

# daily bulletin

issue 2 - Seoul, 18 November 2005

## No compromise on Fundamental Principles

The second day of the Council of Delegates started with the presentation of a consolidated report of the first session of the Commissions on "Access to victims and vulnerable people". The report, presented by Muftah m. Etwilb of the Libyan Red Crescent, highlighted key issues and concerns raised by the participants and offered recommendations for future steps.

Well-trained and empowered volunteers from all walks of life and backgrounds, community-based approaches and well-functioning National Societies were identified as elements that bring credibility and help ensure access to victims and vulnerable people.

The need to reach out to marginalized groups was specifically mentioned, as well as the key role of strong National Society leadership, which can and should be able to negotiate access to those in need.

"Involvement of beneficiaries at every stage of the operation brings us all the closer to the people we seek to help and opens doors for a greater humanitarian impact," stressed Muftah m. Etwilb.

Building on the auxiliary role of National Societies and working to disseminate our distinct role and mission were issues pointed out by many participants, who remarked on the special responsibility of the ICRC in this area. Access to victims of conflict was raised as posing particular challenges: "Careful analysis, dialogue and persuasion, carried out in line with our Fundamental Principles may open doors for Red Cross/Red Crescent humanitarian assistance," he said.

The report highlighted the need for us to work as a true Movement, to respect the provisions of the Seville Agreement, share experiences and lessons learned and agree on roles before a crisis strikes.

A clear consensus emerged from all participants that respect for the Fundamental Principles is not negotiable, and that any possible short-term gains may have adverse long-term consequences.

"Strict adherence to impartiality, neutrality and independence is crucial for our security," reported Muftah m. Etwilb.

A set of recommendations emerged from the Commissions:

1. The components of the Movement should insist that States Party to the Geneva conventions respect their commitments to implement them
2. States must be encouraged to systematically include the role of National Societies into their national disaster plans
3. The programme on International Disaster Response Law (IDRL) is vital and must be continued and strengthened
4. The International Federation and the ICRC should consider preparing a comprehensive study on barriers to access in conflicts and natural disasters, and to recommend how to overcome them. ■



Dr Muftah m Etwilb - Director of International Relations, Libyan Red Crescent. Presented report on 'Access to victims and vulnerable people'

# Greater diversity and non-discrimination needed in and outside the Movement

The resolution and document presented to the Council of Delegates on promoting respect and diversity and fighting discrimination and intolerance was drawn up jointly by the International Federation and the ICRC. It is a follow-up to the 2003 resolution that recognized the importance for all components of the Movement to promote respect and dignity for individuals.

In applying the Fundamental Principles of the Movement, the Red Cross and Red Crescent has a responsibility to prevent victims and vulnerable people being exposed to "discrimination, exclusion and dehumanization." It is a challenge, the document points out, that the components of the Movement face in their daily work.

The document recognizes the importance of implementing specific programmes if the aims of the 2003 resolution are to be achieved. It provides "guidance and guiding questions" to assist National Societies in particular to promote respect and diversity. It concludes by listing the actions a National Society can take:

- set an example by its openness to all members of the community and through its humanitarian activities;

- detect discrimination, exclusion and dehumanization in the areas of the Movement components' responsibility and mandate;
- give help to those who need it;
- promote the principles of humanity and respect for fundamental rights contained in International Humanitarian Law and international human rights law, thus playing a key role in education and prevention;
- contribute in this way to a more peaceful world.

Many delegations made interventions to support the resolution. Pertinent comments included the need to speak with one voice globally, for example by using international days which represent diversity and non discrimination; the need to take practical steps at local, regional and international levels to communicate our humanitarian principles more effectively; the need to reflect diversity within our own ranks; the need to internalize the principles of diversity and non-discrimination into our own environments; and the need to encourage and educate Red Cross and Red Crescent youth groups to adopt and practice our humanitarian principles. ■

## Report from the Standing Commission

Mohammed Al-Hadid presented the report of the Standing Commission to the Council and began with a reiteration of the role of the Standing Commission within the Movement.

The report outlined the Standing Commission's promotion of the Agenda for Humanitarian Action adopted by the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent and its action, following the resolutions passed at the 2003 Council of Delegates. Mohammed Al-Hadid said that the main issues on

the Commission's agenda had been to:

- continue to give high priority to the work for a comprehensive solution to the question of the emblem,
- identify and analyze the challenges that have arisen in the implementation of the Seville Agreement since its adoption in 1997 and to seek ways and means to enhance it in the interest of better cooperation and effectiveness in international operations,
- promote, monitor and review the implementation of the Strategy for the Movement with the aim of preparing an update for the 2005 Council,

- prepare for the 2005 Council with particular focus on its expected outcomes in order to set the scene for the preparations of the 2007 International conference.

The Commission has continued to involve National Societies in its work. Thirty societies, representing all regions, participated in ad hoc working groups mandated to assist the Commission in the realization of the above-mentioned priorities. Members of the Commission participated in all regional conferences and many sub-regional meetings. ■

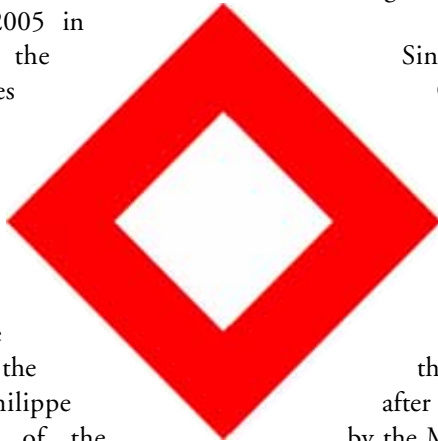


### IHL exhibit

*There are few limits to Movement creativity when it comes to explaining International Humanitarian Law (IHL). This ICRC exhibit mounted on the third floor of the COEX conference centre, which is hosting the Council of Delegates, combines photos, design and video to put the point across. ■*

# Additional emblem update

The discussions on the draft third additional protocol, creating an additional emblem alongside the red cross and red crescent, were conducted in the knowledge that there will be a diplomatic conference of States on 5-6 December 2005 in Geneva to consider the protocol. Delegates were brought up to date with events in the past few months, too recent to have been included in the report on the emblem presented to the Council, by Philippe Cuvillier, chairman of the Standing Commission's working group on the emblem.



The 2000 diplomatic conference had been postponed, but the draft third additional protocol was nevertheless sent to all States. Philippe Cuvillier reminded delegates that the text had not changed.

Since then the Standing Commission has followed the mandate given to it by the Movement. The new working group set up in 2004 continued to support the third protocol process and after extensive consultations by the Movement and the Swiss authorities, a diplomatic conference is now to be held.

He recalled for the delegates the evolution of the issue since 1995 and in particular the decision of the 1999 International Conference to seek a comprehensive and lasting solution to the question of the

Philippe Cuvillier called on all National Societies to encourage their governments to support the additional protocol at the diplomatic conference and concluded by hoping that, in the interests of the true



*Philippe Cuvillier, member of the Standing Commission presenting report on the Emblem*

universality of the Movement, we would soon see the full membership of the Movement of the Eritrean, Israeli and Palestinian societies.

A number of delegations took the floor to comment on the emblem issue and the prospect of a diplomatic conference. ■

## Movement cooperation: implementing Seville

Recent crises, such as the tsunami, illustrated the strength and diversity of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement and its different components. But to effectively address the needs of vulnerable people affected by disasters and conflicts the Movement must be able to coordinate its activities. The Seville Agreement, adopted in 1997, regulates the response of the different components to international emergencies. While its importance is generally recognized, the Agreement's implementation has revealed weaknesses. In 2003, the Council of Delegates therefore tasked the Standing Commission to establish a working group to identify the main problems concerning

the implementation of the Agreement and to pinpoint further opportunities for strengthening Movement cooperation.

The report and draft resolution submitted by the Standing Commission to the Council of Delegates argue that the Seville Agreement is undoubtedly needed and that there had been some successes when implementing it. However, the Standing Commission notes that the external environment in which many crises occur has become more complex and that important changes had also taken place within the Movement. The draft resolution outlines several supplementary measures "to enhance the imple-

mentation of the Seville Agreement" including proposals to clarify the respective roles of the 'lead agency' and the host National Society and to promote better knowledge of the Agreement within the Movement itself.

A group of National Societies submitted several amendments to the draft resolution arguing "that the Agreement does not sufficiently cover the actual needs in the area of operational coordination". Following a debate in the plenary of the Council of Delegates the chairman appointed a working group tasked with drafting a compromise resolution to be submitted on 18 November. ■

## Implementation and update of Movement strategy

Presenting the report on behalf of the Standing Commission, Freddy Pedersen said that approximately 50 per cent of National Societies are now using the Strategy to guide their work. Capacity-building efforts show positive results and integrity issues are being handled. National Societies also participate more in statutory meetings, however, improving the image of societies needs greater effort.

An update was agreed by a working group in September 2005. It sought continuity, simplification and a greater role for National Societies. The original three strategic objectives remained with minor modifications, particularly on image and visibility.

After a brief debate, the draft resolution adopting the update of the Strategy, and amended from the floor, was approved by the Council. ■

## Relations with military bodies

Yves Daccord, director of communication at the ICRC, introduced a document containing guidelines for all components of the Movement on their interaction with military bodies. It was produced after extensive consultation within the Movement.

It seeks to ensure that relations with the military enhance effective assistance and protection for victims, that there is a clear distinction between military bodies and humanitarian actors, that components of the Movement preserve independent decision-making and action and that relations with military authorities do not contribute to the military effort. Yves Daccord said that the current document was a first step in dealing with the issue of relations with the military. He called for the guidelines to be put into practice by all components in a visible and concrete way. ■

## The Movement honours its own – the Henry Dunant medal ceremony

Feelings of gratitude and pride flowed strongly among those present at the award ceremony for the presentation of the Henry Dunant medals. This high moment of emotion concluded the first day of the Council of Delegates.

The Medal, named after the founder of the Movement, is awarded every two years to individuals to acknowledge and reward outstanding humanitarian service and acts of great devotion to the Red Cross and Red Crescent cause. The Henry Dunant medal, the Movement's highest distinction, is a red cross embossed with the profile of the Movement's founder, attached to a green ribbon.

The ceremony opened with a vibrant rendition, by six male singers from the National Korea Opera Company, of the well-known Italian aria 'O Sole Mio', and a Korean song, 'Heemangui Nalaro' (Towards a Nation of Hope).

Janet Davidson, Vice-Chair of the Standing Commission read the tributes, while the President of the Standing Commission, Mohammed Al-Hadid, presented this year's eight Henry Dunant medals.

The first recipient was Colonel Dr. Mekonnen Muluneh, of the Ethiopian Red Cross Society. An active member of the Red Cross for many years, he founded several branches, helped to recruit thousands of members and volunteers, raised funds, and established a blood bank as well as health and youth centres.

In his address, Colonel Muluneh said. "This honour belongs to all the survivors



*Mohammed Al-Hadid, Chairman of the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent with Colonel Dr. Mekonnen Muluneh, Ethiopian Red Cross Society.*

of the war and their children. It is there and then that I swore never to be silent whenever and wherever human beings endure sufferings and humiliation." He then paid tribute to the youth volunteers, "the cornerstone of the Movement's ideals and objectives."

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## The Movement honours its own – the Henry Dunant medal ceremony

The next medal was received by Ms. Linda Paulsen, Vice-President of the Norwegian Red Cross, on behalf of General Björn Egge, who could not be present. "It is my pleasure to convey Björn's sincere thanks and appreciation. He is deeply moved and honoured," she said. General Egge, a former President of the Norwegian Red Cross, has devoted his life to peace building and the dissemination of IHL.

The next recipient was Mrs. Christina Magnuson, former President of the Swedish Red Cross and member of the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. Mrs. Magnuson has dedicated herself to the Swedish Red Cross and the Movement for the past 30 years, starting out as a volunteer.

She had also sent her regrets and Bengt Westerbergh, President of the Swedish Red Cross, received the medal on her behalf. He read her note of thanks. "Now that this great honour is bestowed on me, my heart goes out to all the volunteers in the hundreds of National Societies all over

the world. They are the Red Cross and the Red Crescent!"

The next Henry Dunant medal was awarded, posthumously, to Dr. Jean Pictet, considered as the main architect of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and former Vice-President of the ICRC. A remarkable jurist, he served with the organization for 47 years. He died on 30 March 2002. Dr. Pictet also proposed the Movement's seven Fundamental Principles, which were adopted at the International Conference in Vienna in 1965.

Yves Sandoz, former Director of Humanitarian Law at the ICRC, a close collaborator of Dr. Pictet, received the medal. "Mr. Pictet was a generous man, a man of great principles, almost the incarnation of our Movement. All those who knew Mr. Pictet not only admired him but also felt great affection for him," he told the assembly.

The final four medals were awarded to volunteers and staff of the Red Cross Societies of the four countries most

severely affected by the devastating tsunami of 26 December 2004: India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Thailand. The medals, awarded symbolically to one member of each of these National Societies, recognize the courageous dedication of volunteers and staff who were immediately mobilized to help victims of the deadly tsunami. For weeks, they assisted the injured and other survivors, collected bodies and supported families in their mourning, even while many of them had themselves lost loved ones in the disaster.

Ranjith Wijesooriaya, of the Sri Lanka Red Cross spoke on behalf of all recipients and thanked the selection committee for "this most prestigious medal". "This was made possible," he said, "because of the support from the ICRC, the International Federation, the National Societies and, most importantly, from fellow volunteers within the Movement."

The ceremony concluded with a short video illustrating relief activities for tsunami survivors. ■



*'Award recipients celebrate with Federation President and President of the Standing Commission'*

*From left to right: Ranjith Wijesooriaya, Sri Lanka Red Cross; Mohammed Al-Hadid, President of the Standing Commission; Tasana Meteeviboon, Thailand Red Cross; Juan Manuel Suárez Del Toro, International Federation President; Bunaiya Putra, Indonesia Red Cross; Colonel Dr. Mekonnen Muluneh, Ethiopia Red Cross.*