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Red Cross Obtains New Logistics Software

Geneva

By Dale Gavlak



The biggest relief operator in the world, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, says a new logistics software will speed up its operations around the world.

Whether it's delivering relief supplies to earthquake survivors in Algeria or assisting flood victims in Sudan, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies says it is now better prepared to respond to emergencies and help refugees.

The organization's director for disaster management, Abbas Gullet, says Red Cross's resources have been stretched to the limit with the number of people affected by disasters tripling since 1970. Last year alone, he says, 256 million people were affected, well above the decade's annual average.

Mr. Gullet says the relief process is expected to be increased by 20 to 30 percent using the new Humanitarian Logistics Software.

"It should improve and enhance our ability to better monitor, follow-up, control and to ensure delivery and accountability of these relief supplies from the time the order is placed to the time it is delivered at the other end," he said. "It should also enable our people, our relief workers on the ground to also know at the press of a button what shipments are on the pipeline, where are they coming from, when are they expected and the quantities."

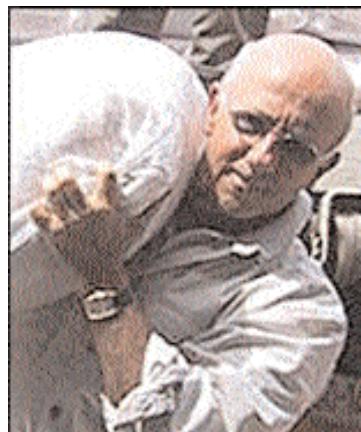
Mr. Gullet says the Fritz Institute, a U.S. leader in commercial logistics, has donated its expertise and latest technology to allow

up to the minute tracking of aid materials to bring the right relief at the right time. The institute's director, Lynn Fritz, says the technology can be easily adapted to other aid organizations.

"When we developed this technology we wanted to do it with the largest, the most complex organization, in size, scale and complexity to prove out the technology so that it would hopefully be more easily adaptable to a variety of other organizations," said Lynn Fritz.

Mr. Fritz says his company donated \$1 million and thousands of hours developing the project, but is making the software available for free. Maintenance will have a nominal charge.

The International Federation says the new logistics system is simple, flexible and user friendly. It goes "live" this week in Geneva and will soon become the standard for 181 Red Cross/Red Crescent operations worldwide.



Lynn Fritz joining in relief delivery efforts in Zimbabwe