

flood; they perform rescue and relief work in time of disaster; they disseminate health knowledge; they demonstrate the construction of latrines and the protection of water resources; they collect food, funds and relief supplies for victims of fires, floods and storms; they volunteer their labour for constructive work; recruit blood donors and give their own blood when required. . . .

The Burma Red Cross works side by side with the public authorities for the prevention of epidemics. The work of Red Cross volunteers is important in the prevention of epidemics by carrying out vaccination campaigns when an epidemic threatens and providing first aid in the event of natural disaster.

During the last ten years, in spite of its slender resources, the Red Cross has distributed funds and food to sister societies to help the victims of disasters. In the same way, other National Societies have helped the Burma Red Cross in time of need. In 1961 for instance, when large areas were flooded, Societies donated money and goods. In a recent cyclone disaster, the Society collected relief goods, some of which it already had in store at Akyab at the time of the disaster and which was airlifted as soon as the bad tidings reached Rangoon.

There are Red Cross Societies in practically every township and in some 2,000 villages. The Burma Red Cross roots spread throughout the whole population for the sole purpose of alleviating distress.

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## PAKISTAN

*The preparation of relief as a precaution against disasters is an important task undertaken today in certain countries by the National Societies. It is also an essential part of the programme of the League of Red Cross Societies, whose Relief Section published the following circular relative to East Pakistan :*

The Swedish Red Cross, in conjunction with the League, offered to assist the Pakistan Red Cross Society with its pre-disaster

planning in East Pakistan—one of the most highly vulnerable parts of the world to disaster. In the second half of 1966 an expert was assigned to work with the East Pakistan Provincial Branch of the Pakistan Red Cross at Dacca.

A profound study was made by the Red Cross and the authorities of the particular problem affecting East Pakistan, namely the cyclones which sweep up the Bay of Bengal and over the off-shore islands and the low lying coastal areas, resulting in thousands of deaths and millions of homeless almost every year. An absolute solution involving the construction of a protective embankment against high storm waves, the installation of a number of weather radars including a complete communication system, etc., is beyond the resources at present available. However, a great improvement was considered possible by teaching and training the population to use their experience in a systematic way and by giving them simple but essential equipment such as radios to receive the warnings and sirens to alert the villagers, etc.<sup>1</sup>

In 1967 therefore, the Pakistan Red Cross, in close collaboration with the authorities, commenced training of team leaders in all the communities along the coast line. These people, with their team of helpers, are responsible for alerting the villagers, the evacuation of the population to safer areas, fire fighting, rescue of cattle, storage of water and food, as well as ensuring the provision of medical care and sanitation, the distribution of emergency relief supplies and other Red Cross services. Systematic training has continued ever since and distributions have been made of transistor radios, hand-operated sirens and lanterns for giving the alert, life vests for children living on the most vulnerable islands, and first-aid kits for the team leaders.

Radda Barnen, the Swedish Save the Children Fund, expressed its interest in cooperating with this programme and agreed to finance the purchase and installation of a 10-cm weather radar at Cox's Bazar as part of the Pre-Disaster Planning Pilot Project undertaken by the East Pakistan Red Cross in cooperation with

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<sup>1</sup> *Plate*: Red Cross volunteers receiving equipment to enable them to carry out their work when cyclones and floods threaten an area: transistor sets, sirens and other material to sound the alarm in sufficient time for the population to take shelter.

the Swedish Red Cross and the League. This would give advance warning of the approach of a cyclone and thus permit the evacuation process to be put into operation. The foundation stone was laid in October 1968 and on the 16th May 1969 the radar station went into operation. The meteorological personnel assigned by the Pakistan Government to the radar station at Cox's Bazar have been trained at the Miami Weather Bureau in Florida and Japan. They are now receiving further training in radar interpretation by an American storm expert and in radar technique and maintenance by Japanese radar engineers at present stationed at Cox's Bazar.

Thus a very important step forward has been taken by the Pakistan Red Cross Society in this vital Red Cross field of pre-disaster planning.

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## PERU

On 21 June 1969, rioting broke out at Huanta and Ayacucho, two towns some 325 miles south-east of Lima. As a result of the clash between peasants and police there were eighteen dead and some sixty wounded.

A relief centre was immediately organised by the National Red Cross Society at Lima. Dr. Demetrio Grados, Head of Relief, flew to Ayacucho, taking with him a consignment of medical supplies including blood serum and plasma.

In addition, four lorries with medical supplies went to Huanta on 27 June. The town had been completely isolated due to the disturbances.

The Peruvian Red Cross, in co-operation with the armed forces, organised an airlift between Lima and Huanta. This enabled the more seriously wounded to be evacuated as rapidly as possible.