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COUNCIL OF DELEGATES
OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS
AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

Geneva, Switzerland
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THE SPECIFIC NATURE OF THE RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT IN
ACTION AND PARTNERSHIPS AND
THE ROLE OF NATIONAL SOCIETIES AS AUXILIARIES
TO THE PUBLIC AUTHORITIES IN THE HUMANITARIAN FIELD

BACKGROUND REPORT

Document prepared by the International Federation
in consultation with the ICRC and National Societies

Geneva, October 2007

SPECIFIC NATURE OF THE RC/RC
A way to a privileged / unique relationship and effective partnerships
between States and the components of the Movement

Background note

The auxiliary role of National Societies constitutes one of the defining characteristics that distinguish them from other national non governmental organisations (NGOs) and from the UN system and other forms of humanitarian response.

The previous Council of Delegates in Seoul in 2005 was presented with a working definition of the auxiliary role of National Societies to the public authorities in the humanitarian field. As a result of subsequent consultations, the definition was updated and will be submitted to this Council of Delegates for endorsement.

The 28th International Conference accepted the concept of a “balanced relationship” between the States and National Societies and requested the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (the International Federation) to continue its work on the subject and report to the 2007 International Conference. In order to meet this request the International Federation in consultation with the ICRC prepared a background report on the issue that is attached hereto (30IC/07/7.1). The report aims to describe the evolution of the concept of auxiliary to the public authorities, the expert consultations on the nature and scope of the auxiliary role, and the available Movement “tools” to assist in the establishment of the dialogue between the Governments and National Societies related to their auxiliary role in the humanitarian field. The report is also intended to serve as the background for discussions and decisions of the Council of Delegates on this subject.

The above mentioned Movement “tools” to support the dialogue between the Governments and National Societies related to their auxiliary role in the humanitarian field will compose a reference information “tool box” to be endorsed by this Council of Delegates, providing guidance on how the National Society is supposed to operate nationally and internationally, including the relationship with its Government. Such tools include:

Documents adopted by Statutory Body meetings (cf. www.ifrc.org and www.icrc.org):

- *Guidance on National Societies Statutes;*
- *Minimum Elements to be included in operational agreements between Movement components and their external operational partner;*
- *Guidance document on relations between the components of the Movement and military bodies, 2005;*
- *Regulations on the use of the Emblem of the Red Cross or the Red Crescent by the National Societies, resolution XXII, 20th International Conference, 1965, revised by resolution 5, Council of Delegates, 1991*
- *Movement policy for Corporate Sector Partnerships, 2005*

Guidance documents produced by the International Federation and/or the ICRC:

- *National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies as auxiliaries to the public authorities in the humanitarian field, International Federation, 2003;*
- *National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies as auxiliaries to the public authorities in the humanitarian field. Study on situations of armed conflict, ICRC, 2005;*
- *Minimum elements to be included in the legislation between Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and their public authorities;*

- *Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the Implementation of International Humanitarian Law: Guiding Principles.*