

ICRC Restoring Family Links Conference, Kyiv 2006

RFL is a Movement : challenge

Conference delegates endorsed in principle the RFL 10-year draft strategy (2008–2018)

On the third and last day of the regional RFL conference in Kyiv, the ICRC convened in plenary delegates from 35 National Societies in Europe and Central Asia along with representatives from the ICRC and the International Federation. The General Rapporteur, Jane Clarke, and the 3 Working Group rapporteurs (Asa Molde / Swedish Red Cross, Vesna Milenovic / Serbian Red Cross and Marc Hofstra / The Netherlands Red Cross) have officially presented the **Final Report and Recommendations** ensuing

from the intense deliberations and consultations of delegates over the past two days.

It appeared that the three Working Groups shared a significant number of positions on the draft RFL strategy and that when tackling the issue of RFL, there were more similarities than differences in their respective approaches.

Conference delegates confirmed the importance of developing a common approach to restoring family links. They reiterated their commitment to this core humanitarian activity and their will to develop the global Family Links Network.

Movement buy-in: a necessity

The ongoing consultation process for the development of the strategy must aim at ensuring that governance levels of the National Societies, the ICRC and the International Federation understand and commit themselves to restoring family links activities. As Dr Jacques Moreillon put it: "RFL is vital and should remain an essentially Red Cross/Red Crescent action". Now is the time for our Movement to commit itself to getting ready in normal times for abnormal times. The main challenge is the "invisibility and the individuality of the drama". The Movement must prepare for the invisible and individual disaster of having lost family links.



Immediate response and speed are key factors in measuring our efficiency

Marc Hofstra, Deputy Secretary General, Netherlands Red Cross commented: "it is very important for all components of the Movement to act together... We are talking of a humanitarian service that functions as a chain, the weakest link impacts negatively on the overall quality of the service. Our ambition is to raise everyone to a higher level. The Netherlands Red Cross will remain motivated and committed to the Restoring Family Links Network. We have 15 paid staff and 200 dedicated volunteers for the tracing/RFL service alone".



Marc Hofstra, Deputy Secretary General, The Netherlands Red Cross.

The President of the Ukrainian Red Cross, Dr Ivan Usichenko, congratulated the audience for having unanimously endorsed and adopted the main statements fixed in the ten-year draft RFL strategy, which demonstrates the will of the

Movement to meet the ever-increasing RFL humanitarian needs.

Emmanuel Rousseau, French Red Cross remarked that "the theme of restoring family links is as important as ever since there are significantly more forces opposite RFL and



François Bellon, ICRC Moscow.

working on dismantling family links". According to him, these forces range from migration, globalization and human trafficking to conflicts and natural disasters. It is crucial for the Movement to be ahead of its time. Proposing an RFL strategy for the coming ten years is compelling and the Movement should embark on it. Not to mention that the Movement is the most legitimate entity to ensure the restoration of family links... The Movement's vertical structure, in other words, accessing top management and governance while simultaneously maintaining grassroots contacts with vulnerable people is of remarkable strength.



Hans Lindstorm, Swedish Red Cross.

Closure of the conference

The conference delegates request the ICRC to take forward the RFL Strategy in the name of the Movement and present it to the Council of delegates in 2007 for adoption.

Press Conference: Ukrainian media

Panelists:

Dr Jacques Moreillon, Member of the ICRC, Chairperson of the RFL conference

Dr Ivan G. Usichenko, President, Ukrainian Red Cross Society

Alain Aechlimann, ICRC Head of the Protection and Central Tracing Agency, Secretary General of the RFL conference

Paul-Henry Arni, ICRC Head of Regional Delegation, Kiev

8 journalists present (radio and print)

TV interview with Dr Jacques Moreillon on Channel 5.

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or visit our special ICRC webpage on family links:

www.icrc.org/eng/rfl-conferences

RESTORING FAMILY LINKS

Regional Conference in Kyiv (15–17.11.2006)

ВОССТАНОВЛЕНИЕ СЕМЕЙНЫХ СВЯЗЕЙ

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