern technical facilities of communication are well known and used by all parties
 - 2.3 Make annual plans for visits by Federation representatives from Geneva and Regional Delegations to each National Society.
 - 2.4 Clarify lines of communication between National Societies, the Secretariat in Geneva, and Regional Delegations. Keep delegations informed of contacts with National Societies. Coordinate actions and communications with other Departments of the Secretariat.

- 3. Increase support to National Societies in their development efforts, including identification of action priorities, development of programs and services, and strengthening institutional infrastructure. To this end:**
 - 3.1 Provide advice, educational materials, and training opportunities for National Society staff and volunteers in fields such as needs identification, vulnerability analysis, working with communities, the advocacy role, and incorporating aspects of prevention into existing programs.
 - 3.2 Organize training, produce materials, and make available technical assistance to support National Society efforts in institutional development in areas such as strategic planning, human and financial resource development, leadership training, administrative practices, project identification, activity and financial reporting, and evaluation.
 - 3.3 Ensure proper follow-up of the self-analysis initiated by the National Societies during the Study. Facilitate assistance in producing Development Plans.
 - 3.4 Provide assistance in drafting Frameworks for Development Cooperation as set out in the Principles and Rules for Development Cooperation.
 - 3.5 Advise and support National Societies in designing project proposals to be included in the Appeal Document. Clarify criteria for selecting projects as well as funding procedures.
 - 3.6 Assume responsibility for including projects in the Appeal Document, ensuring the quality and relevance of a project in relation to a National Society's needs. Take the Study's findings and recommendations into account in the screening process. Promote projects included in the Appeal Document for support by Participating Societies.
 - 3.7 Study ways to speed up the Appeal process to avoid long waits by National Societies. Keep National Societies adequately informed of progress in response.

Conclusions and recommendations

- 4. Strengthen the capacity of the Federation's Secretariat and, in particular, its Americas Department to respond adequately to National Societies' needs in institutional and program development. To this end:**
 - 4.1 Ensure that Secretariat staff, including its Regional Delegations, are sufficiently familiar with Federation policies to be able to promote and advise National Societies on them. Set up regular in-house policy briefing sessions.
 - 4.2 Improve the staff's knowledge of development issues so that they can identify needs and priorities, recruit suitable technical assistance, and evaluate results. Organize training in this field.
 - 4.3 Assume a more active role in tackling difficult internal situations in National Societies to enable such Societies to fully exercise their humanitarian tasks in their countries. Do this, if possible, in cooperation with the ICRC and CORI.
 - 4.4 Strengthen the role of the Regional Delegations in order to enable them to fully support National Societies in their different development needs. Incorporate more professional staff and define the functions of each delegation clearly.
 - 4.5 Secure the financial stability of the Regional Delegations by incorporating them in the Federation's new consolidated planning and budgeting system. Encourage the National Societies in the region to participate in their funding and provide other kinds of support.

- 5. Diversify the profile of delegates, including expertise not only in relief but also in program and institutional development. Build up a network of different kinds of delegates who can respond to changing needs in the region. Set up an adequate system of training and support. To this end:**
 - 5.1 Establish a roster of delegates from the region, including those who have undertaken missions for the Federation as well as those trained but not yet utilized. Identify potential new delegates in National Societies and outside them (e.g., regional development institutions, consultants) with varied professional backgrounds.
 - 5.2 Organize training sessions for current delegates to update them on Federation policies and recent developments, including the Study. Organize basic training for potential new delegates.
 - 5.3 Emphasize the need for delegates to understand the political, economic, social, and cultural conditions in the country or region to which they are assigned, as well as its specific problems.
 - 5.4 Aim at contract periods of a minimum of two years for development delegates and delegates based in Regional Delegations to ensure program continuity and sustainability.
 - 5.5 Provide improved support to delegates in the field. Periodically review Terms of Reference for long-term delegates and evaluate their tasks and performance jointly with the National Society or the delegation concerned.

- 6. Increase contacts and cooperation with the ICRC and CORI in planning and implementing actions related to National Societies to improve long-term results and project a clear joint image. To this end:**
 - 6.1 Improve coordination and cooperation with the ICRC in Geneva and in the field, especially in the initial phase of an ICRC operation when support for a National Society is defined, and in the hand-over phase before the ICRC ends an operation and leaves the country. Also coordinate the Federation Development Appeal with the ICRC Annual Appeal concerning National Society support.
 - 6.2 Establish close working relations with the Regional Inter-American Committee (CORI) and define respective roles and functions. Increase the Federation's participation in preparing Inter-American Conferences and other regional or subregional meetings organized by CORI.
 - 6.3 Cooperate with the ICRC and CORI to create mechanisms for solving difficult internal situations in National Societies which threaten to put the Movement's humanitarian mission and image at risk.