

From the Chair: The Movement's "1st" in Africa

The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement came together at the Council of Delegates in November in Nairobi, Kenya – for the first time ever in Africa. After the Federation's General Assembly, the Council, our Movement's highest deliberative body in non-Conference years, discussed and debated for three days at the UN Centre in Nairobi. Delegations from 160 National Societies, the ICRC and the International Federation participated.

The important issues, which we want to shortly introduce to you in this Newsletter, will help us move forward and contribute to the soon-to-begin preparations for the next International Conference in two years time.

The 'novelty' this time was a full day of workshops. They proved very popular with the National Societies and we had lively debates and exchanges of experiences on topical concerns and issues in an informal setting. The debates were encouraging and showed that we indeed are a Movement alive. I believe that the workshop debates must influence our on-going work and they contributed much already to the preparations for the 2011-meetings.

It was a big meeting with more than 400 participants. The exchanges on the sidelines, the corridor discussions where people from all corners of the world met, shared views and compared notes, were surely as important as the formal parts of the Council.

I felt encouraged by the energy and the positive atmosphere in spite of

New SC Chairman

Dr Massimo Barra of Italy took up the position of Chairman of the Standing Commission on November 26, 2009. His mandate continues until the 31st International Conference in 2011.

The International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent elected Dr Barra into the Commission in 2007. He was Vice Chair until the close of the 2009 Council of Delegates.

He has a life-long experience with the Italian Red Cross, of which he was President 2005 – November 2008. He has also held different positions within the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, including that of Vice President.

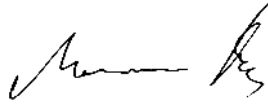
H.E. Dr Mohammed Al-Hadid, Chairman of the Standing Commission since the 28th International Conference (2003) until November 25, 2009 will continue as Vice Chairman.

Highlights in this issue:

- Council of Delegates in Nairobi
- Council Chair calls for action to tackle 'today's Solferinos'
- SC has new Chairman
- Henry Dunant medals 2009
- Movement Strategy – reviews call for change

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the many challenges our National Societies struggle with. They are living proof of humanity in action.



Massimo Barra
Chairman

The full reports and resolutions from the Council can all be downloaded from the Standing Commission's website, www.rcstandcom.info

Council Chair calls for action to tackle today's Solferinos

Meeting 150 years after the battle of Solferino, the Council expressed its solidarity with all those struggling to cope with 'today's Solferinos' – whether caused by armed conflicts, natural disasters, poverty, climate change or the current global economic crisis.

In his statement, the Chair of the Council, Dr Jakob Kellenberger, committed to push decision-makers to prioritise the welfare of those worst affected by today's humanitarian crises. He reiterated the RCRC commitment to Africa, underlining that humanitarian challenges on the Continent need to be tackled from a global perspective.

Climate change as a major driver of weather disasters, affecting millions of people worldwide, calls for a greater investment in risk reduction, community resilience and disaster preparedness as key strategies for adaptation. Along with war, violence and poverty, climate change forces tens of millions of people to leave their homes and join the ranks of the internally displaced.

The Chair further underlined the determination of the RCRC to help and

speak up for tens of millions of migrants seeking a better life outside their home countries, including those living outside or at the margins of conventional health, social and legal systems.

Alarmed by the massive human cost of armed conflict worldwide, the Council Chair stressed his conviction that international humanitarian law offers the best available legal protection for those suffering because of war. 60 years after the adoption of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, he called for better respect for existing rules to ensure that international humanitarian law fits the ever-changing reality of war.

The Red Cross Red Crescent was born out of Henry Dunant's drive and inspiration amid the bloodshed of Solferino. Today's Solferinos require a collective response from the international community based on renewed local and global partnerships.

The theme for the Nairobi Council was 'Our world. Your move'. Volunteers and staff of the Red Cross Red Crescent worldwide make their moves every day, showing that everyone can make a difference.

Policy on Migration

A considerable number of National Societies are deeply involved in work with migrants, providing protection and assistance irrespective of their legal status. This role was acknowledged by the 30th International Conference in 2007, in its resolution (1) 'Together for humanity'. Work with migrants is an example of National Societies working as auxiliaries to the public authorities.

The policy on migration was adopted by the Federation's Governing Board in May 2009. In ten specific principles, it outlines the approach on migration.

The Council 'commends the policy for

its focus on the need for humanitarian access for migrants, irrespective of their legal status, while at the same time recognizing the importance of the legal protection afforded to them under international human rights law, international humanitarian law and international refugee law.'

The Council also expressed its satisfaction with the complementary nature of the Federation's policy on migration and the Movement policy on internal displacement, which was adopted in Nairobi. Together, they strengthen the strategic response of the Movement to the humanitarian needs and vulnerabilities of uprooted persons. All components, in accordance with their respective mandates, were urged to cooperate closely in implementing the migration policy and in coordinating within and beyond the Movement to support the provision of the necessary services and protection to vulnerable persons throughout the entire migration cycle, including return and reintegration.

Movement policy on internal displacement

This policy addresses the needs and vulnerabilities of persons affected by internal displacement and positions the Movement as a major humanitarian actor in responding to their needs. It also seeks to ensure good communication and coordination within the Movement and to define the terms of cooperation with other humanitarian actors.

The RCRC primary goal is to protect people against arbitrary displacement and to reduce the risk of displacement caused by natural and man-made hazards. When basic needs are insufficiently covered by existing services and infrastructure, as in chronic crises, the Movement aims to facilitate progress towards a durable response.

The RCRC is advantaged in having deep roots in the community and

privileged access to the authorities. It takes impartial, humanitarian action to directly meet the urgent needs of people at risk, while supporting authorities in an auxiliary capacity and, if necessary, reminding them of their obligation to care for the affected population.

The policy on internal displacement complements earlier Movement positions on working with refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). It acknowledges that forced displacement may be linked to migratory phenomena and that a coordinated approach is important to meet the challenges of displacement and migration.

As the policy on migration, this policy, in ten guidelines, seeks clarity, focus and guidance for the approach to displacement and to coordination with other entities dealing with it.

Health care in armed conflict

The Council was alarmed by the fact that the wounded and sick in armed conflict and other situations of violence do not receive the care and protection that they require and are frequently denied health care through deliberate action or omission. It reaffirmed the Movement's commitment towards the protection of health care and the security of its delivery to those affected by conflict and violence.

Equally alarmed by the frequent attacks committed against health-care workers, facilities and transports, including those of the components of the Movement, the Council expressed its admiration for the commitment of the staff and volunteers of the National Societies, who assist the wounded and sick despite challenging circumstances. In that work, the importance of adhering to the RCRC Fundamental Principles was emphasizing.

The RCRC deplores the misuse of medical establishments and other medical facilities and of the distinctive emblems to carry out military

operations that place civilians, the wounded and sick, and health-care personnel in danger.

The Council called upon all parties to armed conflicts, and all actors involved in other situations of violence, to respect and ensure respect for health-care personnel, premises and means of transport, and to take all measures to ensure safe and prompt access to health care.

The Council invited the ICRC, in accordance with its mandate, to continue its protection/assistance work for victims of conflict and violence. ICRC was asked to continue to collect specific information on endangered access to and delivery of health care and to make representations to the parties to conflicts to ensure safe and prompt provision of health care, in accordance with international law.

Finally, the Council decided to present a report, with recommendations, on health care in armed conflict and situations of violence to the 31st International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in 2011.

Reducing the effects of weapons on civilians

The Council updated the 1999 – 2009 “Movement Strategy on Landmines.” The new Strategy also covers cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war and incorporates the developments in the law and practice of the past ten years.

With the adoption of this Strategy, the Council reaffirmed the Movement’s continued commitment to develop, promote and implement norms of international humanitarian law and to implement activities aiming at reducing the impact of weapon contamination.

Regarding other weapons, the Council called upon the RCRC to actively raise public awareness of the human costs of unregulated arms availabil-

ity. It encouraged States to pursue a comprehensive approach to reducing such costs. It also addressed the need to monitor developments in biotechnology and the life sciences, to ensure faithful implementation of relevant treaties related to biological and chemical weapons, and to continue efforts towards the elimination of nuclear weapons.

States were reminded of their obligation to ensure the legality of new weapons and of means or methods of warfare under international law. In this, the Council reflects previously taken positions both at the Council and the International Conference.

Code for Good Partnership

On Movement-internal cooperation, the Council adopted the Code for Good Partnership (the Code).

It sets out principles and standards of behaviour in partnerships for staff and volunteers of National Societies, the International Federation and the ICRC. The aim is to strengthen partnerships within the Movement for all components to work together more efficiently and effectively.

The adopted Code calls upon the components to state their individual and collective commitment to implement the Code, to participate in its monitoring and compliance mechanism, to report back and share their experiences implementing the Code to future Council meetings and thus to contribute to its further development.

The Henry Dunant Medal

The Standing Commission paid tribute to the remarkable work and achievements of five distinguished Movement personalities by awarding them the Henry Dunant Medal at a ceremony in Nairobi.

The Henry Dunant Medal is named after the Movement's founder and is the highest distinction that anyone who's involved with the Movement can aspire to. It is awarded every two years to a select few people in recognition of their outstanding dedication to the world's largest humanitarian network.

The recipients in 2009:

Dr Muctarr Amadu Sheriff Jalloh of Sierra Leone – specialist in pediatrics, President of the Sierra Leone Red Cross 1996-2009.

Mr Cornelio Sommaruga – President of the ICRC 1987 - 1999.

Mr Pär Stenbäck of Finland – former Secretary General of the International Federation (IFRC) and former President of the Finnish Red Cross.

Mrs Zoy Katevas de Sclabos of Chile – 55 years in various positions in the Chilean Red Cross, including that of President. Member of the Standing Commission 2003 – 2007.

Dr Fouad Hamza of Syria – President of the Syrian Red Crescent 1978 – 1998.

Datuk Datin Paduka Ruby Lee – former Secretary General of the Malaysian Red Crescent Society. She passed away in June 2009.

Follow-up since 2007

The MoU

The Monitor of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Palestine Red Crescent (PRCS) and the Israeli Magen David Adom (MDA), Mr Pär Stenbäck, reported that four years after the signing of the agreements, he is concerned with the slow progress in the implementation, despite efforts of the two Societies.

With regard to the related Agreement on Operational Arrangements (AOA), MDA has, according to the Monitor, fulfilled its commitment to advocate and lobby on behalf of the PRCS. Improvements have occurred since the 2007. Nevertheless, the Monitor recognized that more advocacy and lobbying efforts are needed to improve patient transfers, especially from the West Bank into Jerusalem.

The Monitor called on both Societies to do more so that broader institutionalised co-operation between them is achieved on a professional level, especially in disaster preparedness. National Societies in the region are encouraged to engage more with MDA to this end. The RCRC humanitarian mandate obligates all of its members to work together in times of crisis, when concerted humanitarian action is necessary to alleviate human suffering.

Mr Stenbäck anticipated that the next two years will be critical for the MOU implementation. Outstanding issues need to be resolved by the statutory meetings of 2011 and the monitoring will focus more particularly on the implementation.

The Council recalled the provisions in the MoU that both parties had agreed to, expressed support for the continued work of the Monitor and for strengthened monitoring. It asked National Societies to favourably respond to any request for help and support that the Monitor may require to fulfil his task. The Council also expects a re-

port in 2011 and, through it, to the 31st International Conference.

Strategy for the Movement

by Steve Carr
SC Member
Chair of Strategy Working Group

From my small corner of the globe in the western United States, I have the honour of leading the Standing Commission Working Group on the Strategy for the Movement. It is the goal of the strategy to help the components of the Movement work better together. Our working group has been charged with promoting and evaluating implementation of the strategy.

At the Council of Delegates in Nairobi last month, I reported on implementation of the strategy's 10 Actions. Our report covered progress in updating National Society statutes to further protect the integrity of our Movement (Action 4), as well as the comprehensive study on operational and commercial use of the emblems. I also spoke about how our Movement is doing in "speaking with one voice" (Action 8).

I focused on a topic of particular interest to National Societies – streamlining the statutory meetings. Action 4 calls for: "[Enhancing] dialogue and consultations within the Movement through better use of existing fora, and improved co-ordination of the agendas of statutory and other meetings."

Over the course of in-depth consultations with National Society leaders throughout 2009, including in Nairobi, it has become clear that our Movement must address the complexities of its global meetings. This includes aligning agendas and engaging National Societies more

fully in the preparations – thereby promoting better implementation of the outcomes.

Although it is premature to predict what changes should take place, it is clear that National Societies anticipate change. Our working group will continue its efforts to reduce the complexities of the Movement fora and present proposals for change to the Council of Delegates in 2011.

I look forward to working with my colleagues at the ICRC and International Federation and to further consultations with National Societies to make sure their views are taken into consideration. Thank you to those who have already participated! Please do not hesitate to contact me with your thoughts outside of the formal consultation process at scarr@prodigy.net



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