

# **30th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent**

## **Guiding Questions for Commissions**

### **COMMISSION A**

**Wednesday 28 November 2007, 9.30-13.00 / 14.30-18.00**

#### **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**

##### **Rationale:**

Commission A offers the Conference members the opportunity to discuss the value of the auxiliary role of National Societies, making use of the definition evolved through the consultations managed by the International Federation and taking account of the information contained in the report submitted to the 28<sup>th</sup> International Conference in 2003 as well as the background paper submitted to this Conference.

In discussion members are encouraged to consider the mutuality of the benefit brought to both Governments and National Societies by the role, as well as the way the use of the role can improve national planning for and response to natural disasters, public health threats and the promotion of tolerance and respect for diversity.

The role should also be seen as a bridging role, one which helps Governments improve their relationships with civil society, the private sector and others whose partnering is important to the achievement of national objectives.

In this regard, and without prejudice to the work carried out in the Drafting Committee on the draft resolution submitted under the item, the debates in Commission A will be of value to the utilisation of the role by all partners in the years ahead.

##### **Guiding Questions:**

- What is the meaning of the National Society's role to its country's public authorities in the humanitarian field? Does this create a special relationship with its government? What is your experience of this role or relationship?
- How should governments and National Societies work together to get the best humanitarian value from the auxiliary role? What support should the public authorities give to its National Society so that the National Society can function effectively as the auxiliary in the humanitarian field?
- What are the benefits of the auxiliary status both to the National Society and to the public authorities? What are the responsibilities of the public authorities and the National Society in their relationship?
- Give examples of possible practical application of the working definition in the dialogue between the public authorities and National Societies in the areas addressed at the Conference (i.e., environmental degradation/climate change, international migration, violence in urban settings, emergent/recurrent diseases and public health, international humanitarian law, disaster response)?

- Why is it important to separate those actions undertaken by a National Society as auxiliary and those undertaken for other reasons (e.g. as part of the humanitarian mission or to fulfil an independent contract)?
- How can the National Society remain independent and neutral – and to be perceived as such – while providing staff as auxiliaries to the medical forces of the armed forces?

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When addressing the above-mentioned issues, Conference members are invited to take into account the overall theme of the International Conference "Together for Humanity" and to consider questions such as the following:"

- ✓ What is the best way of managing the relationship of public authorities to National Societies as their auxiliary partners? Is there a different way of handling some of the issues in federal States?
- ✓ What actions should the International Federation take in support of National Societies as they implement their responsibilities as auxiliaries to the public authorities? Is there a need for special attention to the needs of governments, for example in the provision of information for use by line ministries and other agencies?
- ✓ Should the International Federation be doing more to help other international organisations organise their work with National Societies when they are functioning as auxiliaries?