BACKGROUND

Country Profile

This document complements the operational plan of the IFRC country office and reflects the IFRC support provided to the Colombian Red Cross Society in agreed upon areas of focus.

Colombia is emerging from a long and violent internal conflict. Despite the peace accords of 2016, new challenges have emerged in the form of dissidence from former members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and other illicit armed groups, an increase in coca-leaf production, and a decrease in security and safety. The past two years have seen the assassinations of social leaders and politicians, which have led to repeated demonstrations by civil society actors in demand of justice and respect for human rights.

The socio-political context in neighbouring Venezuela has led to the mass movement of people throughout Latin America. The migration flow has led to over 1 million Venezuelans in Colombia. Norte de Santander, Guajira, Arauca and the other departments on the route to the South and Nariño (Colombian-Ecuadorian Border)
border) in the South are experiencing the impact of this human influx. As Nariño is a conflict zone with the presence of National Liberation Army (ELN) and the Popular Liberation Army (EPL), the migrant population is increasingly vulnerable.

Due to the population movement, other humanitarian issues have emerged due to human trafficking, sexual violence and exploitation, health issues, xenophobia, child labour, labour exploitation, as well as lack of access to education, health, and justice for this population. There is an extreme need for health, food security, water and sanitation services, and assistance for both Venezuelans and Colombians in the border regions and inland Colombia.

The National Society Role and Profile

The Colombian Red Cross Society (CRCS) has 105 years of experience, 25,492 registered volunteers, and 229 departmental and local branches. The CRCS strategic lines are in peace and social inclusion, health, environment, climate change and disaster risk reduction, knowledge management and innovation, and excellence and volunteering. The National Society has done solid work in disaster risk reduction, community resilience, access to safe and clean water, health, social reintegration, socio-economic development, and peacebuilding. It has also implemented projects of social inclusion, restoring family links, human rights protection of people at risk and victims of armed conflicts, and promotion of norms related to explosive devices.
The Role of the IFRC Country Office

The IFRC country cluster support team (CCST) office for the Andean countries created this operational plan to support the Colombian Red Cross Society in 2019 in the following Areas of Focus:

1. Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)
2. Health
3. Protection, Gender, and Inclusion
4. Migration

Additional support will be provided in three Strategies for Implementation:

1. Strengthen National Society capacities and ensure sustained and relevant Red Cross and Red Crescent presence in communities
2. Ensure effective international disaster management
3. Influence others as a leading strategic partner in humanitarian action and community resilience

In addition to the Secretariat, the CRCS receives in-country support from the American Red Cross, German Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross, Spanish Red Cross and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The Swiss Cooperation for Development (COSUDE) currently funds the Monarch Butterfly migration project in the northern border region of Colombia. This project supports the CRCS to address the humanitarian needs of people on the move on the Colombia-Venezuela border in Norte de Santander.
AREAS OF FOCUS

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION (DRR)

5
URBAN COMMUNITIES IN HIGH RISK AREAS WILL BE PREPARED FOR AND ABLE TO RESPOND TO DISASTERS

50
VOLUNTEERS TRAINED IN DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

HEALTH

1,000
PEOPLE WILL BE REACHED BY CRCS HEALTH PROGRAMMES AND SERVICES

PROTECTION, GENDER AND INCLUSION

125
VOLUNTEERS WILL BE TRAINED IN PROTECTION, GENDER AND INCLUSION ASPECTS

MIGRATION

50,000
PEOPLE WILL BE SUPPORTED WITH SERVICES RELATED TO MIGRATION

STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

• STRENGTHEN NATIONAL SOCIETY CAPACITIES
• INFLUENCE OTHERS AS LEADING STRATEGIC PARTNERS
AREA OF FOCUS

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Assessment and Analysis

According to the Notre Dame Global Adaptation Index (ND-GAIN), which measures vulnerability versus readiness to improve resilience in 181 countries, Colombia ranks 77 (2016 figures). Colombia is prone to floods, earthquakes, landslides, volcanoes, and cyclones. According to the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR), Colombia has “the highest recurrence of extreme hazard events in South America, with 84 percent of the population and 86 percent of assets exposed to two or more hazards”.

Climate change impacts and the high density of urban areas in the country makes Colombia even more vulnerable to disasters. The influx of migrants has escalated the level of vulnerability, due to the challenges to reach a highly mobile population with the necessary DRR skills and knowledge for this context. Furthermore, many migrants often settle in highly populated informal settlements in areas prone to disasters.

The Secretariat is seeking funds to support urban resilience actions in Cali and Medellin with a focus on five communities (combined) in both cities. The CRCS has already started the Road Map to Resilience, which can be applied to urban settings. With regards to the target cities, Cali has one of the fastest-growing economies in Colombia, and a burgeoning population to match, due in part to the displaced population during the armed conflict. The latter population, as well as new migrants, often live in high-risk, informal settlements, with limited access to health and other basic public services. These settlements often face increased exposure to flooding due to the vulnerability of the Cauca River dike. Medellin has the challenges of inequality, social conflict, crime, intolerance, inadequate land management, and new environmental challenges related to climate change. Its main risks are landslides and earthquakes, especially in areas of informal human settlements.
Programmatic Approach

The CCST will support the CRCS to develop an integrated DRR and health project to reach demobilized FARC members located in Transitory Zones for Normalization. This project is further detailed in the health section below.

Based on previous work in urban resilience, the IFRC will support the CRCS to secure funding to implement the resilient cities approach in Cali and Medellin.

IFRC will also support the CRCS to secure funding to implement a project to promote action on climate change.

The Secretariat aims to identify and secure funding that permits the CRCS to roll out DRR actions that respond to the emerging needs in the post-conflict period and in the context of massive migration flows.
AREA OF FOCUS

HEALTH

Assessment and Analysis

Following the demobilization of the FARC in November 2016, many of these women and men and their families were relocated in Transitory Zones for Normalization. In the Annual Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), it was noted that “The reintegration of former combatants in rural areas is a major challenge due to multidimensional poverty, problematic access to health and education, illicit economies and endemic violence in 96 per cent of the areas near the Zones.”

Programmatic Approach

The health actions for 2019 focus on community-based health and first aid (CBHFA) actions to address the needs of demobilized insurgent communities and complementing the Emergency Appeal (MDRCO014) Population Movement that is addressing the humanitarian needs of the population on the move and migrants from Venezuela.

Additionally, the CCST will provide technical support to harmonize health actions that are part of the Emergency Appeal Colombia: Population Movement (MDRCO014) with the Monarch Butterfly project.

| PEOPLE REACHED BY HEALTH PROGRAMMES AND SERVICES | 1,000 |
| VOLUNTEERS MOBILIZED BY CRCS FOR HEALTH ACTIVITIES | 100 |
| CBHFA PLANS DEVELOPED TO ADDRESS IDENTIFIED HEALTH RISKS | 5 |
| PEOPLE TRAINED IN FIRST AID | 1,000 |

OUTCOME

VULNERABLE PEOPLE’S HEALTH AND DIGNITY ARE IMPROVED THROUGH INCREASED ACCESS TO APPROPRIATE HEALTH SERVICES
AREA OF FOCUS

PROTECTION, GENDER AND INCLUSION

Assessment and Analysis

Faced with a population of 1.1 million Venezuelans currently in Colombia, the Monarch Butterfly programme will be continued in 2019. The Colombia-focused project currently provides relevant information and orientation to this migrant population. The Secretariat aims to support the CRCS to expand its programmatic scope to work with and for this population. This entails the identification and securing of funds for actions in awareness-raising activities with regards to gender, age (children and elderly), people with disabilities, LGBTI community, among others.

Additional support is required to reach the Venezuelan nationals who have settled in Colombian urban and rural areas in protection issues, as well as to engage in actions with the receiving communities.

Programmatic Approach

In addition to specific programmatic issues, the IFRC seeks to ensure that its actions are framed within the IFRC’s minimum standard commitments to gender and diversity in emergency programming and IFRC Strategic Framework on Gender and Diversity Issues, 2013–2020. In addition to training CRCS volunteers, technical guidance will be provided to contribute to the implementation of a PGI analysis in other sectors.

CRCS, WITH IFRC SUPPORT, LAUNCHES AN ANNUAL PROGRAMME ON VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND MITIGATION FOCUSING ON CHILDREN

CRCS AND IFRC JOINTLY ADVOCATE IN AT LEAST THREE INITIATIVES TO PREVENT VIOLENCE, INCLUDING SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (SGBV) AGAINST CHILDREN

COMMUNITIES BECOME MORE PEACEFUL, SAFE, AND INCLUSIVE THROUGH MEETING THE NEEDS AND RIGHTS OF THE MOST VULNERABLE
AREA OF FOCUS

MIGRATION

Assessment and Analysis

In the UNHCR Commissioner’s October 2018 visit to border countries to Venezuela, he praised Colombia’s humanitarian response and estimated that by 2021, the number of Venezuelan migrants could rise to 4 million. This programmatic area is central to IFRC’s support to the Colombian Red Cross Society in 2019 and complements the Emergency Appeal (MDRCO014) that will continue through mid-year.

390,000 SWISS FRANCS SOUGHT

PEOPLE REACHED WITH SERVICES FOR MIGRATION ASSISTANCE AND PROTECTION 3,000

CROSS-BORDER DISPLACED PEOPLE/MIGRANTS TARGETED/AFFECTED 2,000
**Programmatic approach**

With 1.1 million Venezuelans in Colombia, the CRCS requires continued support to provide basic health assistance, coordination with public institutions and local actors, actions to reduce vulnerability and stigma, discrimination and xenophobia.

Given the ongoing demand for humanitarian assistance to this population, IFRC will support the CRCS to expand the Monarch Butterfly programme. This approach aims to implement actions with the population on the move, migrants who have settled in the country and receiving communities. There will be a focus on migration assistance and protection, based on emerging needs, and on initiatives to decrease xenophobia and foster inclusion of the recent arrivals.

| **RCRC INITIATIVES WITH POLICY AND STRATEGIC PLANNING DECISION-MAKERS TO PROMOTE GREATER AWARENESS OF, ASSISTANCE FOR, AND PROTECTION OF MIGRANTS** | 3 |
| **PEOPLE REACHED BY AWARENESS RAISING AND SENSITIZATION CAMPAIGNS TO ADDRESS XENOPHOBIA, DISCRIMINATION AND NEGATIVE ATTITUDES TOWARDS MIGRANTS** | 50,000 |
| **PEOPLE ASSISTED THROUGH RESTORING FAMILY LINKS (RFL) ACTIVITIES** | 3,000 |

**OUTCOME**

Communities support the needs of migrants and their families and those assisting migrants at all stages of migration (origin, transit, and destination).
STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

STRENGTHEN NATIONAL SOCIETY CAPACITIES

Assessment and Analysis

The Colombian Red Cross Society is one of the strongest National Societies in the Americas. With a solid volunteer network and capable professionals, the CRCS will be supported to improve its organizational structure to better respond to the demands related to the current humanitarian needs. This Secretariat will work with the National Society to build upon the new organizational structure, established in mid-2018, and extend this progress to the branch level.

Programmatic approach

IFRC will provide leadership training at the branch level and work with the National Society to improve its volunteer management and training. All Secretariat work with the CRCS entails a cross-cutting security focus that ensures the safety of volunteers, leadership and staff, as well as the staff of the IFRC.

OUTCOME

NATIONAL SOCIETY HAS THE NECESSARY LEGAL, ETHICAL AND FINANCIAL FOUNDATIONS, SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES, COMPETENCES AND CAPACITIES TO PLAN/PERFORM

OUTCOME

NATIONAL SOCIETIES DEVELOP DEEPLY SHARED IDENTITIES AND IMPROVED INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

OUTCOME

THE FEDERATION NETWORK BENEFITS FROM ITS WEALTH OF EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE AND THE SHARED CULTURE INNOVATION, LEARNING AND BUILDING ON THE BEST
STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

INFLUENCE OTHERS AS LEADING STRATEGIC PARTNERS

Assessment and Analysis

Given the rapidly changing humanitarian context in the country following the 2016 peace accords and the increasing influx of Venezuelan nationals, the Secretariat will remain flexible and employ its technical experience in humanitarian diplomacy to work with all possible humanitarian actors. These actions include direct relations, in support of the CRCS, with the Colombian state at the national and sub-national levels.

The secretariat is committed to strengthening the role and perception of the CRCS as a leading humanitarian actor in the country. Beyond the regular participation in Country Humanitarian Team meetings, the National Society will receive technical guidance from the Secretariat to better shape its humanitarian strategies and partnerships with other actors.

Programmatic approach

IFRC will provide technical support and training to the National Society to strengthen its auxiliary role on Disaster Law. This will include strengthening CRCS’s capacities on Disaster Law, Legislative Advocacy and Humanitarian Diplomacy by using the 2018 Legislative Advocacy Toolkit for the design of advocacy strategies for the effective implementation of International Disaster Response Law (IDRL) / Disaster Risk Reduction recommendations, as they stem from IDRL or DRR legal reports.

Following the 2018 change in the central government, IFRC will support the National Society with advocacy and coordination with the new authorities from the National Risk Reduction System (UNSGR) and related ministries to ensure that progress made to date is not lost.

THE IFRC SECRETARIAT, TOGETHER WITH THE NS, USES THEIR POSITION TO INFLUENCE DECISIONS AT LOCAL, NATIONAL, AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS THAT AFFECT THE MOST VULNERABLE

THE PROGRAMMATIC REACH OF THE NATIONAL SOCIETIES AND THE IFRC IS EXPANDED
Contact information of the IFRC Country office, for partners who wish to find out more:

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