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# Daily bulletin

## Council wraps up with a universal call to action

The 31st Council of Delegates ended on a high note Wednesday with a universal call to action to tackle today's most pressing humanitarian challenges.

The president of the ICRC and Council chairman, Jakob Kellenberger, read out a statement saying that the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement was "ready and determined to lead the way the way" in doing this.

The chairman's paper said the leaders of the Red Cross and Red Crescent were calling on governments and other stakeholders to "join forces with the Movement to help improve the lives of the most vulnerable".



During two and a half days of intense meetings, delegates ploughed through a hefty agenda dealing with a broad range of issues – from the human cost of climate change and the protection of health care in armed conflicts, to the branding of the red cross and red crescent emblems and non-discrimination.

Delegates also heard about the success of the **Our world. Your move.** campaign, which has so far been celebrated in more than 130 countries, as well as the important role that young people can play as agents of change.

This was the first-ever Council of Delegates held on African soil – a fact that was reflected throughout the meetings and debates. Many of the challenges and problems facing the continent were brought to the forefront, as were the Movement's efforts to tackle them.

The Chairman's statement said that "the Movement would work as one to promote solutions and sustainable progress in Africa, based on a common sense of responsibility and with a view to ensuring that African communities can make the difference by and for themselves".

Overall, participants said they were pleased that five new resolutions had been adopted during the Council, which would help the Movement further succeed in working together to help and protect the victims of armed conflict, disasters, discrimination, violence and disease.

Many also expressed appreciation that several new elements had been introduced into the Council, including the workshops, the opening event, video Daily Bulletins and audiovisual presentations, showing the needs and hopes of individuals in different parts of the world.

To see the Chairman's full statement go to: [www.icrc.org](http://www.icrc.org) or [www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org).

## Movement's distinctive humanitarian role must be better promoted

Around the world, an ever-increasing number of actors are trying to respond to the humanitarian consequences of armed conflict and natural disasters. Reflecting on the idea that the Movement acts as one of the pillars in the global response system, next to governments, UN agencies and NGOs, the workshop on external relations discussed how the Movement should cooperate with other key humanitarian agencies. The Daily Bulletin talked to Sir Nicholas Young, chief executive of the British Red Cross and chairman of the workshop about the outcome.

**The Movement has often examined its relationship with other humanitarian organizations in a critical way. What did the delegates identify as the main challenge?**

The Movement has a recognized special role through its fundamental principles, the Geneva Conventions, the protective emblem and our reach through the volunteer network into almost every community. This special position is under threat, due to competition from other agencies, restrictions in access to the vulnerable and an increasing sense of other actors, like the military, that they can deliver independent humanitarian aid.

**How should the Movement respond?**

Our community reach is very attractive to the UN and other partners, but we must not simply become their implementing partners. We have to make strategic choices about partnerships. A partnership has to add value for the beneficiaries. We need better tools and guidelines. The idea is to bring simplified policy documents to the International Conference in 2011 and the ICRC and IFRC will prepare them together with National Societies.

**Are we getting the message across about our distinctive position?**

We are in a competitive environment and therefore we must invest in promoting our distinctive role more effectively. The message has to reflect the capacity on the ground. Many National Societies operate under difficult circumstances with few resources even to pay their core costs. The Movement has to support them. Otherwise, we will fail some of the most vulnerable people on this planet.

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## Partnerships: Blessing, burden or both?



Deficiencies in Movement coordination can have serious consequences – first and foremost for beneficiaries but also for our relationship with donors, our image and future opportunities. A Council workshop focused on this issue and the Daily Bulletin sat down with Mostafa Mohagheg, director of operations for the Iranian Red Crescent, who co-chaired the session.

**What is needed to turn collective responsibility into collective success?**

One criterion for collective success is that the priorities are set by the local community and the National Society. The long-term interests of both groups need to be respected. Sometimes they do not always match well. But the purpose of this dialogue is to find better ways to remedy these issues through collective efforts.

**What impact does increasing bilaterism have on collective responsibility?**

We should all consider collaboration as equal humanitarian partnerships - not as donor-slash-beneficiary relationships, and this includes Participating National Societies (PNS) and Operating National Societies (ONS). We need to have this paradigm shift in our thinking. The ONS represent the local community and they should be represented in all phases of action planning and implementation, not just distribution of items and services, along with the PNS.

**What if ONS don't have the capacity to support that type of involvement?**

We cannot disregard ONS that don't have capacity. We need to establish constructive and positive dialogue to understand how we can collectively best help beneficiaries. There is no fundamental challenge here. We have common objectives, principles and values. The difference between us is sometimes at the planning and implementation level and this can be overcome.

**What is needed to facilitate this dialogue and work?**

We already have many useful tools in the Movement, but we have not been able to use them in a harmonized way. We should be developing our capacity to use what we have already before creating new systems, tools and processes.

## Partnership code puts focus on diversity, integrity and needs of vulnerable

The importance of strengthening the Movement's collective capacity to deal with today's humanitarian challenges came up in discussions throughout this year's Council – from the resolutions on IDPs and migration, to the Standing Commission's opening remarks, to the workshops on collective responsibility.

It was also the overriding message of the Code for Good Partnership, which was adopted on Wednesday.

The Code was born out of an initiative taken at the Council of Delegates in 2007 and was developed in consultation with several National Societies. It was also endorsed by the General Assembly last week.

It aims to enable the different members of the Movement to work together more efficiently and effectively by outlining five key areas of commitment: respecting and empowering vulnerable people, practicing diversity and cultural sensitivity, working as partners within the Movement, cooperating with outside actors, including States and decision-makers, and ensuring integrity.

The Code identifies several indicators for integrity, including compliance with Movement resolutions, effective governance, responsible fundraising, strong financial oversight,



openness and transparency, and accountability towards beneficiaries, the public and donors.

During Wednesday's plenary session, the Finnish Red Cross said it was "extremely delighted" and welcomed the adoption of the Code, but warned that National Societies would need tools to follow-up on implementation. This message was echoed by the Swedish Red Cross, which said that adoption was "just the first step" in the process. The ICRC confirmed that a working-level implementation group would be established involving the different components of the Movement.

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## Building a culture of tolerance and diversity

More than 60 National Societies, together with the IFRC and ICRC, took part in the workshop on non-discrimination and respect for diversity on Tuesday.

Many forms of discrimination were discussed, including those faced by youth, migrants, people living with HIV/AIDS, street children, sex workers, drug users and prisoners. Participants also debated how best to reduce intolerance on the grounds of gender, religion, physical and mental disability, age, ethnic origin and sexual orientation.

National Society success stories included a Mongolian Red Cross programme for sex workers and work on gender issues by the Rwanda Red Cross Society.

The open dialogue and vibrant exchange of experiences was very much appreciated by the workshop participants, who asked that the topic of "non-discrimination and respect for diversity" be placed on the agenda of the 31<sup>st</sup> International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

In advance of the workshop, 44 National Societies were invited to share their experiences and lessons learnt. Twenty-four case studies were provided by the National Societies of Belarus, Botswana, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Britain, including the Cayman Islands branch, Canada, Ecuador, Kenya, Tanzania, Mongolia, Nepal, Netherlands, Pakistan, Rwanda, South Africa, Spain and Sweden. All of these case studies will be referenced in a follow-up publication to the Council of Delegates.

## Restoring family links in the Pacific – a success story

On the final day of the Council, the Solomon Islands Red Cross was invited to comment on the implementation of the Movement's Restoring Family Links (RFL) strategy in the Pacific.

"In 2008, very little was known about RFL in the Pacific. By learning about RFL and talking about it, we discovered that we actually do quite a bit among the different National Societies, helping people lost at sea, immigrants, the violence of disasters and violence, and families separated by urbanization and migration," said Nancy Jolo, the secretary general of the Solomon Islands Red Cross.

The National Society has been working in partnership with the Australian Red Cross, 11 Pacific Islands National Societies and the ICRC to develop RFL capacities at their own pace and according to local needs.

As the first pilot partner, the Solomon Islands Red Cross created a training package, translated tracing forms and Red Cross messages into the local language

and set up RFL kits in waterproof boxes for the branches located in remote areas.

RFL responses were also put in-place following the sinking of the Princess Ashika ferry near Tonga and the tsunami that struck Tonga and Samoa in September this year.



"There is no one-size fits all approach to capacity building," according to the presentation. "Each National Society has its own local knowledge and experiences and the needs vary from place to place... In order to be sustainable, RFL must be integrated into existing structures. Staff, volunteers and governance must see the value of the work," Jolo said.

## Asante sana to the Kenyan Red Cross!

Following the formal closing of the Council, delegates expressed their appreciation for the Kenyan Red Cross' extraordinary efforts to organise the first-ever gathering of the entire Movement in Africa.

The dedication and commitment of the many wonderful volunteers who helped make the event such a success was also recognised.

The Daily Bulletin would like to say its own special thank you to everyone involved in organising the Nairobi meetings and to the delegates, participants and volunteers who willingly shared their thoughts and views with the written and video editions of the Bulletin.

*Asante sana na msafiri salama! (Thank you very much and safe travels!)*

## Look on-line for Council video presentations

Want to learn more about the **Our world. Your move.** campaign? Visit the web site: [www.ourworld-yourmove.org](http://www.ourworld-yourmove.org)

The "Memory of Solferino 2009" youth video shown during Monday's opening event can be found here: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=y3\\_qHz4Tl-A](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y3_qHz4Tl-A)

Angélique Kidjo's special address to the Council, can be found on youtube. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=gKQ04P8D9KA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gKQ04P8D9KA)

All of the video Daily Bulletins from the General Assembly and the Council of Delegates are located here: [www.youtube.com/view\\_play\\_list?p=06CE8E1E4702E36C](http://www.youtube.com/view_play_list?p=06CE8E1E4702E36C)

The resolution-related multimedia presentations shown on the first day of the Council featuring weapons, internal displacement and the protection of health care can be found here: [www.icrc.org/web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/html/section\\_council\\_of\\_delegates\\_2009](http://www.icrc.org/web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/html/section_council_of_delegates_2009)

## Date and venue of 2011 statutory meetings

The next International Red Cross and Red Crescent meetings are tentatively scheduled to take place in Geneva, Switzerland in the second half of November 2011.