



**150 years of humanitarian action**  
**Council of Delegates of the International**  
**Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement**  
Sydney, Australia, November 2013



## OUTLINE OF WORKSHOP 6

### Promoting and Enhancing the Red Response: Working with External Actors

**Chair:** tbc

**Rapporteur:** tbc

**Speakers/Presenters:** tbc

**Substance support staff:**

Federation: Nina de Rochefort, Domitille Cadet in Geneva; Simon Eccleshall, Elise Baudot, Rob Kaufman in Sydney

ICRC: Nicolas Alexandre Bonvin, Daniel Helle in Geneva; Bruno Pommier in Sydney

### **Objectives**

The Movement has never worked in isolation. Whether it is forging close partnerships with the private sector, other humanitarian agencies or governments – as embodied in the International Conference and the notion of National Society auxiliary status –, the Movement regularly combines its forces with external actors. We endeavour to harness such relationships without compromising our Fundamental Principles, reputation and community access and acceptance.

In an ever-changing humanitarian landscape of evolving needs and limited resources it is inevitable that relationships with external actors will change too. For example, National Societies in disaster-affected and disaster-prone countries are increasingly being approached by governmental and non-governmental donors directly to act as implementing and/or project partners. This entails new opportunities, challenges and demands.

Red Cross/Red Crescent skills and resources are also increasingly being called upon by government civil-protection forces raising questions about “Red Response” priorities, use of emblems, and Movement coordination and cooperation principles.

This workshop focuses on the Movement’s future strategy towards external actors and asks: How can we best respond to emerging opportunities and the demands of these actors as well as make better and more systematic use of the tools and policies guidance we have developed? How do we promote a distinct but complementary Movement-wide humanitarian response (the so-called “Red Response”) that reflects the Movement’s unique capacity to alleviate human suffering?

## **Background**

The 2009 Council of Delegates (CoD) workshop on "Relations with actors outside of the Movement" identified the issues to be followed up by the Federation and the ICRC. Among them was the need to:

- A. be perceived, communicate and act as a neutral, independent and impartial humanitarian actor;
- B. manage our collective Movement identity in a cohesive and coherent manner at the local and global level and remain a strong humanitarian player;
- C. strengthen Movement capacity to manage varying types of relations and external expectations with different categories of external actors without compromising our Fundamental Principles and Movement distinctiveness;
- D. address future challenges relating specifically to the increased role of the military as a humanitarian actor, the evolution of civil-protection mechanisms and the impact on National Societies in the longer term of emergency partnerships with international organizations.

This was confirmed in the 2011 CoD with Resolution 2 "Movement components' relations with external humanitarian actors."

Movement components have over the years taken significant steps to better manage and develop their relations with various external actors. Policies and guidelines have already been adopted in previous statutory meetings. However, there remain important challenges in what is generally recognized as a more complex and challenging humanitarian environment. Resolutions that were adopted in earlier years are not necessarily suited in all respects to this changing operational environment or being interpreted in a common or coherent fashion by all components of the Movement.

While work is progressing on establishing guidance on working with UN agencies in emergencies, more work is required to strengthen coordination within the Movement and with external actors to ensure aid is reaching those in need. The review of Movement coordination and relations with external actors will identify some of the key challenges facing future operations, a few of which will be addressed in the workshop. Respecting the Fundamental Principles is essential when working with external actors; for this reason, components must step up planning and forecasting work upstream with those stakeholders who have an increasing role in providing aid.

While there is significant work being done on these issues, some important questions remain, such as: Are we giving this the priority and attention it deserves to ensure our humanitarian work is credible and accountable? What can National Societies do to prepare more? What steps can be taken to help individual NS excel in humanitarian work and to contribute to the collective good of the Movement? Given the increasing number of partnerships the UN has with the private sector, are there additional implications for RC/RC humanitarian assistance when it engages with the UN, and how are we addressing this collectively as a Movement?

To answer these questions, the realities of operational work in today's world need to be shared through frank and open dialogue, and solutions found to help each other make the best decisions for the Movement and the people it serves. This workshop will address some of those issues and identify what measures could be discussed and taken to the 2015 CoD. Due to time constraints, the presenters will focus their presentations on relations with UN entities and civil-protection forces, which will serve as a catalyst for plenary discussion on the questions raised above.

### **Guiding questions**

In the operations you have recently been involved in (either in your own country or in support of another National Society):

1. What were the advantages and disadvantages of partnering or coordinating with external actors?
  - a. Did we miss out on partnering/coordination opportunities that would have enhanced the Movement's humanitarian response?
  - b. Were there partnerships or coordination efforts that should not have happened and/or that we should avoid in the future?
2. Are our partnerships with external actors increasing the sustainability of our institutions and responses?
3. What steps, if any, were taken to ensure compliance with the Fundamental Principles and the protection of the Movement's interests with regard to these partnerships and coordination initiatives? Could/should more have been done?

### **Expected outcomes**

Interventions made during the workshop, along with information provided through consultations with governments and the background report, will identify some of the most pressing challenges faced by Movement components in their relationships with external actors, thus pointing to areas where further reflection and guidance is necessary.

The workshop should enable participants to share practical experiences on how best to address these challenges, as well as approaches to ensure compliance with the Fundamental Principles. It should also help to identify the main opportunities and challenges of working with external humanitarian actors (in particular with UN entities and civil-protection forces).

Linked to the broader debate on cooperation within the Movement, the workshop should help answer the question of how to promote a distinct but complementary response that reflects the Movement's unique capacity to alleviate human suffering.