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# Daily bulletin

## Evaluating Red Cross Red Crescent brand perceptions



While the protective nature of the emblems is of paramount importance, the national and global branding of the red cross and red crescent requires close examination. A side event hosted by Sir Nick Young, CEO of the British Red Cross, focused on this theme and how to proactively "sell" the Red Cross Red Crescent values in a way to motivate people to act.

"We know that we are passionate about serving the vulnerable, but can we be sure the public knows? We need to take an honest look at what our brand represents," said Sir Nick.

Data gathered by the the ICRC found that the Red Cross is most closely associated with medical care, first aid and emergency response and the organization is seen as a neutral and impartial actor. The study echoed results from several National Societies.

"We are only as strong as we are perceived at the community level... The ongoing challenge is to stay relevant during times outside disasters," said Larry Paul, vice chair of the American Red Cross.

Samir Tallaj, manager for risk and emergencies at the Syrian Red Crescent, confirmed there is a weak public linkage between the Red Cross and the Red Crescent as a brand.

Commissioning further research on the public perception of Red Crescent was listed as one of several next steps discussed. Other points included gathering and sharing branding research of National Societies on FedNet, raising the branding issue as a resolution at the next Council of Delegates and considering launching a global brand campaign in the future.

## Preparing the Movement for the future requires innovative changes

"People need to think differently if we want to survive the 21<sup>st</sup> century," Dr Julius Kipng'etich told the Council of Delegates. The host of the Gala dinner in Nairobi's National Park and Director of the Kenya Wildlife Service explains that the Red Cross Red Crescent needs to adapt to a fast-moving world.

What is your key message to the delegates?  
Governments have changed since the fall of the Berlin Wall but the Movement hasn't changed much. But Strategy 2020 shows a new determination to take the IFRC and its members to the next level. That requires a lot of courage and a new partnership between the National Societies in the North and in Africa, and between Na-

tional Societies and governments.

What does the Red Cross Red Crescent need to do?

I see several essential elements: the most important one is leadership. You need a strong leader who has a clear vision of how to achieve accountability. At the same time, you have to understand your staff and know how to motivate them. You need to develop information systems that signal trouble well in advance so that you can plan accordingly. And you should also engage more with the private sector to ensure funding.



## *Creative solutions needed to boost funding for Africa*

Millions of people across Africa are displaced from their homes due to armed conflict and natural disasters. Many are cut off from their families and from social services, detained, wounded or killed. Efforts to help them are hampered by political instability and violence in many regions. To address their humanitarian needs a continuous effort by all Movement partners is necessary. Participants of the workshops on Africa discussed how best to strengthen this effort.

"National Societies face numerous challenges when trying to shape an efficient humanitarian response," explained Isaiah Mondisha, panellist from the South African Red Cross. "Mainly, a lack of qualified human resources, operational tools and finances."

"If we want to move ahead, we need informed business plans that are legitimate and credible, as well as professional skills and an appropriate structure to turn these plans into action," he continued. "The Movement partners can help through capacity building and the transfer of knowledge."

Abbas Gullet, secretary general of the KRCS and chairman of the workshops, reiterated that strong leadership was essential to the success of National Societies – a view shared by many delegates. Others highlighted the "bottom-up" approach used, for example, by the Burundi Red Cross to successfully strengthen its base of community volunteers.

Several delegates raised the issue of investing in commercial activities as a way to ensure funding – a sign of proof for panellist Matthias Schmale, undersecretary general for development at the IFRC, that the Movement had already made a step forward. "It is not that nothing has changed since the 60s, today we're talking about entrepreneurship but unlike businesses, we cannot afford to go under," he reminded the delegates.

Angela Gussing, panellist and deputy director of operations at the ICRC, asked the participants to make sure that their Societies respond best to the needs of the most vulnerable in the respective countries. "This was the idea of Henry Dunant and we have the obligation to work towards it."

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## *Medal winner speaks of horrors of war and deep gratitude to Movement*

During Monday's Henry Dunant Medal award ceremony, Dr Muctarr Amadu Sheriff Jalloh of Sierra Leone spoke on behalf of the recipients, saying that all five would "treasure" the award.

"It is with genuine humility and gratitude in the true spirit of the Red Cross Red Crescent that we accept the award... I'm sure we all feel touched by it to the bottom of our hearts," he told delegates.

Dr Jalloh spoke of his harrowing experience during Sierra Leone's civil war and his gratitude for the help he received as a victim of the violence. At the height of the conflict, he was attacked and nearly killed, when armed men tried to chop off his hands.

"I am alive and indeed very lucky not to be one of the amputees roaming around in my beautiful city of Freetown thanks to the help of this Movement, including many National Societies and many leaders in the IFRC and the ICRC," he said.



## *Movement towards climate change adaptation*

In 2007, the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent adopted a resolution on the humanitarian consequences of climate change.

Broadly speaking, this resolution acknowledged climate change as one of humanity's major global challenges, and it called on governments and the Red Cross Red Crescent to do more to support those already suffering from its impacts.

On the second day of the Council of Delegates, workshops took stock of Red Cross Red Crescent progress in supporting communities adapt to changing and often aggressive climate events.

The workshops heard of the significant developments of many National Societies in terms of understanding and integrating climate risks into their everyday work. However, despite these achievements, National Societies also



bore witness to the quickening pace and rising intensity of climate-related disasters, be it rising sea levels in the Pacific, increased storms in Asia or biting drought in Africa.

"Wherever we are, the story is the same," said Ibrahim Osman, IFRC deputy secretary general and chair of one of the sessions. "We see it, we feel it, we forecast it."

These experiences lent the workshops a sense of urgency that the Movement and the wider humanitarian community must do more.

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## *Reaching victims of war remains tough challenge*

One of the main challenges that humanitarian workers face in today's armed conflicts is gaining safe and unhindered access to vulnerable people, according to Tuesday's workshop on international humanitarian law (IHL) and humanitarian access.

The group said obtaining such access could be difficult for a lot of reasons – ranging from insecurity to politics – and that it had grown even trickier to reach the victims of war in recent years as fighting has become more complex.



"Nowadays, we're seeing multiple actors involved in fighting, often including fragmented and poorly organised armed groups or criminal gangs, making it increasingly complicated for us to know whom we should be talking to in order to gain access to those who need our help. These situations have also made current conflict realities more dangerous for civilians," Knut Dörmann, the head of the ICRC's legal division, told the Daily Bulletin.

"Under IHL, parties to armed conflicts have an obligation to grant humanitarian relief organisations rapid and unimpeded access to civilian populations, but in reality, the rules of war are often ignored, and those that apply to humanitarian access are complex and may need further clarification," he added.

Participants concluded that IHL is an important tool to obtain improved humanitarian access, but not the only one. It is at least equally important to be able to dialogue with all parties in an armed conflict in order to gain their trust. One observation made during the workshops was that, "You are judged by your actions and how you are perceived." Participants underscored the importance of ensuring that the Movement's approach as a neutral, independent and impartial actor is accepted by all stakeholders.



## A call for leadership in Africa



"We have to move beyond commitments towards action," Abbas Gullet urged his colleagues. Chairing the workshops on meeting humanitarian challenges in Africa, the secretary general of the Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) called for a new culture of leadership on the continent. The Daily Bulletin asked him to explain:

What was your key message to the workshops?

Addressing Africa's humanitarian challenges effectively requires strong leadership. Africa has an abundance of qualified and motivated people. They can bring about the change we need in African National Societies. This huge asset has been underutilized until now.

The KRCS with its 70,000 volunteers was mentioned several times as a good example of strong leadership. From your point of view what makes a good leader ?

It takes commitment, education, and belief in oneself. A leader has to be focused and know where he or she wants to go. A leader with a vision is capable of translating it into action and following it to the letter.

What would you tell a National Society who says there is no one in sight who fits those criteria. Can leadership be learned?

Of course. There are people who are born leaders, there are others who learn it. You have to be willing to take risks, as long as they are calculated risks. If people are not self-confident they are not fit to be in those positions.

One of the panellists said that while the demand for humanitarian action was boundless in Africa, resources were limited. Do you agree?

Only partly. Today Africa does not need food aid. We have enough water and land. The problem is a lack of leadership including in our governments. Some of our National Societies are a mirror image of their governments, corrupt and badly managed. But there is light at the end of the tunnel. Kenya and Burundi are African success stories. It is about image, credibility and accountability. Once we have that the funding will follow. We should be optimistic.

## Departure information for delegates

- Airport transport is available for delegates from their hotels for departures until 28<sup>th</sup> November
- Registration for departures should be done with the volunteers at hotels
- Delegates are advised to leave for the airport three hours before their flight departure time
- Delegates checking out earlier than their planned check-out date will not receive a refund
- For any delegates who did not show up but paid, no-show fees for one night will apply and a refund to the National Society will be done after reconciliation with the hotels by transfer payments.
- All delegates on their own/private arrangements must settle their bills and provide for their own transport arrangements to the airport.

*Please note that the non-discrimination, external actors and collective responsibility workshops will be featured in Thursday's Daily Bulletin, which will be posted on [ifrc.org](http://ifrc.org), [icrc.org](http://icrc.org) and on the Standing Commission page, <http://www.rcstandcom.info>. Print copies will not be available.*

*Official documents, agenda, and other information from the General Assembly and the Council of Delegates are available on FedNet at: <https://fednet.ifrc.org/sw176612.asp> and communication materials are available at: <https://fednet.ifrc.org/sw184752.asp>.*