Following the massive explosion on April 22 at Ryongchon station in North Korea, the Republic of Korea National Red Cross has continued its effort to support the disaster victims through donations from various sources.

The Society has distributed emergency disaster relief items such as medicines and other life necessities, and has also supported the North with recovery materials and equipment, and school requisites as requested during a bilateral meeting between the North and the South on April 27 at Kaesong.

The first consignment consisting of diverse relief items worth over USD 775,000 was sent to Nampo port on April 28. Living necessities and medicines have also been sent to the North by air and sea.

In addition, requests by the North for emergency recovery materials and equipment have been met, starting with the first donation of 20 dump trucks, desks, chairs and blackboards on May 10 and 11. They comprised a payload, bulldozers, steel and PVC sheeting worth USD 1.4 million. It should be pointed out that for the second delivery of recovery equipment, engineers from the South were allowed to visit Shinuiju for the first time in order to give instruction on the use of the heavy-duty equipment. The fourth to seventh consignments including rice, gas, cement and steel were delivered before the end of May to Nampo and Dandong.

By the end of June, the KNRC had made 27 deliveries of relief goods including nine shipments of emergency relief goods and 18 consignments of recovery materials and equipment. These relief goods were delivered to the North through land, sea and air routes. The total value of these goods is over USD 28 million. In addition the KNRC donated USD 100,000 in response to emergency appeal of the Federation on 12 May.

Moreover, in order to support the North, the KNRC has collected:- USD 1.03 million through the ARS telephone service.- USD 9.7 million through cash collections and bank deposits.- Other relief items such as medicines and living necessities from 220 different organizations.
2004 Disaster Relief Training

On May 14, comprehensive training for disaster relief was held by the KNRC at Hwangryong Riverside Park in Jang Sung Gun, Cheonnam Province to prepare for summer typhoons and flooding. A total of 2,500 people attended the session including the KNRC President Dr. Yoon-Gu Lee, the City Mayor of Gwangju, the Governor of Cheonnam Province, administrators of the Cheonnam police, KNRC volunteers and RCY members, and local residents.

With the presence of other KNRC chapters and blood centers, including Gwangju-Cheonnam and Seoul Chapters, and the Gwangju-Cheonnam Blood Center, the KNRC supervised cooperation among 11 concerned organizations such as Gwangju City, Cheonnam police, Fire Defense HQ and the Korean Electric Power Corporation.

Training for Red Cross Volunteer Leadership

To enhance leadership among volunteers, the 15th Training Session for Red Cross Volunteer Leadership was held with the participation of 51 Red Cross volunteers from all over the country at the Society’s Training Institute in Suwon, Kyonggi Province.

During the three days and two nights of training, lectures were given on resource development in the community, human relationships and communication, the management of volunteer activities and leadership, followed by a special speech delivered by the Korean Red Cross Vice President Dr. Soja Hong.

In addition, the National Council of Red Cross Volunteers, with the Chairman of the National Subcommittee in attendance, held a workshop with the Subcommittees for Disaster and Safety and for Child and Youth to discuss and exchange views and ideas for heightening expertise within the subcommittees, and setting priorities for various programs.

Teacher’s Day Memorial Event

In May, Red Cross Youth (RCY) members held various events to commemorate Teachers’ Day. The Korean Red Cross held the Fourth National Youth Composition Contest at Kangkyung Girls’ High School in Kyongnam Province, the first school to celebrate Teachers’ Day. Some 1,500 people attended, including RCY members and KNRC leaders.

Participants gathered near the Teachers’ Day memorial tower built in 2000 at Kangkyung Girls’ High School and expressed their thanks through poetry, essays and drawings to celebrate the profound meaning of Teachers’ Day.

The KNRC also collaborated with the Korean Federation of Teachers’ Associations (KFTA) to hold a Teachers’ Day ceremony in the KFTA main hall. Some 500 persons including KNRC President Dr. Yoon-Gu Lee, the President of the KFTA and other education-related persons participated in a ceremony to reward distinguished educators, and to show their gratitude.

The KNRC also organized an essay competition for RCY members, students, teachers and the general public during the month of May to celebrate Teachers’ Day.

In 2005, stamps celebrating the centennial of the Republic of Korea National Red Cross’ foundation will be on sale. After due consideration of proposed commemorative stamps, Korea POST, under the Ministry of Information and Communication, decided on May 17 that the KNRC’s 100th anniversary will be depicted as a commemorative stamp.

Korea POST will produce 1.6 million of these stamps on the day of 100th anniversary, October 27, 2005. The KNRC also plans to produce 3,000 stamp books for both internal and external PR reasons.

President Lee, First from the South to Visit Ryongchon

The Korean Red Cross President and Federation representatives arrived in Pyongyang on June 5th and visited Ryongchon station by helicopters next morning in which heavy casualties and property damages occurred on April 22nd due to train explosion.

They were briefed by Red Cross Branch Vice-Chairman on current rehabilitation process and future plan and visited reconstruction site. According to Vice-Chairman of the Branch, Ryongchon will be a new city under the strong support from the North Korean government by the end of October this year. She never failed to express sincere appreciation for strong support from the Components of Movement.

The visiting group moved to one of temporary tents where around of 50 families had been accommodated followed by visiting the county hospital in Ryongchon. The hospital had 150 in-patients including 20 patients of train explosion.

While staying in Ryongchon, the KNRC President who made a first visit from the South to Ryongchon had a bilateral discussion with the North Korean Red Cross on mutual cooperation issues.

Korean Red Cross 100th Anniversary Stamps

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The World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day Commemorated

On May 8 the Republic of Korea National Red Cross (KNRC) held a commemoration for the World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day in its headquarters building. KNRC Vice Presidents Dr. Se-Ung Lee and Dr. Soja Hong and 100 other Red Cross staffers attended.

The May 8 World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day celebrates the birthday of Henry Dunant, the founder of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and the first to win the Nobel Prize. Currently, 181 countries commemorate the day.

On this day, Mr. Juan Manuel Suarez del Toro Rivero, President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and Dr. Yoon-Gu Lee, President of the KNRC, gave commemorative messages.

Mr. Suarez del Toro appealed to Red Cross and Red Crescent people around the world with these words, “All Red Cross and Red Crescent people must practice ‘stop discrimination campaigns’ to stand up against all kinds of discrimination for mankind and enhance respect and tolerance for cultural diversity.”

The President of Korean Red Cross said in his message that, “With a grateful heart I thank everyone individually for supporting accident victims. We, the people of the Red Cross, shall continue to walk together toward disasters in our society, North Korea and anywhere in the world, and shall serve the world under the flag of the Red Cross.”

Commemorative ceremony for the World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day at the Society’s headquarters on May 8

Turkish Red Crescent Delegation Visits KNRC

As members of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and based on the spirit and ideology of humanitarianism, the Republic of Korea National Red Cross and the Turkish Red Crescent Society reached an agreement in 2003 aimed at increasing mutual understanding and cementing friendship between two Societies.

The two Societies revived a national-level staff exchange program, dormant since 1998. A delegation composed of five staff members from the Turkish Red Crescent Society (TRCS), including President Mr. Talat Yilmaz, made a visit to Korea under the staff exchange program from June 21 to 26.

When the delegation made a courtesy call on Dr. Yoon-Gu Lee, the Red Cross Grand Order of Taeguk was conferred on TRCSPresident Talat Yilmaz. They exchanged views on strengthening cooperation between the two Societies for humanitarian missions. And on the last day of the delegation’s stay, the Presidents of two Societies concluded Memorandum of Understanding for enhancing and developing the cooperation between them.

During its stay in Korea, the delegation also visited the KNRC’s Seoul Chapter, Busan Chapter and Busan Blood Center in order to observe their various activities. For further understanding of Korea they had the valuable opportunity to visit places with important historical associations such as Bulguk temple and Sukgulam in Kyoungsi, both built in the Shilla Dynasty. It was also very meaningful for them to visit the UN cemetery, in which foreign soldiers who fell in the Korean War lie buried. There they placed flowers at the foot of the monument to the Turkish soldiers who died while participating in the Korean War 1950-1953.

The Second Friendship Tree Planting Event

Youth members from the two Korean Red Cross Societies gathered at Mt. Geumgang to plant trees representing peace and friendship. Some 27 RCY members of the Republic of Korea National Red Cross, ranging from elementary school to university students, planted approximately 1,000 trees on the mountain with youth members of the North Korean Red Cross on April 5, national Arbor Day.

The event was held in Jo Po village, On Jung-ri, near permanent meeting place agreed between two sides for separated family members. Eighty Red Cross staff members attended including Byung-Dae Park, Secretary General of the KNRC, Chang-Hun Choi, Director of the Relief Department of the North Korean Red Cross and Mr. Harvor Fossum Rauritzsen, Director of the International Relations Department of the Norwegian Red Cross.

Mr. Park, Secretary General of the KNRC said, “Korean youths are gathered under the humanitarian flag of the Red Cross. Today’s event will be the foundation for growing friendship among young people of two sides, and will foster a greener peninsula.”

The course included education and exercise on the role and responsibilities of delegates at operational fields in which both ICRC and the Federation carry out humanitarian mission and mock relief training under realistic circumstances, all in English.

Director of the North Relief Department said, “Today’s event will enhance the patriotic spirit and hopes for unification among the youth of two Koreas.” After the event, both RCY members climbed Gu Ryoung Yon at Mt. Geumgang and watched a performance by the North’s acrobatics team. After a tour of Samil-Po, youths ended the three-day program by sharing their farewells.

In addition to this event, on March 26 the KNRC offered 300,000 young cone pines to the North Korean Red Cross for their reforestation efforts to lessen flooding disasters caused by the devastated land.

A participant in 2004 BTC is presenting his group’s opinion on group task

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2004 Basic Training Course for Delegates

The aim of the Basic Training Course for Delegates (BTC) is to educate those who will professionally act as supporters of victims in natural and man-made disasters. This year’s BTC educated 23 Red Cross staff members and external volunteers at the Red Cross Training Institute in Suwon, Kyonggi Province for a week from May 17 to 22.

This year’s BTC invited these able personnel because of the KNRC’s determination to actively participate in international field by sending its members. The training session was facilitated by KNRC staff members and one professional trainer each from the Federation and the ICRC.

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A group consisting of 20 people including the Republic of Korea National Red Cross President Dr. Yoon-Gu Lee visited North Korea from April 20 to 24. The visit was the result of an official invitation from Mr. Jae-On Chang, the Chairman of Central Committee of the North Korean Red Cross.

On April 20, the group arrived in Pyongyang from Beijing. The group received a warm welcome from North Korean Red Cross members.

The group visited the head office of the North Korean Red Cross, delivered medical supplies donated by South Korea medical firms and discussed cooperation between the two Red Cross Societies regarding the humanitarian agenda.

The medical supplies given to the North are worth approximately USD 2.1 million. These medicines were donated by 31 domestic medical firms and delivered by sea from Incheon in the South to Nampo in the North.

The event provided an opportunity for the South Korean medical group to discuss medical matters with the North including support for the Pyongyang Red Cross Hospital.

As a member of the international community, the Republic of Korea National Red Cross (KNRC) will celebrate its centennial in 2005 while devoting great efforts to support the programs of Sister Societies in developing countries.

Starting last year, the KNRC has supported the first aid activities of the East Timor Red Cross. The Society will train more than 80 staffers and volunteers from four chapters and provide 1,000 local residents with education on first aid and public health. The KNRC sent the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies CHF 50,000 to support the joint development program of the East Timor Red Cross and the Federation.

Additionally, in June the KNRC donated CHF 78,590 to the Federation to support the Red Cross Society of Azerbaijan, a country that suffers from frequent disasters and economic instability. This aid is aimed at strengthening disaster preventive and management systems, and at repairing and improving the housing of solitary seniors and displaced people in Nakhchevan.

This year, the KNRC is planning to continue support activities for Sister Societies’ development programs by assisting first aid and health activities in Iraq, strengthening disaster management capacity in Kiribati and supporting printing facilities in Uzbekistan.

Blood Donor’s Day (June 14) is a special day for showing gratitude to the silent heroes who donate blood without seeking acclaim. To celebrate this day, the Republic of Korea National Red Cross (KNRC) organized a campaign through 16 blood centers, donation centers and mobile blood donation buses from 10 to 14 June.

The KNRC made a contract with the Red Crescent Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran to aid Iranian sufferers by primarily constructing 100 prefabricated houses before the end of July and organizing a campaign for fundraising in Korea. One participant said, “I hope these houses will be built quickly to bring smiles to the victims who have lost hope.”

Korean Red Cross members are building prefabricated houses for earthquake victims in Iran

The recent earthquake in Bam, Iran resulted in 41,000 deaths, left 20,000 injured and 80% of its buildings destroyed. A effort of the Republic of Korea National Red Cross (KNRC) to diminish the suffering of the victims by constructing prefabricated houses is under way.

Early this year at the request of Iranian Red Crescent Society, the KNRC decided to build prefabricated houses for these earthquake victims. Subsequently a group of volunteers and University RCY members was dispatched to support and monitor the construction for a period from April 26 to May 8. The members helped construct temporary prefabricated housing in disaster area and gave further support by serving victims with food at a free feeding center.

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The origin of this date, July 14, comes from the birth date of Dr. Karl Land Steiner, who discovered the ABO blood types. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the World Health Organization, the International Federation of Blood Donor Organizations and International Society of Blood Transfusion collaborated to set this day to honor and thank blood donors globally.

During the campaign, blood donor buttons, Korean Red Cross mugs and other gifts were given to blood donors. The volunteers also pursued a campaign at major spots in the city to inform the public about the purpose of the blood donation drive. In addition, the KBS1-TV show “Ask Anything” focused on Global Donor’s Day for an hour, reporting live the meaning of the day, the process of participating in blood donation, personnel identification and much more to support greater attention from the public.

Furthermore, the blood donation drive collected various ideas for slogans and actual experiences of blood donation from the younger generation through its website. Dreamwiz.com also took part in celebrating this day and agreed to display the Korean Red Cross banner for free to inform its users of blood donation campaigns.

The Minister of Health and Welfare and KNRC President made awards to the most enthusiastic participants and organizations during the year following recommendations from Korean Red Cross blood centers. 

KNRC Medical Group Visits Pyongyang

International Assistance for Sister Societies

Global Blood Donor’s Day

KNRC Sends Volunteers to Build Temporary Housing in Iran

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