

Daily bulletin

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Council of Delegates of
the International Red Cross and
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Geneva, 2007

Conseil des Délégués
du Mouvement international de
la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge,
Genève, 2007

Consejo de Delegados
del Movimiento Internacional de
la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja,
Ginebra, 2007

مجلس المندوبين للحركة الدولية
للصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر
جنيف، عام ٢٠٠٧

Help for all migrants, regardless of status

Migrants left unprotected in the tidal wave of humanity now on the move around the world must get assistance regardless of their status, the Council of Delegates underlined Saturday.

With the Movement unanimous it should intervene even where authorities hinder – or penalize – humanitarian help to marginalized people, a raft of measures was passed reflecting current concern to strengthen policy, guidelines and Movement cooperation on migration.

Last week the International Federation's General Assembly called for the development of a new migration policy (*see Daily Bulletin no 4*) and migration is a major issue on the International Conference agenda.

Among other things the Council of Delegates asked the ICRC to develop guidelines for working in places where migrants are detained, and, with the Federation, help National Societies gain access to vulnerable groups, wherever they may be, without being penalized.

"We have to be where our presence is needed," one delegate said, summing up the mood of the debate. But the need to avoid being drawn into political, economic and security aspects of migration was emphasized.



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Red Cross and Red Crescent services to uprooted people were provided because they were vulnerable not because they were migrants.

The Council also asked the Federation, the ICRC and National Societies to promote respect for international law – including human rights, refugee and humanitarian law – and to work together on the development of advocacy strategies that address migration issues. One concern expressed was that government policy could increase vulnerability, and prevention was preferable to cure.

The Red Cross and Red Crescent has provided assistance and protection to uprooted populations since the start of the Movement but until now it has not been guided by any common statutory commitment. ■



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Perception of strategy misleading

A perception that the Strategy for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is primarily a framework for the ICRC and the International Federation was cause for concern at the Council of Delegates. Measures to increase National Society ownership had to be developed, a Standing Commission report warned.

Of 62 National Societies responding to a self-assessment, only a quarter considered they had solid understanding of the strategy that has the overall goal of improving cooperation within the Movement, and with external partners, to increase efficiency and effectiveness. Some 37 National Societies rated their understanding as average, and ten reported poor understanding.

“National Societies are the vital force of the Movement,” the report reminded them, “and have a decisive role in promoting and actively furthering better cooperation between all components.” The strategy, it said, was about how they should work to become stronger together.

Much progress had been made, Standing Commission member **Dr Freddy Karup Pedersen** told the Council but ownership could be better.

A seven-point Council resolution was passed that included a call for increased efforts to implement the strategy’s ten points of action and for monitoring to continue with greater focus on “measurable progress” made by National Societies.

The resolution also urged National Societies to update their statutes to meet strategy requirements related to integrity. The Standing Commission report said the development of a Federation policy, mechanisms, tools and approaches had generated a greater awareness of integrity issues and how to tackle them, and an increasing number of societies were amending their statutes as a consequence.

Yet the goal of all National Societies doing so by the target date of 2010 was uncertain, and the Council heard more than 100 societies still had to complete revisions.

Dr Pedersen emphasized considerable efforts still needed to be made on cooperation in capacity building. The strategy, he reminded the Council, contained a Movement-wide concept all components would comply with, and which would enhance capacity-building commitment and funding.

Coordination was improving slightly but almost one fifth of National Societies still lacked a disaster preparedness plan. ■



Emblem issues

How to use the emblem for promotional purposes and still ensure its protection brought extensive debate to the Council of Delegates.

An emblem study, requested from the ICRC by the Strategy for the Movement, was submitted to the Council for information. Philip Spoerri, the ICRC’s director for International Law and Co-operation within the Movement, said the study – drafted in consultation with National Societies and the International Federation – addressed 44 specific issues covering operational, commercial and non-operational matters, and roles and responsibilities in the prevention and repression of emblem misuses.

It reflected, he said, the ICRC’s current thinking but was not fixed in stone. It aimed to be an evolving document.

“It is important to emphasize,” Mr Spoerri said, “that while the components of

the Movement need to reinforce their visibility in order to obtain support to assist victims, this should not be carried out in ways that erode the protective value of the emblem and its symbolic power.”

National Societies asked for continuing dialogue and for the report to look further into communications, marketing and fund-raising uses of the emblem. The emblem had an indicative role they could not do without, they said.

The Council agreed the Movement’s components should use the study’s recommendations to enhance implementation of rules governing use of the emblems and asked them to provide feedback to the ICRC. Work on the study should continue, the Council requested. ■

Memorandum of Understanding

The chairman of the Council, Dr Jakob Kellenberger, announced that the small working group he had set up the day before (*see Daily Bulletin no5*) had reached agreement on a draft resolution on the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding between the PRCS and the MDA. Its main point was the continuation of the monitoring process. The new draft was adopted by the Council unanimously. ■

The Council reaffirms commitment to coordination and cooperation

Coordination within the Movement is increasingly effective and is leading to better services for vulnerable communities, but “more emphasis needs to be placed on preparedness measures that facilitate working together” said Mr Raymond Forde, chairman of the high-level group on implementation of the Seville Agreement.

The group is responsible for reviewing the impact and efficacy of the Agreement and its supplementary measures.

“We need to be better prepared. Joint risk assessments and contingency planning is needed (and) we need a strong and trusting relationship between components before disaster strikes,” he went on to say.

Mr Forde also called for continual emphasis on awareness training for senior members of the Movement. National Society leaders needed to prepare themselves for the role of lead agency or primary partner in emergency operations.

Noting that the group’s mandate had come to an end, Mr Forde recommended that monitoring of Movement coordination and cooperation should continue. After a brief debate these recommendations were unanimously adopted by delegates. ■

The 7th Pan African Conference will be held in Johannesburg, South Africa, on 19–22 October 2008.
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“Remarkable achievements” on weapons

Ms Brigitte Troyon of the ICRC presented a follow-up report to the 2005 Council resolution on weapons and international humanitarian law. It confirmed that “the remarkable achievements” on reducing the impact of antipersonnel landmines was continuing, ten years after the signing of the Ottawa Convention. Deadlines for mine clearance agreed as part of the Ottawa treaty are approaching and some States will need extensions. But Ms Troyon said that extending deadlines should not be allowed to reduce pressure for clearance. “Responding to the long-term needs of the growing number of mine victims around the world is another continuing challenge,” she said.

Other explosive remnants of war (ERW) are equally of continuing concern. They cause injury and death on an unacceptable scale among civilian communities. The Protocol on ERW entered into force in November 2006 and it should be a Movement priority to encourage ratification and implementation by more States, said Ms Troyon. The Movement must also develop its support for victims of such weapons. The ICRC is working to expand the scope of the Movement’s action in this area.

Transfer and availability of weapons is an urgent humanitarian problem, said Ms Troyon. Small arms availability remains a challenge even though regional small arms control agreements have been signed.

She said the ICRC welcomes the international arms treaty negotiations that will take place in 2008. Such a treaty must include arms transfer rules.

Ensuring that rapid advances in life sciences and biotechnology are not misused for hostile purposes, continued Ms Troyon, remains urgent. The Movement can continue to promote a “culture of responsibility” in new developments in the life sciences as well as specific measures, such as the adoption of national legislation.

“The ICRC and National Societies have an important role to play in encouraging all States to establish national procedures to evaluate the legality of new weapons, means or methods of warfare,” she said.

Ms Troyon concluded by saying that Movement efforts over the past decade on mines and ERW “are making a real difference on the ground”

The next step could be a new international treaty on cluster munitions. A resolution that includes such a proposal and which is supported by the ICRC, was presented by Trygve Nordby, secretary-general of the Norwegian Red Cross. After a lively and informed debate, it was adopted by the Council. ■

Preparations for the 30th International Conference

The Council of Delegates adopted the provisional agenda for the 30th International Conference and approved a proposal to fill posts.

Chairman of the Conference:

Ms Mandisa Kalako-Williams
(The South African Red Cross Society)

Vice-chairs:

Ambassador Boudewijn
J. Van Eenennaam (Netherlands)

Ambassador Juan Martabit (Chile)

Mr Abdul Rahman Attar
(Syrian Arab Red Crescent)

Ms Annemarie Huber-Hotz
(Swiss Red Cross)

Rapporteur of the Conference:

Ambassador Ichiro Fujisaki (Japan)

Chairman of the drafting committee:

Ambassador Masood Khan
(Pakistan)

Vice-Chairs of the drafting committee:

Mr Ian Courtenay
(Belize Red Cross Society)

Mr Abbas Gullet
(Kenya Red Cross Society)

Ambassador Valery Loshchinin
(Russian Federation)

Exhibitions

All photos: ICRC/Marko Kokic



“Our stand is a tribute to our 17 staff and volunteers who lost their lives in the conduct of their humanitarian duty since 2000,” explains Khaldoun Oweis, head of the Youth and Volunteers Department of the **Palestine Red Crescent Society**. The exhibition illustrates the activities of the National Society for the most vulnerable in the West Bank

and Gaza, as well as for the benefit of Palestinian refugees in Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria. ■



“**Weapons that keep on killing... must be stopped.**” This is the slogan of a new ICRC exhibition – and campaign – aimed at raising awareness about landmines, cluster munitions, and other explosive remnants of war that continue to maim and kill long after fighting has ended. In Afghanistan alone, “tens of thousands of mine victims will need health care and assistance for the rest of their lives,” writes Najmuddin Helal, in the *International Herald Tribune*. He lost his two legs in a mine accident 25 years ago and is now the head of the ICRC orthopaedic centre in Kabul. ■

The plight of missing persons is a hidden tragedy, too often the direct consequence of armed conflicts. It is a tragedy for the person who disappears, but the families suspended in limbo suffer as well – and the few but powerful photos chosen to highlight



one of the most important activities of the ICRC are all about that. **The right to know** the fate of a relative is a fundamental principle of international humanitarian law. It must be respected. “Something can and must be done. End the silence”. The young boy holding the photo of his father does not speak. But we hear him loud and clear. ■

The 2009 Council of Delegates will be in Nairobi, Kenya

Delegates are kindly requested to empty their pigeon holes on a daily basis.

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