

>>> **Bulletin**

**In this Bulletin:**

> Letter from the Chair	1
> Members of the Standing Commission	2
> Moving forward	3
> 33rd International Conference	4
Resolutions and pledges	5
2019 Awards	5
> Council of Delegates	6
> COVID-19: Movement response	7

*This issue marks the beginning of the work of the 18th session of the Standing Commission and its communication with the members of the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.*

*With your support and ideas, we hope to be able to bring to future issues of the Bulletin better insights on the implementation of important resolutions adopted in 2019 by the Council of Delegates and the 33rd International Conference, preparations for future statutory meetings and other matters of interest to the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.*

*Photos from the 33rd International Conference Bulletin*

-----  
**Standing Commission  
of the Red Cross and Red Crescent**  
19 Avenue de la Paix CH - 1202  
Geneva Switzerland  
tel: +41 22 730 20 32  
email: [contact@standcom.ch](mailto:contact@standcom.ch)

<http://www.standcom.ch>

## Letter from the Chair

On behalf of the Standing Commission, whose members were elected on 11 December 2019 at the 33rd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, I wish to express our gratitude for making us trustees of the International Conference for the next four years. We are deeply honoured.

The work of the 18th session of the Standing Commission has just begun against the extraordinary backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic. In just a few weeks, it has become a major global challenge for international, governmental and local authorities. As the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement scales up its response everywhere, I wish first and foremost to pay a warm tribute to the dedication of all volunteers and staff who strive to provide care for the sick, prevent the spread of contagion and ensure the well-being of the world's most vulnerable people.

The members of the Standing Commission know that we have a great challenge before us as we take office. We will do everything possible to live up to the legacy that the previous members have bequeathed to us. I thank them for all their past efforts. We will keep working hard to encourage all those concerned to implement the resolutions adopted at the 33rd International Conference and those of the Council of Delegates, where important decisions were taken that will shape the Movement of tomorrow. In our first meeting, held via videoconference in March, I shared with the members my vision and aspirations for a Standing Commission that is strong and well positioned to meet what lies ahead.

They are now common commitments for us all for the coming four years. We are convinced that there is a genuine need for the Standing Commission to exist as a board of trustees for the International Conference, a Commission that can ensure the Movement responds in a coordinated and effective manner to the challenges that arise, always in line with the Fundamental Principles.

Among those aspirations, I would like to highlight the importance of mutual trust. The theme of trust in humanitarian action was at the heart of the 33rd International Conference. More than ever, trust is needed among all those involved for our work to be effective – to foster solidarity, collaboration and coordination on international and local levels, and in particular to cultivate our relationships with and accountability towards our donors and the people we serve. To achieve its humanitarian goals, the Movement must nurture mutual trust with those outside the Movement as much as among those within. The Standing Commission is willing and ready to contribute to that effort.

I hope that this resonates with your own interests and concerns and that you too will make this issue of trust a shared goal that can help us to carry out our humanitarian work efficiently and effectively, with absolute respect for the dignity of all and the sense of responsibility of each.

Please do not hesitate to raise any issue with the Standing Commission that you feel needs addressing. I am sure we can count on your collaboration and support.

Yours sincerely,

*Mercedes Baki.*

5

members of different National Societies each elected in a personal capacity by the International Conference.

2

representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), one of whom shall be the president.

2

representatives of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), one of whom shall be the president.

## >>> Standing Commission members

### >>> Elected members: 2019-2023



Mercedes Babé  
Chair



George Weber  
Vice-Chair



Hilal Al-Sayer



Abbas Gullet



Fine Tu'itupou-Arnold

### >>> Ex Officio members: ICRC-IFRC



Peter Maurer  
ICRC President



Francesco Rocca  
IFRC President



Katrin Wiegmann



Jagan Champagain

## Q: What does it mean to be a member of the Standing Commission?

A: The Standing Commission's *raison d'être* is to act as the trustee of the highest deliberative body of the Movement, the International Conference, which meets every four years. Between conferences, the Standing Commission provides strategic guidance in the interest of all components of the Movement. In addition to its responsibilities regarding arrangements for International Conferences and meetings of the Council of Delegates, the Standing Commission strives to:

- promote harmony in the work of the Movement and coordination among its components
- encourage and further the implementation of resolutions of the International Conference
- examine, with the preceding aims in view, matters which concern the Movement as a whole.

The Commission is not intended to be an operational body of the Movement. It seeks to encourage and facilitate the preparation, adoption and implementation of relevant, effective commitments and policies for the Movement and the International Conference. It works to ensure that these measures uphold and strengthen the Movement's cohesion, adherence to common principles and positions, and harmonious coordination in its humanitarian work, drawing on the specific strengths, areas of expertise and mandates of its components.

## >>> *Moving forward*

Owing to the disruption caused by the current international health crisis, the Standing Commission's first meeting this year, in March, took place in an abbreviated session over videoconference for some of its members.

It was an opportunity for the chair to rally fellow members behind the effort towards a strong and well-positioned Standing Commission. She referred to her nine aspirations for the Standing Commission, which she had presented in her candidacy speech and which the members of the Standing Commission have taken on as common goals.

The full list of those aspirations can be found at right.

*"I would like to highlight the importance of mutual trust. The theme of trust in humanitarian action was at the heart of the 33rd International Conference.*

*More than ever, trust is needed among all those involved for our work to be effective – to foster solidarity, collaboration and coordination on international and local levels, and in particular to cultivate relationships with and accountability towards our donors and the people we serve."*

*Mercedes Babé*

1. Contribute to the **unity of our Movement** in order to increase the global public's awareness of and trust in our mission.
2. Contribute **to strengthening the Movement's role as a critical conscientious voice in the world addressing situations of vulnerability**, a critical voice that will be heard and respected by governments and civil society alike.
3. Encourage the Standing Commission, in the humanitarian debate, to place a greater **emphasis on the role and voice of the National Societies** as the fundamental pillars of the Movement.
4. Believe firmly in the need for the **Standing Commission to exist as a trustee of the International Conference**, a Commission that can ensure that the Movement responds in a coordinated and effective manner to the challenges that arise, always safeguarding the Fundamental Principles.
5. **Believe in the importance of mutual trust** – trust not only between the Movement and the external world, but, above all, inside the Movement. Trust must be fostered in order to improve our work with the people we serve in communities as well as with authorities.
6. Accept the need for a **greater presence of women leaders** across all the Movement's governing bodies, including the Standing Commission.
7. **Show transparency in our actions.**
8. Ensure **accountability and integrity.**
9. **Join our efforts:** we need to have a united Movement that is connected and capable of reaching those who need us and making all people feel that we, the Red Cross and the Red Crescent, are close to them.



# >>> 33rd International Conference

*“Act today, shape tomorrow”*



The International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent is the supreme deliberative body of Movement, where the States party to the Geneva Conventions come together with the components of the Movement to discuss key matters of humanitarian concern and to make joint commitments.

It is a unique non-political forum in which the Movement components have the same voice as States.

The International Conference aims to:

- contribute to respect for and development of international humanitarian law (IHL)
- improve the safety, security and dignity of individuals by strengthening legal frameworks and policies
- shape the global humanitarian agenda
- foster relationships, alliances and synergies.

The [33rd International Conference](#), held in Geneva on 9–12 December 2019, brought together 2,393 participants from 187 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 170 States, 77 observer organizations, the ICRC and the IFRC.

A rich program of formal and informal events (including plenary sessions, the drafting committee, commissions and spotlight sessions, workshops, Red Talks, the Humanitarian Village and the Humanitarian Trail) encouraged a very high degree of engagement with participants before and during the conference around the themes of IHL, protecting people in armed conflict, shifting vulnerabilities and trust in humanitarian action.

Current and emerging challenges faced by humanitarians and the people we help were examined in fields as varied as digital transformations, the fight against epidemics and pandemics, the mental health and psychosocial needs of people affected by emergencies, humanitarian action in urban areas and the climate crisis.

**The 33rd International Conference**  
What are the main themes?

**International humanitarian law**

**Shifting vulnerabilities**

**Trust in humanitarian action**

**Power of humanity**  
33rd International Conference  
of the Red Cross and Red Crescent  
9-12 December 2019, Geneva

## >>> Resolutions and Pledges

**Eight resolutions** were adopted by the 33rd International Conference, the result of considerable successful work to reach consensus in the traditional spirit of the global humanitarian forum.

The resolutions were supplemented by voluntary commitments made by participants in the form of **151 pledges**. Pledges are important tools to facilitate and improve cooperation and dialogue between humanitarian organizations, public authorities and other partners present at the conference. Please note that **the deadline for submitting other pledges has been extended until 31 May 2020**. (You may find the pledge database [here](#).)

The resolutions adopted are as follows:

- *Bringing IHL home: A road map for better national implementation of international humanitarian law ([Resolution 1](#))*
- *Addressing mental health and psychosocial needs of people affected by armed conflicts, natural disasters and other emergencies ([Resolution 2](#))*
- *Time to act: Tackling epidemics and pandemics together ([Resolution 3](#))*
- *Restoring Family Links while respecting privacy, including as it relates to personal data protection ([Resolution 4](#))*
- *Women and leadership in the humanitarian action of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement ([Resolution 5](#))*
- *Disaster laws and policies that leave no one behind ([Resolution 7](#))*
- *Implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding and Agreement on Operational Arrangements dated 28 November 2005 between Magen David Adom in Israel and the Palestine Red Crescent Society ([Resolution 8](#)).*

The Standing Commission fully endorses also the terms of [Resolution 6](#), entitled “Act today, shape tomorrow”, and calls upon the members of the International Conference to act upon and fully implement all resolutions that were adopted and the pledges they made.

This responsibility is an integral part of the new cycle of preparation for the 34th International Conference, demonstrating that the commitments made at the conference are relevant and important and will help make a difference in future humanitarian crises.

## Awards



The **Henry Dunant Medal** is the highest distinction that the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement can bestow on an individual. It was awarded on 4 December 2019 to three individuals to recognize and reward outstanding services and acts of great devotion to the cause of the Red Cross and Red Crescent:



**Mario Villarroel Lander**

Venezuelan Red Cross



**Manuela Cabero Moran**

Spanish Red Cross



**Michael Meyer**

British Red Cross

The **Red Cross and Red Crescent Prize for Peace and Humanity** is awarded either to National Societies or to people in the Movement who have actively contributed to a more peaceful world by carrying out their humanitarian work and spreading the ideals of the Movement.



**Mohammed Al-Hadid**  
Jordan National Red Crescent

It was awarded on 4 December 2019 to **Mohammed Al-Hadid**.



## >>> Council of Delegates

The Council of Delegates of December 8, 2019 brought together all the components of the Movement to discuss and decide on a wide range of issues based on a very rich and ambitious agenda. In addition to update on a number of previous engagements (e.g. Elimination of Nuclear Weapons; Gender Equality and Equal opportunities in the Movement; Disability Inclusion; Resource Mobilization), the **Council adopted by consensus twelve resolutions.**

Some of these resolutions were directly related to the preparation of the 33rd International Conference, either to set its agenda or to arrive at common positions and commitments that would guide the dialogue between the Movement and States on crucial humanitarian matters. The Council also adopted two important declarations:

- **The Statement on Integrity of the Movement** ([Resolution 2](#)) acknowledged past efforts and made new commitments across the Movement to reinforce ethical behaviour, accountability and transparency. While an important aim of the statement is to foster dialogue with States on trust in humanitarian action, the Standing Commission will be particularly attentive to the measures taken within the Movement, yet to be put in place, to support and monitor its implementation.
- **The Statement on Migrants and our Common Humanity** ([Resolution 8](#)), solely focusing on humanitarian considerations, underlined the Movement's growing concerns for the safety and well-being of vulnerable migrants, refugees and other people in need of international protection, and its commitment to supporting States to ensure that the humanitarian needs of migrants – as well as those of vulnerable people in host communities – are met.

On the initiative of the Standing Commission, a new policy framework was adopted by the Council of Delegates aimed at enhancing transparency, gender balance and renewal in the election and composition of the Standing Commission ([Resolution 4](#)). A positive impact could already be observed in the election held during the International Conference.

The Council of Delegates also provided the Movement with policy and strategic instruments to strengthen and harmonize the action of its components in their responses to mental health and psychosocial needs ([Resolution 5](#)), in the area of restoring family links ([Resolution 6](#)), in their commitments for community engagement and accountability ([Resolution 1](#)) and to improve their statutory and constitutional base ([Resolution 3](#)).

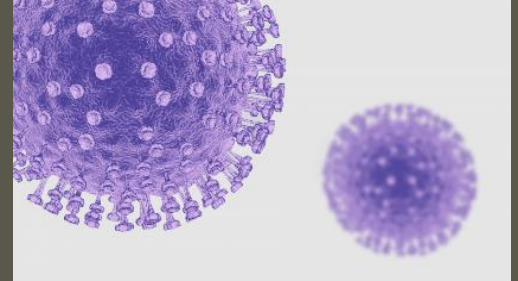
The Council of Delegates had a lively and constructive discussion on Movement coordination and cooperation issues. The Council welcomed the positive transformations already accomplished within the framework of the Strengthening Movement Coordination and Cooperation (SMCC) process and set new priorities for SMCC 2.0 in the next four years ([Resolution 9](#)).

Also, the plan of carrying out reviews of the 1997 “**Agreement on the Organization of the International Activities of the Components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement**” (the [Seville Agreement](#)) and its [Supplementary Measures](#) of 2005 was presented and discussed at length. Following this debate, the Standing Commission noted with satisfaction the proposal the presidents of the ICRC and the IFRC made to National Societies in February 2020 to put in place a unified, inclusive and transparent process this year to “enhance the Movement's collective humanitarian impact [including] an update / review of the Seville Agreement and its Supplementary Measures”.

This process touches on essential questions of harmony and coordination within the Movement that lie at the core of the Standing Commission's mandate. The Commission is eager to contribute and will determine how best to do so in due course.

## >>> COVID-19

*The Red Cross Red Crescent Movement join efforts to face this worldwide pandemic.*



In just a few months since the end of 2019, COVID-19 has become a global pandemic. Its epicentre still moves from one continent to another, insensitive to borders and affecting the lives, health and livelihoods of billions of people around the world.

It is one of the major challenges of this decade, and indeed this century, not only in terms of public health but also because of its uncertain and worrying consequences on political, economic, social and humanitarian levels. The potential impact of COVID-19 on the world's most vulnerable people – who are already hit hard by conflict, natural disasters and displacement and are often grouped in unhealthy and overcrowded quarters, camps or places of detention – makes it the most urgent threat of our times.

While international, governmental and local authorities are mobilizing against the pandemic, volunteers and personnel of all components of the Movement are scaling up their activities to prepare for public health emergencies, to prevent the spread of the disease, to ensure their access to the most vulnerable people and to provide them with hospital and community health care, psychosocial support, assistance and protection.

The National Societies – in particular in their role of supporting the public authorities in the fields of preventing disease and promoting public health – the IFRC and the ICRC are working hard to confront the pandemic and to ramp up and coordinate their actions in the spirit of generosity and dedication to their common humanitarian mission.

On 26 March 2020, the Movement launched [an emergency appeal](#) for 800 million Swiss francs (823 million US dollars) to help the world's most vulnerable communities halt the spread of the COVID-19 and recover from its effects:

- The [IFRC](#) is appealing for Sfr 550 million (\$566 million) to support National Societies in providing people health care and cash grants, distributing supplies in advance of need, communicating risks to the public, acting on lessons learned from a worldwide network of emergency responders and mitigating the impacts of large outbreaks.
- The [ICRC](#) is appealing for Sfr 250 million (\$257 million) to respond in places of conflict and violence, to support medical facilities and places of detention, to curb the spread among – and ensure access to medical services for – displaced people and detainees and to support National Societies in their response.

As humanity grapples with the COVID-19 pandemic, the members of the Standing Commission wish to express our admiration and encouragement to all volunteers and staff of the Movement on the front lines of this unprecedented global endeavour, and wish them courage, tenacity and success in the face of this immense challenge. Above all, may everyone remain healthy so that we can continue to fulfil our mission of helping the most vulnerable.

Thank you all. **Stay safe!**