



**Opening Remarks
at the 14th Mediterranean Conference
Cairo, June 12-15, 2023**

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Chair

Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

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(original Spanish)

Dear President of the 14th Mediterranean Conference and Director General of the Egyptian Red Crescent, Dr. Ramy Elnazer,

Dear President of the International Federation, Mr. Francesco Rocca,

Dear ICRC Deputy Regional Director for North Africa and the Middle East, Mr Diene Diouf,

Dear leaders of the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies,

Distinguished observers and guests,

Dear colleagues, dear friends, masa' alkhayr (الخير مساء), buenas tardes, bonsoir, good evening.

Thank you, Mister President (of the Conference), for giving me the opportunity to address the 14th Mediterranean Conference on issues relevant to the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in the Mediterranean region.

It is a great pleasure to see again, in person, so many friends, precisely here in Cairo, where during the IX Mediterranean Conference held in 2004, the constitution of the Centre for Cooperation in the Mediterranean of the Spanish Red Cross was forged to keep alive the flame of the region and the common challenges of the National Societies on the coast.

Allow me to congratulate you on holding this meeting here in Cairo for the second time in the history of the fourteen Mediterranean Conferences.

I would not like to begin my address without first recalling the thousands of people who are suffering the consequences of disasters and conflicts in Turkey, Syria, Sudan, Ukraine and Russia, as well as in many other places, where the consequences for the civilian population are increasingly appalling.

I would especially like to express the Standing Commission's admiration and support for the volunteers and staff of these National Societies, who are from the region, for being an example to all of service and resilience.

We are living in difficult times at the national and international levels. It is one of those moments, when the world is living in uncertain times, when the Movement must act as one and we must show ourselves as a united organization, capable of fulfilling its mission and of effectively and efficiently addressing growing humanitarian needs.

Unity, solidarity and trust within the Movement are essential today in the face of new threats to our work and to the humanitarian space.

I am honored to represent the Standing Commission and to be able to attend this Conference that brings together 26 National Societies of the region to discuss crucial issues such as migration, the impact of climate change on the population and other issues of interest to all and that, in one way or another, are on the way to the 34th International Conference and the Council of Delegates that will take place in late October 2024.

As the trustee of the International Conference, the Standing Commission strives to ensure that the statutory meetings provide a constructive space for all members - both the components of the Movement and the States Parties to the Geneva Conventions – to work together on alleviating human suffering, protecting life and health and upholding human dignity, especially during armed conflict and other emergencies.

As everyone knows, the proposed theme for the 34th International Conference is **"Navigating Uncertainty - Strengthening Humanity"**, with three main pillars:

- **"Respect IHL",**
- **"Respond to humanitarian needs and risks" and**
- **"Enable locally led sustainable action."**

I encourage you to liaise with your respective Governments in preparation for the International Conference. We have a responsibility to participate in dialogue with States and to contribute to the preparation of this unique forum, which must guarantee the existence of a neutral humanitarian space.

At the next meeting of the Standing Commission at the end June, we will evaluate and examine the results of the ongoing consultations, in order to outline the elements of the agendas of both the International Conference and the Council of Delegates.

Dear friends, I reiterate the commitment and desire of the Standing Commission to work with all of you, in the service of harmony among all members, on significant and important matters in order to foster a Movement of unity and solidarity.

Thank you very much for your attention. I will be glad to listen, in these days, to your remarks and suggestions.

Once again, thank you Mr. President. I wish you a successful Mediterranean Conference.