
Remarks at the Governing Board

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies on follow-up to the 2019 statutory meetings and way forward

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Mr President, Mr Secretary General, dear colleagues and friends, Buenos dias from Madrid, good afternoon, bonjour, masa' alkhayr.

Thank you Mr President for giving me the opportunity to address the International Federation's Governing Board for a moment of reflection on the follow-up to the statutory meetings of 2019. I am delighted to be back with this group in which I have participated so often, in the last years, even if I do so briefly today in a different role, as the Chair of the Standing Commission. This is indeed the first time since my election in December 2019, at the 33rd International Conference, that I have had the opportunity to meet you and I wish to convey to you the greetings of the other elected members of the Commission: George Weber, the Vice-Chair of the Commission from Canada, Hilal As-Sayer from Kuwait, Abbas Gullet from Kenya and Fine Arnold from the Cook Islands. And, of course I am not forgetting the ex-officio members of the ICRC and the IFRC, including Francesco Rocca and Jagan Chapagain, whom I thank once again for this invitation.

This meeting is being held in the extraordinary context of the COVID-19. I hope first that the COVID-19 did not affect any of you or your family members and that everyone is safe and sound and continues to enjoy good health and safety.

We can see the **incredible impact that this health crisis has already had and will no doubt continue to have for a long time to come on the way we meet, interact and work together within the Movement**. This is true within each of the components. It also applies to this Governing Board as much as it does to the Standing Commission, which already met twice by videoconference this year. I can testify to the challenge of discussing and deciding effectively on virtual basis.

Our Movement is characterized in particular by its worldwide network of National Societies and ICRC and IFRC delegations. This network is nourished by dialogue, meetings, as well as common decisions, policies, strategies and positions that **help to strengthen cohesion, solidarity, cooperation, coordination and simply trust between its components**. So far, we are talking about **trust** among their components. The Movement's global statutory meetings, as well as the various regional, partnership or expert meetings contribute to this, and it is still difficult to measure in the medium and long term how the crisis of COVID-

19 will affect these interactions. It is likely that **both the Governing Board and the Standing Commission will be called upon to reflect - probably together - on the practice of our meetings in the light of new health, technological and environmental realities.**

During its last meeting in June, the Standing Commission paid tribute to the Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers and staff who have been very extensively involved in the response to COVID-19 pandemic, some of whom have even paid with their lives. There is no doubt that this pandemic is already an immense humanitarian challenge for the Movement as a whole. It is already impressive and gratifying to note the **unprecedented efforts made to promote the reinforcement and adaptation of operational actions, complementarity, coordination, capacity building, coordinated fundraising and integrity of all components of the Movement.** Much remains to be done. Each day brings new difficulties. And I can only give the Standing Commission's encouragement to find the forces to carry the Red Cross Red Crescent's flag high in the face of this global crisis.

This intervention, gives me the opportunity to **underline the importance and relevance of resolutions adopted by the Council of Delegates and the 33rd International Conference in December 2019**, starting of course with the very timely Resolution 3 of the Conference "Tackling epidemics and pandemics together", as well as on issues such as the responses to mental health and psychosocial needs or the safety and well-being of vulnerable migrants, whose themes find an **extraordinary resonance in the light of the COVID 19 crisis.**

Under the slogan "Act today, shape tomorrow", **the last International Conference is overall hailed as a success** with themes and subjects deemed relevant, many high-quality events to address them, a high level of engagement by participants. Especially, to highlight the adoption of all **eight resolutions by consensus.** It is a remarkable result in a global context that we know is not conducive to new multilateral commitments, be they of a strictly humanitarian nature. In addition, the **Council of Delegates** celebrated under a real spirit of bringing together the "Red Cross Red Crescent family" **adopted of 12 resolutions of general interest to the Movement.**

Unfortunately, we do not have the time now, to go into the details of each of these decisions, but **the Standing Commission attaches paramount importance** to ensuring that they do not remain dead letters and **that members of the Council and the Conference follow up on their commitments.** We wish to ensure, with the support of the Federation and the ICRC, that appropriate mechanisms for encouraging and monitoring their implementation, especially by National Societies, are put in place, with a clear vision of the follow-up expected at the next meetings in 2021 and 2023.

With regard to the updating and revision of the **Seville Agreement (1997)** and its **Complementary Measures (2005)**, **the Standing Committee has paid great attention to the joint readiness of the ICRC and the IFRC to establish a unified, inclusive and transparent process** that "improves the collective humanitarian impact of the Movement. We attach particular importance to the success of this process, which is valued so much by National Societies and which is so essential to the harmony of the Movement. And **I confirm our interest and our willingness to actively contribute to it.**

We also willing to participate actively and contribute to the process that is being set-up for fostering and monitoring the effective implementation of the **Movement Statement on Integrity.** We also hope that

reflections on **Trust in Humanitarian Action** will continue to move forward and inspire us, **to ensure that this trust is a reality**, both inside as outside the Movement.

Of course, it is important to **act on all the commitments made in 2019**. But it is also time to **look ahead to the next cycle of preparations** for the Council of Delegates in 2021 and even for the 34th International Conference in 2023. Despite the disruptions and delays caused by the crisis of COVID-19, it is still time to draw lessons from the latest statutory meetings, including the many innovations introduced then. The Standing Commission has already received a great deal of information and recommendations. We will examine them with a view to **preserving the unique and safe space for Humanitarian Dialogue with States** at the International Conference, while **ensuring that our statutory meetings and their decisions remain relevant** and in tune with the reality of the humanitarian challenges of today and in anticipation of those of tomorrow. Above all, we have to **ensure that our Resolutions make a difference for the people we serve**.

I think it is time for me to conclude. I really do hope that we will soon have further opportunities for discussion between the Standing Commission and your Governing Board, be it on future statutory meetings or other subjects of common interest.

For the time being, I wish you all very fruitful deliberations this week and I thank you for your attention, reiterating the commitment of the Standing Commission, where we remain at your disposal to continue working together, on the issues of utmost importance that we are dealing with.

Thank you.