

9th Pan African Conference

Abidjan, 9 - 12 April 2017

Speech by Ms Eva von Oelreich

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

10 April 2017

Excellencies, Mesdames et Messieurs.

It's wonderful to be here and an honour to address you on behalf of the Standing Commission. We, members of the Standing Commission, are in Abidjan as part of our preparations in view of our Movement statutory meetings in November this year in Turkey. We're here to be able to meet you leaders of African NS, to be inspired by your *discussions*, to hear your *priorities*. We'll listen carefully to you in order to better understand what issues are at stake seen from your *perspective*, what is most important to you – and therefore to us - to give space to the most essential issues of common concern in our Movement Council of Delegates, the only, the only statutory meeting for all of us, for the whole Movement. Your conference here is all the more important in this world of deepening humanitarian challenges, a world where we are more and more interconnected, but where, on a national level, humanitarian aid doesn't reach all who need it and where regional and international support is also insufficient.

At the Council of Delegates in 2015, we decided *on a global Vision for the Movement* that links us further together in our overarching goals and aspirations. It's there to inspire our strategic thinking, our global as well as national strategic direction, so that we can be strong in our unity of *identity* to the outside world, strong in our unity of *cohesion* inside the Movement and therefore strong in our unity of *action* to those affected in our different regions of the world. Now that we start to think of a Strategy after 2020, let it also be inspired by this Movement Vision. It is short, succinct. After the preamble, noting the State of the World in its humanitarian aspects, there are seven headings. The first: Responding to growing needs. The last: A champion of humanity through the power of its deeds.

We all know that *Responding to growing needs* is a challenge to the whole world – and to us. Can we stand up to the challenge to do more now that the times - so urgently - require it? It's through the power of our deeds that we *are* the Red Cross and Red Crescent, through our action *only*, our relevant, transparent, integer humanitarian action. Then *only* can we claim to be the Red Cross Red Crescent.

The themes of this regional Pan African conference are timely and useful, "Investing in Africa's Leadership, Governance, Sustainability and resilience". We need to "sharpen" our tools, our ways of thinking, working, doing, to be - what we say we are. Our humanitarian action only manifests our existence, our relevance only shows if we succeed, our integrity only makes us "live" our humanitarian values.

So, we in the Standing Commission are here to listen to you, to women, men, young and old, hear your ideas how to "sharpen" our Red Cross Red Crescent tools to grow constantly in order to "Respond to growing needs and be a champion of humanity through the power of our deeds".

On behalf of the Standing Commission I wish you fruitful days and look forward to seeing you – delegations of women, men, youth – from African National Societies in November in the Council of Delegates, to continue our discussion, - *then* - on a global level.

My best wishes for a lively, sharp and interesting Pan African!

Thank you