

# **Council of Delegates 2013**

## **REPORT ON THE WORKSHOP**

### **Promoting and Enhancing the Red Response: working with external actors**

**Chair: Eva von Oelreich**

**Rapporteur: Lorenza Donoso Oyarce**

#### **(A) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (one paragraph):**

The workshop focused the fundamental strategic questions on when and how we should seek to work with and coordinate with external actors. What should funding streams look like and how can we best mitigate the potential risks of operational relationships. Participants stressed the need to ensure respect for Fundamental Principle as well as the need to ensure fair and equal partnerships, and the necessity on NS to meet the expectations of accountability and transparency placed on them. Many issues were raised – there was an expressed desire to continue the discussions through the process of strengthening Movement Coordination and Cooperation.

#### **(B) GENERAL OBSERVATIONS**

The importance of ensuring that in all partnerships there is respect of the Fundamental Principles.

- Our acceptance and access are dependent on our identity- this identity being dependent on perceived respect to fundamental Principles.
- Who we partner with can affect our reputation. (though sometimes we are too worried about impacts to our image – and are overly cautious in this regard).
- Recognition and support of the Government for the NS identity and respect of principles is a key component.
- Not to forget that we are auxiliaries to the public authorities.

In light of our objective to meet needs the best we can there is a need to coordinate with other actors working in country.

We need to continue to fight for partnerships on equal terms.

- Burundi and Kenyan Red Cross have shown how this is possible.
- We should not accept punctual implementing partnerships with discrete tasks and no say.
- We should not accept unequal pay terms for local actors versus INGOs /IOs

There is a continued need for guidance – as to how we best coordinated with and not be “coordinated by” Un actors. Whatever guidance there is must be disseminated and followed

In working with external actors there is need to find common understanding of the key terms such as “protection” and “vulnerability” – and ensure in any work which we do our notion of the most vulnerable and the legitimate expectations they place on us are met. We need to ensure the inclusiveness of our service and work.

Among the good practises identified were joint exercises with UN, civil protection and other actors, as well as the sensitization of Governments to the Red Cross/Red Crescent specificity, including Fundamental Principles.

We need common approaches, policies and strategies – but these must be clear and easy to understand. There is need for continued guidance on how and who NSs are expected to coordinate with. The UNOCHA cluster system – brings unique challenges in this regard. Bringing funding – but also imposing coordination obligations which may go too far.

We need to continue to keep in mind that each situation is different – with a complexity of its own.

We also have to be aware of the accountability and compliance obligations that are imposed on us. We need to have clear strong systems that pass the tests and demands of funding partners. At the same time we may need to push back on onerous reporting obligations that go too far – draining our abilities to respond.

Negotiations and agreements are critical – the support the ICRC and IFRC can provide in this regard welcome

## **(C) CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. There was a call for clear and simple policies/guidelines adaptable to each contexts, including model agreements. Where such policies and guidance are in place they should be followed. There was also the call for better clarity on the means and mechanisms to ensure the proper level and depth of coordination with UN mechanisms, in particular the cluster system.
2. We need to move from being seen as ad-hoc task focused implementing partners to equal operational partners, as well as ensuring the sustainability and reliability of such partnerships. There is a need to collectively work to ensure fair and appropriate agreements –avoiding onerous reporting obligations and unfair payment conditions.

3. We need to ensure that our definition of vulnerable persons –coincides with that of our partners and ensure we serve our stakeholders – not necessarily that of the UN agency.
4. Need to manage the balance between humanitarian imperative and the perception/security risks. We should not be afraid to pursue partnerships – to the contrary they are opportunities to better serve the most vulnerable.
5. Respect for Fundamental Principles remains key, in order to continue to ensure access, acceptance, reputation, and security.
6. Increased demand and opportunities on local actors – must be met with systems of transparency and accountability.
7. Participants welcomed the focus on external actors – in the Strengthening Movement Coordination/Cooperation initiative – and sees the need for strategic alignment on these issues in the Movement.