

**Remarks at the Governing Board  
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies**

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Chair

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Madrid, 17 May 2021

(Original in Spanish)

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Mr. President, Mr. Secretary General, dear colleagues and friends, buenas tardes from Madrid, good afternoon, bonjour, masa' alkhayr. As usual at the Governing Board, I continue my talk in my own language, Spanish.

Thank you, Mr. President, my good friend Francesco, for once again inviting me to address the Governing Board and have this opportunity to reflect together on issues of strategic importance to the Movement.

Before I continue, I would like to thank all the National Society volunteers and staff who, one year into the pandemic, continue to give their best in caring for people affected by the coronavirus. They are managing to deal effectively, efficiently and, above all, humanely with this unprecedented challenge.

I think especially of countries suffering the consequences of COVID-19 in an extraordinarily intense way, such as India, Nepal, Bangladesh and South Africa, just to mention a few.

While we have been talking about COVID-19, the world has not stood still. National Societies have had to continue dealing with numerous crises, such as that in Colombia and Myanmar and the violence that is sadly unfolding in the Middle East. Everything possible must be done at all levels to prevent escalation and the impact of the violence on the most vulnerable members of society. Compliance with international humanitarian law is absolutely imperative. It is vital to allow free passage to medical vehicles and personnel. I would like to express our great admiration for the members and volunteers of the Palestine Red Crescent Society and Magen David Adom in Israel.

As you all know, both the 23rd General Assembly and the Council of Delegates scheduled for this year have been postponed until 2022, owing to the consequences of COVID-19 worldwide. This decision was taken jointly by the IFRC's leadership and the Standing Commission. I would like to stress the high degree of cooperation that has existed between us throughout. We strove hard to ensure mutual understanding given the importance of the decisions to be taken.

The concerns that led to this decision were both to ensure the safety of participants, volunteers and staff involved and to ensure equal access to the proceedings, and other rights, for all participating National Societies.

Throughout the coming year, we must continue our dialogue about new dates, and set those dates provided the organizational conditions are favourable. During this Governing Board and again in September, you will be able to discuss the different work scenarios, as well as the General Assembly agenda. This will also be done within the Standing Commission in June and October, when we meet to discuss the Council of Delegates. Depending on the evolution of the pandemic, which will determine the Movement's ability to meet, either in person or virtually, we will decide whether our meetings can be held from May 2022 or whether we will have to consider later dates.

In the meantime, the consultation continues on the Concept Note and the elements of the proposed Council of Delegates resolutions. I take this opportunity to encourage you to take part in this consultation, the deadline for which is 4 June.

I also encourage you to become “influencers” and motivate your colleagues in other National Societies to share their views on these documents and thus contribute to a Movement that is more pluralistic, inclusive and fit for purpose.

As part of the journey in the run-up to the Council of Delegates, the Standing Commission – along with the ICRC and the International Federation as co-organizers – is considering proposing a series of virtual workshops open to all members of the Movement, including those who may not usually be able to come to statutory meetings.

The programme and conditions for the holding of these workshops still need to be discussed and approved by the Standing Commission, but such workshops could help lighten the agenda of the Council of Delegates, while providing space for debate within the Movement on issues of humanitarian concern to us.

The possible participation of observers at statutory meetings (General Assembly and Council of Delegates) should also be considered at a time of reduced participation.

The Governing Board will work on the General Assembly's agenda and programme. I would like to express my wish, as chair of the Standing Commission, that we harmonize our work so that our agendas and programmes are complementary. We should seek synergy, avoiding duplication. And why not, when possible, deal jointly with issues of common interest?

When the postponement of the statutory meetings was decided at the last meeting of the Standing Commission (in which, as you know, the leadership of the IFRC and the ICRC take part), it was proposed to hold a worldwide virtual event in the last quarter of 2021, highlighting the Movement's common position on pandemics and climate change.

I understand that the International Federation and the ICRC are working on preparations for this event, which should take place just before the COP 26 meeting (scheduled for early November 2021). It should be an opportunity both for the Movement to demonstrate its prominent position on the humanitarian scene and to promote the Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organizations, which is currently being finalized and should be formally adopted by the Council of Delegates.

I would not like to end my speech without referring, once again, to some of the issues arising from the resolutions adopted in 2019. Very briefly, I want to mention three issues:

1. First, progress is needed on implementing the Memorandum of Understanding between the Israeli Magen David Adom and the Palestinian RCS.

2. Second, the Movement's Steering Group on the Statement of Integrity adopted in 2019 (in which the Commission's vice-chair will take part) must start its work and focus on the action plan and priorities for implementing the Statement. This process is vital to building TRUST, trust which is essential to gaining and maintaining acceptance by and security for the individuals and communities with whom we work. Trust is needed above all among ourselves, between all components and bodies of the Movement.

3. Third, the work of the Movement Advisory Group on Collective Impact (which includes review of the Seville Agreement and Supplementary Measures) follows up version 2.0 of the resolution on Strengthening Movement Coordination and Cooperation (SMCC 2.0). Once this Group's work is completed, the results will be sent to National Societies for consultation.

I would like to conclude by thanking you once again for inviting me and for this opportunity to address you. I wish you every success in your deliberations over the next few days. Allow me to reiterate the Standing Commission's commitment to working together on issues of great importance to the Movement.

Thank you very much for your attention.