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UGANDA RED CROSS INTENSIFIES COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS

Jinja: The Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) will this year commit its efforts towards strengthening community development interventions as a measure for community resilience in times of disasters.

URCS together with Kenya, Ethiopia and Eritrea Red Cross Societies have agreed to focus on areas of disaster response, disaster preparedness, health and care in communities gauging by the level of humanitarian needs in those countries.

This was agreed on during the International Federation of Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Eastern African regional Master Trainers of Trainers on Community Development on January 29, 2010 at Sunset Hotel International in Jinja.

Community Development seeks to empower individuals and groups of people by providing them with the skills needed to effect change in their communities. The training was funded by Netherlands Red Cross through IFRC.

The four Red Cross Societies noted the need to empower communities so that in times of disasters, they are able to respond early enough through social groups or individuals working for a common agenda. This is based on the fact that whenever emergencies occur, communities have to wait for humanitarian organizations and government to intervene.

The overall objective of the TOT training was to prepare national trainers who know how to use the training package for planning and managing community projects and who are able to train and support their Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies to build the capacity of their branches and local units.

Participants were equipped with skills in community based health care, assessing health needs during a disaster, how to conduct a rapid assessment in time of any disaster. They also discussed the strategy 2010 for Community Development.

URCS Board Chairman Tom Buruku while closing the training said community development is key in the implementation of any development programme/project. He noted that members of

the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement have had a chance of sharing experiences during times of need, citing an example where Kenya Red Cross supported Uganda Red Cross floods interventions in Teso sub region.

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