

**Remarks at the Welcome Reception
of the Inter-American Regional Conference**

George Weber

Vice-Chair

Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

The Bahamas, Paradise Island, June 2023

Thank you,

Madam President of The Bahamas Red Cross, Dear Terez and all our friends and hosts from The Bahamas Red Cross,
Acting Deputy Minister of Tourism, Aviation, and Infrastructure, Minister of Public Works and Transport, The Honorable, Mister Alfred Sears,
His Excellency, Ambassador of the Holy See, Santiago de Wit Guzmán,
Madam Vice-President of CORI, Señora Judith Carvajal De Álvarez,
Mister Vice-President of the IFRC of Americas, Dear Miguel,
Mister Vice-President of the ICRC, Dear Gilles,
Mister Secretary-General of the IFRC, Jagan Chapagain,

Dear colleagues from National Societies of Latin, Central and North America, The Caribbean and beyond,

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear friends,

Good evening, Buenas tardes, Bonsoir,

Let me first congratulate the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, on the celebration of its 50th anniversary since its independence, and on the 83rd anniversary of the Bahamas Red Cross Society.

Thank you to The Bahamas Red Cross and to the IFRC, for having invited the Standing Commission to participate as an observer at this Inter-American Regional Conference. I am very happy to greet you all on the behalf of the Chair of the Standing Commission, Mercedes Babé, and myself as Vice-Chair.

It is a pleasure to see you all again today. Such a Regional Conference provides a special occasion to meet and discuss matters that are important to the Movement from a regional perspective.

Es un placer verlos de nuevo el día de hoy. Una conferencia como ésta brinda una ocasión especial para reunirse y debatir asuntos importantes para el Movimiento desde una perspectiva regional.

Now I want to talk about some substance to prepare for the deliberations over the next couple of days.

As you know the 34th International Conference and next Council of Delegates will take place in late October 2024. As the trustee of the International Conference, the Standing Commission is working to have statutory meetings that will provide a constructive space for all Members - both the Movement components and States Parties to the Geneva Conventions - to work together towards the alleviation of human suffering, the protection of life and health, and the upholding of human dignity especially during armed conflicts and other emergencies.

The current world situation requires our full attention and the International Conference in 2024 needs your support. To this end, the Standing Commission and the organizers of the statutory meetings encourage you to be responsive and active in each step of the consultations that have begun and will continue through 2024 to share your thoughts and help us build our Conference and Council agendas.

In March you already received a first request to make proposals for the Council of Delegates and to comment on a Concept Note for the 34th International Conference. Tomorrow we will have the opportunity for a further exchange on these matters. I am also pleased to note that various items on the agenda of this Regional Conference are particularly relevant to our statutory meetings in 2024, such as the implementation of the Seville 2.0 Agreement, the climate and environmental crisis, migration, integrity and trust, and promoting local solutions to global challenges. I look forward to these discussions, as a very valuable input and inspiration for the Standing Commission.

The proposed focus of the 34th International Conference is “Navigate Uncertainty – Strengthen Humanity” and three main thematic pillars were proposed:

1. El primer pilar es el Respeto del derecho internacional humanitario y reforzar su aplicación.
2. El segundo pilar es la **Intervención ante las necesidades y los riesgos humanitarios** de manera eficaz y en el respeto de nuestros principios.
3. Lastly, the Third pillar is about **Enabling Sustainable Locally Led Action**, with special focus on National Societies’ networks of local branches.

In a few weeks, the Standing Commission will take stock of the feedback received from the Movement and the States and will examine more specific proposals to be included in the agendas of the Conference and the Council. This will be the occasion for a new stage of consultation. I take this opportunity to also encourage your National Societies to liaise with relevant governmental authorities to ensure that they are aware of the preparations for the Conference, that their participation in it will be optimal and, above all, that our humanitarian objectives and the proposed Resolutions at the Conference obtain the widest possible support.



I reiterate the Standing Commission's commitment and desire to work with you to ensure harmony among the 193 components of the Movement, and to have impactful statutory meetings next year.

Thank you for your support, and I wish you a very successful Conference in The Bahamas "Paradise". Good luck, buena suerte, bonne chance.