

DEATH OF LEAGUE DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL

On 24 June 1973, Mr. Nedim Abut, Deputy Secretary-General of the League of Red Cross Societies, died suddenly. After fulfilling important functions with the Turkish Red Crescent from 1946 onwards and representing the Turkish Government at various international conferences, including the 1949 Geneva Diplomatic Conference, he took part in the work of several commissions and consultative committees of the League before being appointed, in 1962, Under Secretary-General of that institution. Four years later he was appointed Deputy Secretary-General, in which capacity he has carried out several missions in various parts of the world.

The International Committee will not forget Mr. Abut and expresses its sympathy to the League on its loss of such a valuable colleague.

INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS ASSISTANCE IN INDO-CHINA

Special projects

In addition to programmes of direct assistance to displaced persons and the particularly distressed populations in the Republic of Vietnam, the Khmer Republic and Laos, which we mentioned last month, the Indo-China Operational Group has prepared several "special projects" in co-operation with the Red Cross in the countries concerned. Some of those projects are in progress, such as the improving of the Phnom Penh pediatric centre, the medico-social action in orphanages in the Republic of Vietnam, and the supply of medicaments and medical and surgical equipment to the Pathet Lao, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the Provisional Revolutionary Government. Other projects in the IOG programme are:

Vietnam Republic: construction, equipping and financing for one year of a hospital for paraplegic cases at Vung Tau (estimated cost 5.3 million Swiss francs); construction, equipping and operation for a year of 18 provincial medical centres (13.7 million Swiss francs); equipping of a centre for amputees in Saigon (650,000 Swiss francs); sundry relief projects (550,000 Swiss francs).

Democratic Republic of Vietnam: provision to the Red Cross of this country of medical material and ambulances for about 1.3 million Swiss francs.

Provisional Revolutionary Government: equipping of a university hospital centre (estimated at 10 million Swiss francs).

Khmer Republic: despatch of a medico-surgical team (cost of one year's operation 500,000 Swiss francs); participation in establishing the Khmer Red Cross National Rehabilitation Centre (200,000 Swiss francs).

Laos: orthopedic hospital at Savannakhet (380,000 Swiss francs); assistance to Vientiane orthopedic centre (6,500 Swiss francs); services of an orthopedist for these two centres (estimated cost for one year 85,000 Swiss francs).

Democratic Republic of Vietnam

As mentioned, the technical specifications for the construction of prefabricated houses for 100,000 homeless people in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam have been submitted to National Societies which may be prepared to give the project financial support.

The specifications meet several basic conditions. The project includes the production and delivery to Haiphong of material and prefabricated elements for the rapid construction of the greatest possible number of simple houses. Vietnamese participation is ensured in respect of choice and planning of sites, transport, management and work of construction.

The first deliveries to Haiphong are expected before October 1973. In order to ensure the construction of the greatest possible number of houses with the means available to the Red Cross for this project, the strictest economy is a major need.

Whilst providing emergency shelters for the homeless, these houses should nevertheless have a life of thirty years. They should

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be resistant to the humidity, heat and wind of the tropical climate. These houses, even though very simple, must satisfy essential needs but they will not from the outset satisfy all the needs; it is therefore planned to improve them later.

The erection and assembly of the prefabricated elements must be simple enough to enable the work to be done by unskilled labour.

Each house will have a surface of 20 to 30 square metres, depending on the number of inhabitants, and will have one or two rooms.

The actual living quarters are separated by an inner court from a unit which includes a kitchen and an ablution room which, for the smaller types of house, can be used by two families.

Activities of Delegates in the Field

At the end of May 1973, IOG had in the field 45 people made available by the ICRC, the League and six National Societies (Belgium, France, Japan, Sweden, Switzerland and Tunisia).

Activity of the Tracing Offices

Laos: The Tracing Agency office in Vientiane has distributed thousands of family message forms and enquiry forms. Hundreds of requests for news of missing persons have been received since the office was opened.

Khmer Republic: The central office in Phnom Penh has transmitted to Geneva about a hundred requests for enquiries into the fate of missing military personnel and civilians; it has registered 6,000 displaced persons.

Republic of Vietnam: The Saigon office has sent the Central Tracing Agency in Geneva about a thousand requests for enquiries, which were immediately transferred to the Red Cross in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. In Saigon and in the provinces, the registering of displaced persons continues.
