

URGENT: POSTPONEMENT OF THE COUNCIL OF DELEGATES

To the members and observers of the
COUNCIL OF DELEGATES
OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

Geneva, 31 March 2021

Dear Madam / Sir,

Owing to the exceptional circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic and its multiple consequences, which will continue for many months to come, it is my duty to inform you on behalf of the Standing Commission that the Council of Delegates, which was to be held in December 2021 in the Dominican Republic, has been postponed to 2022, on dates yet to be determined.

You will find attached the detailed decision taken by the Standing Commission after consulting the leadership of the International Federation to coordinate our decisions postponing respectively the Council of Delegates and the 23rd session of the General Assembly. I would like to take this opportunity to warmly thank the Dominican Red Cross for its understanding of this decision and its flexibility in hosting our two Red Cross and Red Crescent meetings.

All over the world, we see the extraordinary commitment of Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers, staff and leaders in the fight against the pandemic. On behalf of the Standing Commission, I would like to express deep gratitude, encouragement and every success in your efforts. Keep safe and healthy!

Yours sincerely,



Mercedes Babé
Chair
Standing Commission
of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

Annex:

- Decision taken by the Standing Commission on 26 March 2021

DECISION OF THE STANDING COMMISSION
ON THE DATE AND FORMAT OF THE NEXT COUNCIL OF DELEGATES
26 March 2021

The Standing Commission,

recalling its responsibility to select the place and dates for the Council of Delegates, and its prior acceptance of the offer of the Dominican Red Cross to host that meeting in Punta Cana in December 2021,

deeply concerned about the prolonged COVID-19 pandemic and the poor prospects for normalization in the short term, which make it highly unlikely that large-scale, in-person international meetings can take place safely in 2021,

considering the statutory, security and practical requirements that apply to the Council of Delegates, first and foremost the organizers' duty of care towards all participants, volunteers and staff, as well as the need to guarantee equality for the Movement's components in exercising their right to participate in debates and help take decisions in either a face-to-face or online format,

taking note of the various alternative options for the organization of the upcoming Council of Delegates,

considering significant technological and practical challenges that would currently make it very difficult to ensure all Movement components fair and equitable access to global meetings conducted online,

recalling that beyond the adoption of resolutions, statutory meetings provide a valued forum for promoting a strong Red Cross and Red Crescent community, in particular by fostering unity, good relationships, cooperation, alliances and mutual trust among components and individuals,

stressing its wish to observe as far as possible the principle and practice of concomitant organization of the IFRC General Assembly and Council of Delegates and to reach coordinated decisions together with the IFRC on the place and dates of the next meetings,

1. *declares* that the present exceptional circumstances do not meet the requirements for participant safety and full respect for the statutory rights of the Movement's components during the next Council of Delegates – were it to be held in December 2021, whatever the format;
2. *decides* to postpone the Council of Delegates to a more appropriate time in 2022, in line with the IFRC's decision to postpone the 23rd session of its General Assembly;
3. *agrees* to continue monitoring the health situation and the prospects for safely holding the Council of Delegates and to reach a decision at the earliest opportunity – at least nine months before the opening of the Council – on its dates, format and venue, in coordination with the IFRC's decision for its General Assembly;
4. *encourages* the organization, in the last quarter of 2021, of a global online event highlighting the Movement's common position on pandemics and climate change.