

SEVENTY-SECOND DISTRIBUTION OF INCOME FROM THE EMPRESS SHÔKEN FUND

Fourteen Red Cross or Red Crescent Societies in developing countries will benefit from grants totalling 423,000 Swiss francs under the seventy-second distribution of income from the Empress Shôken Fund. The money will finance activities relating to disaster preparedness, health, social welfare, first aid and youth programmes.

The National Societies were selected at a recent meeting in Geneva of the joint ICRC-Federation Commission entrusted with the distribution of the income of the Fund. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Maurice Aubert, former Vice-President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The delegation of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (Federation) was headed by its Acting Secretary General, Mr. George Weber. The Ambassador of Japan in Geneva, H.E. Mr. Hidetoshi Ukawa, was present at the meeting.

The grants will finance the following projects:

<i>Beneficiary National Society</i>	<i>Amount in Swiss francs</i>	<i>Purpose of allocation</i>
Cape Verde	30,000	To purchase a minibus for the transport of aged people
Chile	37,000	For a CHEVROLET-ISUZU "Transporter" ambulance
Costa Rica	12,000	To install communication links in the "Región Tres"
Ecuador	35,000	For a TOYOTA Hiace 4WD ambulance
Egypt	35,000	For first-aid and rescue-training programmes all over the country

Jordan	34,000	To purchase medical equipment for a laboratory in the Ma'an district
Laos	45,000	To strengthen the capacity of the Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service
Madagascar	7,000	To purchase audio-visual equipment for training programmes
Pakistan	43,000	To purchase medical equipment for the Blood Donor Centre in Islamabad
Rwanda	30,000	For a TOYOTA Hiace ambulance/minibus
Sao Tome & Principe	20,000	Wheelchairs/tricycles for disabled persons
Solomon Islands	20,000	To purchase equipment for training and development programmes
South Africa	50,000	To help finance the enlargement of the Kwanobuhle Community Centre in the Eastern Cape Region
Swaziland	25,000	To train first-aid instructors for programmes to be carried out throughout the country
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Total	423,000	

The Fund was set up in 1912 through a gift from Her Imperial Majesty of Japan to encourage the development of humanitarian activities by National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The Empress Shôken died on 11 April 1914. The Fund has received repeated gifts from the Imperial Family of Japan, the most recent one being a five million yen donation to mark the 90th birthday of Her Majesty the Dowager Empress on 6 March 1993.

Both the Japanese Government and the Japanese Red Cross Society also contribute to the Fund, the former with generous annual allocations of twenty million yen, the latter with donations on special occasions, e.g. a five million yen contribution on 8 March 1993, the 40th anniversary of the enactment of the Japanese Red Cross Law.

The interest-bearing investments of the Fund amount to 7.5 million Swiss francs.