

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

George Weber

Chairman

Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

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Mr President, Mr Secretary General, dear colleagues and friends, good afternoon (*other languages*).

In spite of the distance between us because of the impossibility for me to be there with you, I am happy and grateful to be able to address you at the moment when you are about to start the important work of the Governing Board of the International Federation.

In a few days, I will have the pleasure of meeting Francesco Rocca and Elhadj As Sy when the Standing Commission meets in Geneva. As I pointed out to you in February, I attach special importance to having a harmonious, balanced and constructive working relationship with the Federation and all of you.

In February, I had the opportunity to highlight various challenges and issues of common interest that will certainly lead us to engage concretely in further collaborations. Allow me today to mention three of them which are at the heart of the current reflection and action plans of the Standing Commission, and which I believe will have convergence with your own work.

[Statutory meetings 2019 – collaboration with the Working Group of the Governing Board]

The Standing Commission is already heavily engaged in **the preparation of the Council of Delegates of 2019 and the 33rd International Conference**. In a few days, we will have the opportunity to review and discuss the draft **concept of the Conference and the proposed themes**. These will have been formulated on the basis of various consultations carried out in recent months within the Movement and hopefully supplemented by your thoughts when you address this item on your agenda. The publication of this concept will pave the way for more focused outreach and engagement effort with all National Societies, states and other influential actors. These intense and in-depth consultations in the coming 12 months are meant to help us produce a draft agenda that will shape the conference both in terms of substance and structure, in order to realize successful outcomes, and enhance participants' knowledge and experience.

I especially want to thank President Rocca for inviting members of the Standing Commission to take part in your Governing Board's Working Group on Statutory Meetings. This should be a **great opportunity for fruitful exchanges leading to heightened coordination and alignment of agendas**

of the next General Assembly, Council of Delegates and International Conference. And most importantly I hope it will benefit their collective impact.

[Strengthening the Movement's framework on Integrity & Compliance]

I want to once again **commend the Federation's substantial efforts and steady progress to continue building a culture of greater transparency, integrity, compliance and zero tolerance for fraud and corruption as well as sexual exploitation and abuse.**

These issues are major challenges for our Movement community where **the failure of one component and even of individuals can potentially discredit the collective reputation of all others.** The Standing Commission is considering how best to contribute and take its part in this reflection where it adds value, of course in close collaboration with the ICRC and the Federation. It is our shared responsibility with the Federation and with all the components of the Movement to do everything to **preserve the integrity of our institutions and the people's trust in the Red Cross and Red Crescent.**

In the coming months, we will certainly have to **collectively determine how these issues of trust in humanitarianism, integrity and compliance should be brought to the agenda of 2019 statutory meetings**, including in our dialogue with the States at the Conference. Should your Governing Board decide to deepen its work on strengthening the integrity policy and framework of the Federation, this would certainly present a unique opportunity to **promote a more coherent foundation of common definitions, principles and rules of integrity for the whole Movement.** The Standing Commission would be keen to contribute to this work within the framework of its functions.

[Promotion of gender equality in RC/RC leadership]

Finally, I would like to stress the importance of **our common accountability for taking "concrete measures to enhance gender equality and equal opportunities** at all levels of leadership" of the ICRC, the Federation, National Societies and the Standing Commission. The Commission has already started to do its part in this collective endeavor, with a particular focus on its own membership and election, as well as other areas where its decisions can have impact on this issue.

I am aware of the commitment of the Federation's leadership to promote gender equality and commend you on the steps you have already made. I look forward to the proposals that you will put forward in the coming months. For its part, the Commission stands ready to contribute to a combined report to the 2019 Council, which would mark a collective and united dynamic for all the components of the Movement.

Your induction session in February has certainly prepared you for the important and intense work ahead of you. You will find in me and in the Standing Commission faithful partners to support your

work, especially where we will have to deal with challenges of common interest. I wish you fruitful deliberations leading to successful and impactful results. Good luck! Bonne chance! ¡Buena suerte!