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Letter from the Chair

Just over a year has passed since the 2019 statutory meetings where the Standing Commission was elected. I would like to bring you up to date about what has been achieved despite difficulties arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.

This past year has posed a great many professional and personal challenges. A year in which we have had to respond, as a Movement, to huge health, social and logistical challenges.

Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers worked tirelessly to come to the aid of the most vulnerable people, often facing multiple, simultaneous crises. Many lost their lives in the process.

As the Standing Commission, our inability to meet and communicate in person obliged us to find a different means – virtual meetings – of exchanging views and furthering our work.

The ongoing pandemic continues to create uncertainty about the date and organization of the next Council of Delegates and General Assembly of the International Federation, both scheduled to be held in the Dominican Republic this December. The Standing Commission and the International Federation are studying various options to take a joint decision, which will be announced as soon as possible.

The statutory meetings cannot be organized as if we were living in normal times. Apart from helping alleviate the effects of the pandemic, the Red Cross / Red Crescent has a commitment to act on climate change and must strive to reduce its own carbon footprint.



Nevertheless, I do not think that these meetings can simply be held via the internet. Person-to-person contact makes for more productive interactions. A balance must be struck in our forthcoming meetings.

This past December, the Standing Commission approved a strategy for preparing the statutory meetings leading up to the 34th International Conference, scheduled for 2023. It also adopted a concept note for the Council of Delegates with a view to beginning the work of drawing up the agenda. The Council of Delegates will play a key role in preparing the 34th International Conference, exploring and formulating ideas for presentation in 2023.

The Standing Commission greatly appreciates the valuable work undertaken in various areas over the past year. I would like to stress again the importance for the Movement of *integrity*. The actions, reputation and credibility of some affects us all, and can inevitably either help the Red Cross / Red Crescent or harms it, both inside the Movement and outside.

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We also hope that our participation in the joint work of the National Societies, the ICRC and the International Federation on the Seville Agreement and the Supplementary Measures will make it possible to strengthen the Movement's collective humanitarian impact. The need to invest in National Society capacity has been clearly demonstrated by the response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Standing Commission is determined to ensure, in accordance with its mandate, that everything possible is done to promote knowledge of and duly implement the resolutions adopted. It will continue striving toward this end throughout 2021.

Finally, it is my earnest hope that you and those dear to you are safe and healthy. Please feel free to contact the Standing Commission about any matter you judge needs attention.

Yours sincerely,

Mercedes Baki.

>> Standing Commission work in 2020

In 2020, the Standing Commission took part in, among other things, the following events:

- Three official meetings of the Standing Commission in March, June and December. Decisions are available [HERE](#).
- Three internal workshops concerning :
 - revision of the Standing Commission's Rules of Procedure,
 - strategy for the Movement statutory meetings and [concept for the 2021 Council of Delegates](#), and
 - reform of the [Henry Dunant Medal and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Prize for Peace and Humanity](#).
- Two IFRC Governing Board meetings (opening) and one meeting of its working group on statutory meetings.
- A joint ICRC/IFRC governance meeting focusing on the "Movement collective impact including the review of the [Seville Agreement](#) and its Supplementary Measures".
- The first meeting of the Movement Advisory Group on the above-mentioned topic.
- Consultations on the implementation of the [Movement Statement on Integrity](#).
- Pacific National Societies Leaders meeting focusing on the follow-up to the 2019 statutory meetings and preparation of the next Council of Delegates.
- Other Movement-wide events and consultations such as [Climate : Red Summit](#), National Societies Annual Legal Advisers meeting, [GLOW Red network](#)



Fourth meeting of the Standing Commission, 8-9 December 2020

>> Council of Delegates 2021

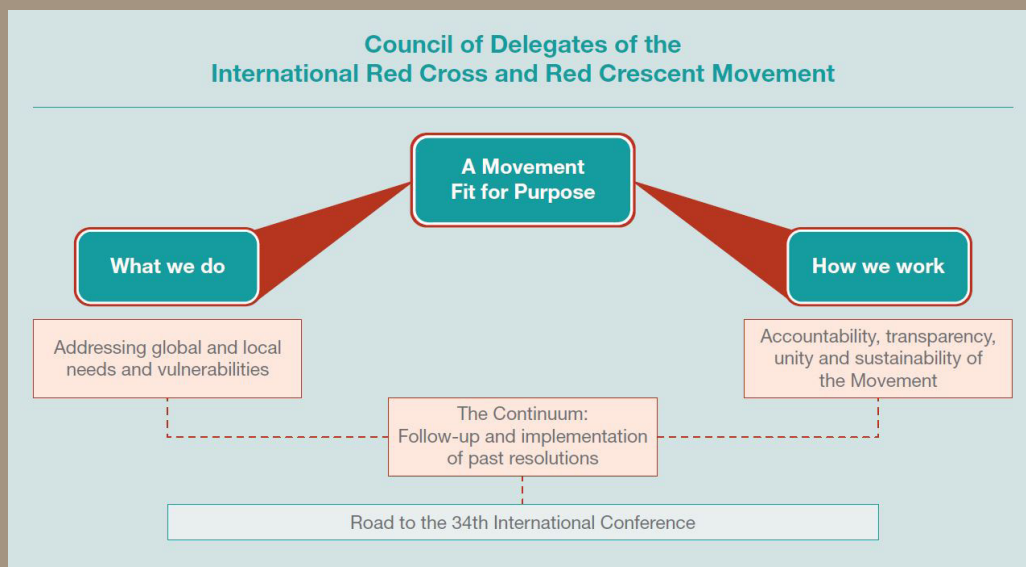
A Movement fit for purpose

A large part of the Standing Commission's work in 2020 naturally focused on preparations for the next Council of Delegates. This work will be stepped up in 2021 with the co-organizers in order to consult all components of the Movement and to propose an agenda, discussions and decisions that correspond as closely as possible to today's challenges and humanitarian expectations.

Both the next Council of Delegates and the 23rd Session of the IFRC General Assembly are scheduled to be held in the Dominican Republic in December 2021, which still needs to be reconfirmed due to the current COVID-19 crisis.

For now, the Standing Commission has approved the **concept note for the next Council of Delegates** aimed at building an

agenda around a common and revitalized **ambition of the Movement to be fit for purpose**. The emerging ideas for topics and expected outcomes are essentially grouped around two key areas of focus: **WHAT WE DO: Addressing global and local needs** and **HOW WE WORK: Accountability, transparency, unity and sustainability of the Movement**. A number of the topics identified are closely connected to discussions and decisions taken at previous [Councils of Delegates](#) and [International Conferences](#). They demonstrate a **continuum** between the meeting cycles. The Council of Delegates will constitute a key milestone on the road to the 34th International Conference, and an opportunity to explore, generate and test ideas that can be put forth in 2023.



WE NEED YOUR FEEDBACK! [The concept note](#) has now been sent (28 January) to all components of the Movement for consultation. National Societies are invited to **submit feedback by 28 February 2021** and to help the Standing Commission and co-organizers shape a provisional agenda for the Council of Delegates focusing on the most relevant, priority topics with a distinction between topics open for discussion and exploration and those for which decisions will be required to set the course of action for the coming years.

Awards - What's new for the Henry Dunant Medal?

The Standing Commission will next award the Henry Dunant Medal at the Council of Delegates scheduled for December 2021. On 28 January 2021, its chair launched her traditional call to National Societies, the ICRC and the IFRC to submit nominations for the highest distinction that the Movement can bestow on an individual Red Cross / Red Crescent member. In addition to the letter sent to all components of the Movement, useful information for this [call for nominations for the Henry Dunant Medal 2021](#) is available on the Standing Commission website (Rules, Guidelines, nomination questionnaire).

In its role as administrator of the Movement's two most prominent awards, the Standing Commission has been working to reform them over the past two years. The first result was the Commission's adoption on 9 December 2020 of its new "[Guidelines for awarding the Henry Dunant Medal and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Prize for Peace and Humanity](#)" which will guide the awarding process for the next Henry Dunant Medal.

While the Standing Commission will continue to give priority to the need for the nominees' achievements to be exceptional in nature, it is also committed to fostering diversity and inclusion among nominees. In particular it will encourage a balanced representation of genders, geographical regions, ages and functions within the Movement. The Commission would also like to emphasize its commitment to upholding the highest standards of integrity and ethics along the awarding process and among the recipients, in line with the Movement's values and principles. Movement authorities are encouraged to submit inspiring and high-quality nominations, while helping to promote diversity, inclusion and integrity.

The Standing Commission is pursuing its work and considering the possibility of supplementing its reform with changes to the [Regulations of the Henry Dunant Medal](#) and the [Regulations of the Prize for Peace and Humanity](#) with a view to their adoption by the next Council of Delegates.

Those interested in learning more may contact the Standing Commission Secretariat contact@standcom.ch

>> Walk the Talk - From resolutions to actions

In 2019, the Council of Delegates adopted [12 resolutions](#) and the 33rd International Conference adopted [eight resolutions](#). These were supplemented by voluntary commitments made by participants in the form of [151 pledges](#). All resolutions and pledges amount to calls to action for members to make a difference in the service of Humanity. This section highlights some of the progress being made.

Mental health and psychosocial consequences of emergencies – A call for global action

The current COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated with great power the relevance, accuracy and duty to implement 33rd International Conference Resolution 2 on [Addressing mental health and psychosocial needs of people affected by armed conflicts, natural disasters and other emergencies](#). Adopted unanimously by States and National Societies, this resolution calls for increased efforts to respond to mental health and psychosocial needs.

As the pandemic produces uncertainty, stress and anxiety, public discussion has highlighted mental health and psychosocial needs. More than ever, multiple and complex issues of humanitarian concern demonstrate the importance of a holistic and integrated response addressing the diverse mental health and psychosocial needs of people affected by emergencies. In this regard, the new [Movement policy on addressing mental health and psychosocial needs](#), adopted by the 2019 Council of Delegates, serves as an important guide for the National Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC in all their efforts to meet those needs. To support the global implementation of these commitments, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has developed a [Roadmap for implementation 2020-2023](#) that will enable strategic partnerships and critical investments in the means to deal with mental health and psychosocial needs.

Together, we trust that this will make the Movement better placed in the near future to respond to the unmet mental health and psychosocial needs of those affected by emergency.



By **Dick Clomén**

Project Manager, Movement Project on Addressing Mental Health and Psychosocial Consequences of Armed Conflicts, Natural Disasters and other Emergencies (MOMENT)

Learn more about MHPSS:

- Visit the website of the IFRC Psychosocial Centre <https://pscentre.org/>
- More detailed [blog post](#) on this call for global action on MHPSS

Restoring Family Links (RFL) and Data Protection

Major steps are being taken with active support from the RFL Leadership Platform to implement **33rd International Conference Resolution 4** ([RFL while respecting privacy, including as it relates to personal data protection](#)), and [RFL Strategy for the Movement 2020-2025](#) (this second text adopted by the 2019 Council of Delegates). In addition, a total of 48 National Societies and 29 States have signed one or several of the 32 [pledges](#) registered at the Conference in connection to RFL and Data Protection



In response to the need expressed by practitioners to strengthen their ability to protect personal data, a certified training course in data protection was developed by the ICRC and Maastricht University in cooperation with the IFRC, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the International Organization for Migration. Priority will be given to candidates from National Societies. RFL staff who graduate will form a Movement-support network at regional level. In addition, generic templates and accompanying instructions on incorporating data-protection standards in tracing-request collection were devised and will be accompanied by webinars for the entire Family Links Network.

To recognize outstanding efforts by staff and volunteers in restoring family links, often under the harshest conditions, the idea was put forward for a Movement RFL Medal. Regulations for the medal are being drawn up for adoption by the 2021 Council of Delegates. In addition, a groundbreaking monitoring and evaluation system was devised to implement the RFL Strategy, to be rolled out across the Family Links Network in early 2021 with crucial support from the IFRC. Additionally, the Movement is, for the first time, able to communicate consolidated global statistics on its RFL caseload and on information supplied to families.



By **Eduard Abegg**

Advisor, RFL and Missing Persons Unit, ICRC

Learn more about RFL and Data Protection:

- Visit the website of the Family Links Network <http://familylinks.icrc.org>
- [Family Links Network's Code of Conduct on Data Protection \(2015\)](#)

>> Standing Commission members' corner

A talk with Fine Tu'itupou-Arnold

Fine is the Secretary General of the Cook Islands Red Cross Society.

She was elected to the Standing Commission at the 33rd International Conference in December 2019.



After a year as a member, what are the priorities you believe the Standing Commission should focus on in its 18th session?

We started our work in earnest at the outset of COVID-19, which has transformed the world. I believe the resulting challenges will dominate this session of the Standing Commission.

Each of our 192 National Societies has been on the front line responding to the COVID-19 emergency. So the Movement now has 192 new perspectives, ways of working, lessons learned, and individual "audits" (sometimes containing a harsh evaluation) of capacity, resources, strengths and weaknesses.

The Movement's priority must be to listen and learn from those many and varied stories.

We must shape a "new normal": a working method incorporating the best of our shared experience. The pandemic forced us to work effectively at the local level. We must use this experience to enhance localization and our capacity to deliver community-specific response.

What more specific changes would you advocate and should the Standing Commission promote?

Cooperation and mutual trust and respect have marked the past year of COVID-19 response; we need to build on that momentum. The Standing Commission should prioritize resolutions that strengthen the capacity of National Societies. Coming from a small island State, I am here to bring the voices of the smallest and poorest National Societies to the Standing Commission table. They need to be heard clearly.

I think it would be well for the Movement's next statutory meetings to focus on health and on localization, while ensuring they do not neglect climate change and the victims of armed conflict and other violent situations. I am ready to play my part in shaping those meetings.

COVID-19 has also shown us that large-scale meetings can be more inclusive in that they are held online; many of us from the Pacific have used various online platforms to participate in meetings. The Standing Commission together with the organizers must, when planning future statutory meetings, shape those events to ensure that though they are "virtual", they are also real. It must make the whole process more efficient yet more inclusive.

>> Opinion

The future of young people at risk

Almost one year after the outbreak of the global pandemic, its long-term impact on the young generation is unfolding into a new existential crisis. In various ways, young people's education, livelihood, development, safety and mental health are being put at serious risk. Particularly those who were already vulnerable, such as young migrants and refugees and young people with a precarious legal status or deprived of their rights, with disabilities, without a home, or living in makeshift settlements are in danger of being left behind.

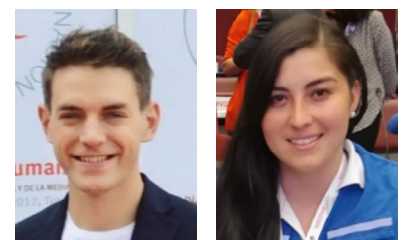
In education alone, UNICEF estimates that at least 24 million children have dropped out of school while – especially in low-income communities – education represent a lifeline in attaining a decent livelihood, and schools serve as nutritional, social and health centres and early-warning systems for abuse. Over the past months, 1.5 billion young people have had to stay at home, which unfortunately is all too often far from an environment conducive to learning, to personal safety, or to healthy strengthening personal resilience.

Education provides young people with a future, an ability to define their own lives independently. Yet in recent months and often due to a loss of family income, we see that even in the case of school re-openings, students are not returning. Instead, they are forced to work to support their families. An additional 100 million children have been thrown back into poverty, putting girls at greater risk of child marriage and adolescent pregnancies compared with the past 30 years. The pandemic will force young people to prioritize family income over education, yet before the pandemic young people were already three times more likely than older people to be unemployed. Even with a job, they were too often in low-pay, insecure and unregulated employment that does not qualify as decent work. Young people in such situations may be

attracted to armed groups or organized crime, be exploited by online prostitution or fall victim to human trafficking – all for lack of alternatives. The pandemic has led to an alarming feeling of hopelessness and helplessness among young people unable to invest in their personal development, in their ability to shape their own future.

When people in the formative years of life lose opportunity and hope, it puts their entire future at risk. For many young people, there is no time to wait for vaccines to do their slow work. As their prospects for education dwindle, too many are being pulled back into poverty and are forced into poor life choices with possible permanent impact if no meaningful alternatives are provided.

The Movement must ensure that our work takes full account of urgent pandemic-related concerns as well as emerging vulnerabilities in the longer term. These will last long after vaccines have been distributed globally. We need to act now to protect young people from falling behind.



By **Bas van Rossum**, *Netherlands Red Cross*
and **Silvia Gelvez**, *Columbian Red Cross*
for the [IFRC Youth Commission](#)