Remarks at the opening of the Governing Board

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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Chair

Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

Geneva, May 2017

Mr President, Dear Colleagues and Friends, good morning,

In these times of increasing crises, it is encouraging to hear both the IFRC President and the ICRC Vice-President, who spoke before me, highlight encouraging signs and challenges ahead.

The first time I was here I said that we need to *know more about ourselves.* As components of the worldwide Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement network we need to know *who we are*, drawing some baselines to measure and understand our own trends. As an example I mentioned that we need to follow our financial footprint over time. Even more important is of course to follow the results of our action, to know that we are useful to enough persons in need and in relation to our overhead costs.

The second time I flagged the Vision for the Movement, which we all adopted in the Council of Delegates two years ago – a Vision to guide us into the future and help our common strategizing. The Presidents of the International Federation, the ICRC and I as chair of the Standing Commission will send you a letter in the coming weeks about this overarching Vision. We are interested to know how you are using it. The onus is on all of us to turn the words of the Vision for the Movement into meaningful reality on the ground. We must prove ourselves to be true champions of humanity, through the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of our response, and ultimately by making a real difference to people suffering the effects of armed conflicts, natural disasters and other crises. The magnitude of humanitarian needs around the world today demands nothing less.

Now here again for the third time, we are coming closer to the next round of Statutory Meetings this November in Turkey. The Standing Commission has recently decided on an early agenda for the Council of Delegates, guided also by input from National Societies. On the 10th of May we will send out the Draft Provisional Agenda for input from you. It is not easy to accommodate all issues that are relevant to our Movement right now. We think we have managed relatively well. There are eight thematic areas in plenary and eight workshops - also part of the plenary - competing for our interest. By putting the workshops two by two and having full interpretation in all of them, we hope also National Societies with small delegations will be able to be part of all. One learning point for me is how important it is to align issues across the GA, the intermediary, free-flowing RC2Forum and the Council of Delegates. If you see the same issue in the GA and in the Council of Delegates, look closely. Take migration, planned for the General Assembly with the aim of an operational approach. In the Council of Delegates it appears again, because we also need a Movement position and policyon migration. My impression is that more and more issues need to be tackled as Movement issues, although then dealt with in accordance with the particular purpose of each of them.

In order to further streamline the *flow* of statutory meetings, in addition to continuing the successful joint opening ceremony from Sydney 2013, the Standing Commission now also suggests – instead of two small award ceremonies – that we could have one joint ceremony for our different awards and medals to make into a global award celebration. We believe this could benefit all and hope you agree.

The Council of Delegates has always had a value, but I daresay it needs to be even more - treasured - in the future. This is where all components come together. The agenda for the Council of Delegates aims to bring our most burning Movement issues to discussion to help us formulate common positions and decisions, to enable strong action and strong positioning.

If we see the link from the resolution we take in the Council of Delegates to what we do in our daily humanitarian action on the ground, it will sharpen our action.

If we see the link from a challenge on the ground to the decision we take in the Council of Delegates, it will also sharpen our action.

We must never forget the connection between action on the ground and the policy resolutions in our statutory meetings.The day we do that, or treat them lightly, we are a Movement of the past.

Instead we all dream as Henry Dunant, don´t we:

And, as last time, I end with his words: “*I dream of a Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement that has global moral authority and can call the attention of the world to humanitarian issues of concern, a Movement, which independently chooses which issues to focus on*.“

I wish you fruitful days in the Governing Board!