

From the Chair

The year 2015 ended with the 32nd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, an event that yielded many important decisions for the future of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and for the people we serve across the world.

*It also yielded a new **Standing Commission**, with the following elected members in addition to the representatives of the ICRC and the International Federation:*

- Dr Massimo Barra (Italy)
- Mr Chrystold Chetty (Seychelles)
- Ms Eva von Oelreich (Sweden)
- Mr Greg Vickery (Australia)
- Mr George Weber (Canada)

The institutional members are:

- Dr Peter Maurer, President of the ICRC
- Mr Tadateru Konoe, President of the International Federation
- Mr Elhadj As Sy, Secretary General of the International Federation
- Mr Balthasar Staehelin, Deputy Director General of the ICRC

I am honoured and humbled at having been asked to chair this body of eminent persons, with Mr George Weber as Vice Chair, and look forward to working with them to address issues of importance to the future of the Movement.

I, and the new Standing Commission, express our appreciation and gratitude for their many and significant

contributions to the three departing members of the Commission:

- Dr Mohammed Al-Hadid (Jordan), formerly Chairman of the Commission
- Mr Steve Carr (United States), outgoing Vice Chairman of the Commission
- Mr Pär Stenbäck (Finland)

While the new Commission has not yet met for a substantial session, my own priorities include sharpening the International Conference of the Red Cross and Crescent as a forum for debate and decision on humanitarian matters, building firmly on action on the ground.

That includes strengthening the dialogue and interaction with the States Parties to the Geneva Conventions, as well as with humanitarian actors outside the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

It also means safeguarding the individual and complementary mandates and independence of each component of the Movement, yet promoting a harmonious and effective Movement, building and keeping trust of our beneficiaries and partners. In the end it is about optimizing our strength to reach today's most vulnerable.

To put it more briefly: I wish to contribute to shaping the future of the Movement as a crucial humanitarian force in the world.



Eva von Oelreich
Chair

COUNCIL OF DELEGATES

The Council of Delegates met for one day, December 7, before the International Conference. At this meeting, Components of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement agreed on a number of issues of importance to them.

The Standing Commission, responding to decisions made in Sydney in 2013, submitted a “Vision for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement” which was adopted. This “Vision” is a continuation of the Strategy for the Movement that underpinned much of the work done during the period 2001-2013, many elements of which have become integrated in the day-to-day co-operation among Components of the Movement.

After two years of consultations across the world, the Council of Delegates adopted a resolution on “Strengthening Movement Coordination and Cooperation (SMCC): optimizing the Movement’s humanitarian response” which, it is anticipated, will provide the foundation for even more effective humanitarian action in all situations that require an international response from the Movement.

The Council also approved a “Movement Branding Initiative” which aims to enhance the Movement’s ability to obtain the resources required by particularly large-scale operations, through the establishment of a logo that, under certain circumstances, can be used at the international level.

Following up a decision taken in Sydney, the Council of Delegates adopted a “Strategic Framework on Disability Inclusion by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement” which will make it easier for the Movement to benefit from the talents and energy of individuals who live with disability, and to better target services for their benefit.

Also as a follow-up from 2013, a resolution was adopted for “Preserving the historical and cultural heritage of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement”, and the Regulations for the Empress Shôken fund were revised.

The Memorandum of Understanding and Agreement on Operational Arrangements dated 28 November 2005 between the Palestine Red Crescent Society and Magen David Adom in Israel was on the agenda in the form of a report from the Standing Commission, which had been monitoring its implementation during the period 2013 to 2015. The Council decided to revert to the model of an independent monitor for the future.

Looking outwards, the Council of Delegates also agreed on a message from the Movement to the forthcoming World Humanitarian Summit.

One of the functions of the Council is to set the stage for the International Conference through proposing the agenda for that, and proposing candidates to fill the posts of officers.

The Standing Commission wishes to thank the following for their willingness to play such roles:

Chair of the Conference	Ms Fatima Gailani, Afghan Red Crescent Society
Vice-Chair	Ms Annemarie Huber-Hotz, Swiss Red Cross
Vice-Chair	Dr Tha Hla Shwe, Myanmar Red Cross Society
Vice-Chair	H.E. Ms Yvette Stevens, Sierra Leone
Vice-Chair	H.E. Ms Marta Maurás Pérez, Chile
Vice-Chair	Ms Bolormaa Nordov, Mongolian Red Cross Society
Chair of the Drafting Committee	H.E. Mr Carsten Staur, Denmark
Rapporteur of the Conference	H.E. Ms Saja Majali, Jordan
Chair of the Humanitarian Dialogue: A Vision Lab	Ms Ashanta Osborne-Moses Guyana Red Cross Society
Chair of Commission A: The Fundamental Principles in action	Dr Werner Kerschbaum, Austrian Red Cross
Chair of Commission B: Contemporary challenges to international humanitarian law	Mr Richard Rowe, Australian Red Cross
Chair of Commission C: Sexual and genderbased violence: Joint Action on prevention of and response	H. E. Ms Nazhat Shameem Khan Fiji
Chair of Commission D: Health Care in Danger: Continuing to protect the delivery of health care together	H.E. Mr Nthuthang Khumoetsile Martin Seleka, South Africa
Chair of Commission E: Building resilience by scaling up local action and strengthening legal frameworks - Launch of the One Billion Coalition for Resilience	Dr Seyed Amir Mohsen Ziaee, Red Crescent Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran
Chair of Commission E: Building resilience by scaling up local action and strengthening legal frameworks - Strengthening legal frameworks for disasters and emergencies	Mr Fabrizio Curcio, Italy

The Standing Commission also wishes to express its high appreciation of the hard work and good advice of Ambassador Nicolas Lang of Switzerland who was Commissioner, then Secretary General, of the 32nd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

International migration

During 2015, "migration" – understood in the broad sense of people on the move for many different reasons – re-emerged as a matter of deep humanitarian concern, for which reason the Council of Delegates decided to include the subject in its agenda.

The result of its deliberations on this was the adoption of a Movement statement on migration: "**Ensuring Collective Action to Protect and Respond to the Needs and Vulnerabilities of Migrants**", which has five elements:

It commits the Components of the Movement to increase and sustain their response aimed at saving lives and improving the protection, health and dignity of migrants and to take other action in their favour. Moreover, it calls upon States to fulfil their legal obligations; to ensure there are adequate procedures to protect the dignity and ensure the safety of all migrants; to address the causes of forced displacement and find durable solutions; and, finally, called for sustained co-operation between States, at all levels, and the components of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

HENRY DUNANT MEDAL

The Standing Commission awarded the Henry Dunant Medal to four outstanding individuals, one of whom is, sadly, no longer with us:

- Prof Dr Mamdouh Kamal Gabr
Former Secretary General of the Egyptian Red Crescent Society (Extraordinary posthumous award)
- Mr Stephen Davey
Former Under-Secretary General IFRC
- Mrs Monowara Sarkar
Bangladesh Red Crescent Director (Restoring Family Links)
- Dr Ahmed Mohamed Hassan
President of the Somali Red Crescent Society

32ND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT

Resolutions

The 32nd International Conference took place from 8-10 December, in Geneva, and had a very rich agenda spanning most areas of Red Cross Red Crescent work.

In terms of International Humanitarian Law, the International Conference dealt with two subjects: protecting persons deprived of their liberty, and compliance with IHL. Both of these subjects received significant attention from both national Societies and States, and after much hard work, the Conference adopted resolutions on Strengthening international humanitarian law protecting persons deprived of their liberty and Strengthening compliance with international humanitarian law

Another subject which received much attention was Sexual and gender-based violence: Joint action on prevention and response, and which has been a source of mounting concern to Components of the Movement.

Contemporary conflicts have shown that "Health Care in Danger: Continuing to protect the delivery of health care together" remains an issue of very great importance, and the International Conference called upon States to do more and do better, but also on National Societies "to intensify their commitment and efforts to increase their acceptance, safety and security in order to access persons in communities where they deliver health-care services".

The safety and security of humanitarian volunteers has been a source of increasing alarm, given that nearly 100 Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers lost their lives in the course of their duties since the 31st International Conference in 2011.

The International Conference also passed resolutions on Strengthening legal frameworks for disaster response, risk reduction and first aid and Strengthening the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement response to growing humanitarian needs, the latter endorsing "Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Humanitarian Assistance" as revised by the General Assembly of the International Federation in 2013, which govern National Societies and their International Federation in international humanitarian assistance (excluding armed conflict, internal strife and their direct results).

With regard to Implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding and Agreement on Operational

Arrangements dated 28 November 2005 between the Palestine Red Crescent Society and Magen David Adom in Israel, the International Conference endorsed the decision of the Council of Delegates.

Finally, the International Conference adopted a resolution entitled “Power of Humanity”, dealing with aspects of follow-up and implementation of decisions and pledges, and noted – with appreciation – the outcomes of the Humanitarian Dialogue: a Vision Lab.

Commissions

During the Conference there were five Commissions – one of which had two sections. As befitting the year in which the Fundamental Principles celebrated their 50th Anniversary, one of the Commissions focused on these, and especially their practical application and role as a unique, ethical, operational and institutional framework

Another Commission dealt with contemporary challenges in international humanitarian law, while Commission C looked at the prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence, and Commission D discussed Health Care in Danger.

Commission E, on Building resilience by scaling up local action and strengthening legal frameworks, had two sections: one on Launch of the One Billion Coalition for Resilience, the other on Strengthening legal frameworks for disasters and emergencies

Humanitarian Dialogue: A Vision Lab

Responding to calls for “modernisation” of the International Conference, the Standing Commission agreed to include a section where the discussions would be freer, the themes more open, and the resulting ideas more creative, than what is possible in the traditional conference format.

This took the form of the “Humanitarian Dialogue: A Vision Lab” which ran in parallel with other sessions of the Conference. Five thematic discussions were focused on disaster risks linked to climate change, risk in urban settings, resilient health and care, challenges in insecure environments, and migration.

Each of these thematic discussions has yielded a rich material in the form of ideas, questions, and perspectives which will be further analysed and published.

A sixth session, drawing on the others as well as the overall Conference, ran in parallel with the thematic discussions, was the “Vision Lab” - an ambitious approach to finding novel approaches to addressing some of the most pressing long-term, strategic questions facing the humanitarian community. This also produced a valuable collection of thoughts and questions that will be collated and shared in public, for all members of the Conference to use.

Special Humanitarian Award

In recognition of the extraordinary efforts made in response to the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, the Standing Commission bestowed a Special Humanitarian Award on the volunteers of the three National Societies most affected, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. The awards were handed to one representative of each of these volunteers at a ceremony during the 32nd International Conference.

Side Events

No fewer than 35 side events were organised during the International Conference, some by individual National Societies, others by various combinations of governments, national societies and others.

The full list of events may be accessed [here](#).

MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMISSION

The Standing Commission met in Vienna, on the 50th Anniversary of the Fundamental Principle, which were proclaimed there in 1965.

At this meeting, the main focus was the state of preparations for the International Conference, including approval of conference documents, proposal for agenda, programme, proposals for officers, and similar. The Council of Delegates was reviewed from a similar perspective.

A decision was made to reinforce the follow-up to the International Conference by reconvening the Advisory Group that assisted the Standing Commission in designing the Conference, early in 2016.



**Standing Commission
of the Red Cross
and the Red Crescent**

19 Avenue de la Paix
CH - 1202 Geneva
Switzerland

tel: +41 22 730 20 32
fax: +41 22 730 20 27

email: contact@standcom.ch
site: <http://www.standcom.ch>