

From the Chair



Mark your calendar! The 33rd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent is due to take place in Geneva from 9 to 12 December 2019. The Standing Commission and the Conference organizers are now in the intensive preparation phase for this unique forum, which, every four years, brings together

all of the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement) and States party to the Geneva Conventions to take part in informed exchanges and deliberate on pressing global humanitarian issues.

By now, you will have received a document outlining the concept of the 33rd International Conference (<http://rcrcconference.org/33rd-international-conference/>). As a member of the International Conference, you are invited to take an active part in its preparation – in the first instance, by reading the proposals included in this concept note and sharing your comments and thoughts with us (conferences@rcrcconferences.org). Based on the comments received, a provisional agenda and programme will be developed before June 2019, with a view to offering you a privileged forum for discussion of humanitarian issues that are relevant to the key challenges we face today and in the future. The International Conference, which is designed to be participative and open to the various actors of influence in the humanitarian sphere, will be structured to facilitate the achievement of targeted and concrete results.

On several occasions over the past year, the Standing Commission has conferred with Conference organizers the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on the direction of the Conference, based on extensive research and discussions on current and emerging trends affecting humanitarian action. Consequently, the

Conference is set to examine, through a forward-looking lens, several issues of humanitarian concern, namely:

- the opportunities offered and threats posed by the technological revolution;*
- the need for tomorrow's humanitarian response to adapt to vulnerabilities arising from global health-care challenges, climate change and urbanization; and*
- the reinforcement of trust in neutral, independent and impartial humanitarian action.*

At the same time, the Conference will continue its core work on ensuring respect for and the implementation of international humanitarian law (IHL), and will ascertain the status of commitments made previously in this respect by the Conference and its members.

Preparedness to take swift action to address challenges is key for the Movement and for the humanitarian system at large. The future will undoubtedly be challenging but it will also provide opportunities for us to work more effectively. This Conference will be an occasion to identify and exploit those opportunities and so improve our chances of success.

In the months ahead, you will receive regular updates on preparations for the Conference, as well as invitations to engage in the consultation process. I urge you to get involved and participate fully in this process, thereby helping us to set the right course for next year's gathering. Your contribution in the lead-up to and at the Conference is an indispensable part of the collective effort to make a difference to vulnerable people.

Together, let's Act Today and Shape Tomorrow!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Weber'.

George Weber
Chair of the Standing Commission

COMMISSIONER OF THE 33rd INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE TAKES OFFICE

The Standing Commission is pleased to announce that Ambassador Didier Pfirter took office on 1 September 2018 as Commissioner of the 33rd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, to take place in December 2019. The Commission is grateful to the Swiss Confederation, the host country of the Conference, for its invaluable support to the organizers of the Conference, including the appointment of Ambassador Pfirter – a highly experienced Swiss diplomat.

This is not the first time that Ambassador Pfirter has lent a helping hand to the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. As Ambassador-at-Large for the Emblems of the Geneva Conventions, he led the efforts by Switzerland to bring about the adoption of the Third Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions and was the secretary-general of the relevant Conference of the States Parties in 2005. He also participated in the 29th International Conference in 2006.

As Commissioner, he will provide advice and assistance for all of the preparations for the Conference and contribute to pre-conference discussions with the participants, principally through making contact with, consulting and meeting National Societies, members of the diplomatic community and relevant international and non-governmental organizations. He will be proposed as secretary-general of the 33rd International Conference to support the chairmanship. Please join the Standing Commission in extending a warm welcome to Ambassador Pfirter.

He may be reached as follows:

H.E. Ambassador Didier Pfirter

Commissioner of the 33rd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

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ONLINE ACCESS TO DECISIONS OF THE MOVEMENT'S STATUTORY MEETINGS

Since 1867, the International Conferences and the Councils of Delegates have adopted numerous Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement resolutions. Unfortunately, these decisions, as well as many related documents (background and progress reports, records of meetings, etc.), are scattered across many locations, in physical or electronic form, in archives, libraries, websites or other data centres. Following a feasibility study, the Standing Commission decided to create an “online research platform on Movement decisions” in order to close existing gaps and provide easy access and effective search functionality for members and observers of these meetings, as well as field workers, academics, the media and other stakeholders. The Standing Commission is engaging with the ICRC, IFRC and, if necessary, other partners throughout the project’s development and implementation.

STANDING COMMISSION ELECTION PROCESS – POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENTS IN 2019

Since 2015, the Standing Commission has been studying possible measures to enhance the inclusiveness, transparency, diversity and fairness of its election process, which is conducted once every four years at the International Conference. This effort was bolstered by a resolution adopted at the last Council of Delegates, in November 2017, calling for gender equality in the leadership of the Movement. A small task force, composed of legal experts generously provided by the ICRC and the IFRC, is conducting a feasibility analysis of various measures to be considered in light of the 2019 statutory meetings.



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