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Letter from the Chair

Dear Friends,

Just a few days after the 2022 Council of Delegates, where we were able to bring together the components of the Movement and discuss important questions for the Movement, either in person or online, it is my pleasure once again to address you through this Bulletin.

In uncertain times such as this, the Movement must act in unity and demonstrate that we are capable of fulfilling our potential, carrying out our mission and meeting growing humanitarian needs effectively and efficiently.

Our statutory meetings are always an opportunity to take decisions that will promote respect for international humanitarian law and for neutral and impartial humanitarian action, thereby enhancing protection for people affected by conflict, disaster and other situations that render them vulnerable.

We worked hard over these few days, reflecting on the challenges that the Movement is currently facing. We also drew up plans of action for the next few years regarding key questions of particular relevance in today's new humanitarian landscape.

Having listened to all who attended, and the discussions that took place, the 2022 Council of Delegates concluded with an [appeal](#), supported by all, for respect for neutral and impartial humanitarian action.

Today, as we embark on a new phase of our



journey, I should like to re-emphasize the duty of all 194 Movement components to implement the resolutions adopted at the recent Council of Delegates.

As I announced in my [opening address to the Council of Delegates](#), the Standing Commission has already started preparing for the 34th International Conference, which will take place in Geneva in 2024.

That gives us a little over two years to fulfil the commitments made at the Council of Delegates and prepare ourselves for the 34th International Conference. The Standing Commission has undertaken to continue looking for ways of achieving closer convergence within the Movement, and we are grateful for the participation of all Movement components.

Our humanitarian action, supported by the effective implementation of the resolutions we have adopted, can make a real difference in today's complex and polarized situation, a context that will no doubt affect humanitarian action.

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 Find out the latest decisions of the Standing Commission on this webpage:
<http://standcom.ch/meetings-and-decisions/>

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By raising our collective voice on the most urgent humanitarian matters, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement can shape the international humanitarian agenda.

We wish to intensify relationships and identify opportunities for synergy, between Movement components, between us and governments, and between us and civil society, via other humanitarian agencies. Mutual trust and cooperation will be essential if we are to apply and strengthen the impact of the results of the 33rd International Conference and prepare for the next.

Within the Movement, we must continually adapt our own response, to ensure that we remain a solid, worldwide humanitarian network, unstoppable and essential at the local, national, regional and international levels.

During the Council of Delegates, we bade an emotional farewell to ICRC president Peter Maurer. It has been 10 years since he assumed the presidency of the ICRC, and at the end of September he will be handing over to his successor. It has been an honour to work with Peter, especially over the last

few years in my capacity as Chair of the Standing Commission. I wish him every success in his new role, and as I said on the occasion of his farewell, in the spirit of the Red Cross and Red Crescent principles of universality and voluntary service, he will always be welcome, wherever he is, as a volunteer in the Movement.

I do not wish to end without a special word of thanks to Philip Tamminga, who has kindly contributed an opinion piece to this Bulletin. In his capacity as an international expert on the process of enhancing the effectiveness and impact of humanitarian action and on accountability, he has asked a number of questions of interest to the Movement, which are worthy of our consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Thank you for your contributions in 2021 to the Standing Commission's budget

The Standing Commission strives each year to carry out its statutory duties and to work diligently and effectively while keeping its expenses as low as possible. In 2021, its total expenditure amounted to 460,840 Swiss francs, a level scaled down by the Covid19-induced restrictions on travel and Movement meetings.

The Standing Commission's budget is funded jointly by the IFRC, the ICRC and the National Societies in line with the principle of one-third each. This was a decision taken by the 2007 Council of Delegates. National Society contributions are made on a voluntary basis. In May a new call for contributions was made. We sincerely thank those National Societies that have responded swiftly and positively, and we hope more will join in supporting our work. We are naturally well aware of the financial and operational burdens that all parts of the Movement must bear to meet the immense needs they face.

For now, the Standing Commission wishes to express its deep gratitude to the IFRC, the ICRC and the 43 National Societies of the countries listed below for their generous contributions to its 2021 budget.

Andorra	Cook Islands	Israel	Morocco	Spain
Australia	Costa Rica	Italy	Netherlands	Sweden
Austria	Cyprus	Japan	Niger	Thailand
Bahrain	Czech Republic	Republic of Korea	Norway	Tonga
Belgium	Denmark	Kuwait	Palestine	Turkey
Bolivia	Finland	Liechtenstein	Poland	United Arab Emirates
Bulgaria	France	Mexico	Portugal	United Kingdom
Cambodia	Germany	Monaco	Qatar	
China	Honduras	Montengro	Romania	

>> Council of Delegates 2022

Outcomes

The Council of Delegates held on 22-23 June 2022 brought together all components of the Movement to discuss and decide on an ambitiously wide range of issues.

Among the [thirteen resolutions adopted](#), eight endorsed new commitments for the Movement, namely:

- ❖ The Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organizations ([Resolution 1](#)),
- ❖ Strengthening anticipatory action in the Movement: Our way forward ([Resolution 2](#)),
- ❖ The revised regulations for the Henry Dunant Medal and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Prize for Peace and Humanity ([Resolution 3](#)),
- ❖ The establishment of and regulations for the Movement Family Links Medal ([Resolution 4](#)),
- ❖ The 2022–2027 Movement Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to the Humanitarian Impacts of War in Cities ([Resolution 6](#)),
- ❖ The 2022–2027 Action Plan on the Non-Use, Prohibition and Elimination of Nuclear Weapons ([Resolution 7](#)),
- ❖ The Movement Coordination for Collective Impact Agreement ([Resolution 8](#) and annexed “[Seville Agreement 2.0](#)”)
- ❖ Movement commitments and calls on States and other actors to safeguarding humanitarian data ([Resolution 12](#)),

The Council of Delegates also set new decision-making goals for its next meeting, in 2024:

- ✓ a Movement policy on patient safety and quality of care ([Resolution 5](#)),
- ✓ a Movement strategy on migration ([Resolution 9](#)),
- ✓ a globally applicable set of principles of action that will contribute to strengthening the resilience of urban communities ([Resolution 11](#)).

While reiterating strong disappointment about the lack of progress, the Council of Delegates reaffirmed the collective determination and commitment of all the Movement’s components to an effective and positive coordination in support of the full implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding and Agreement on Operational Arrangements (28 November 2005) between Magen David Adom in Israel and the Palestine Red Crescent Society ([Resolution 10](#)).

The 2022 Council of Delegates welcomed the [Appeal for respect for neutral and impartial humanitarian action](#) by the Standing Commission chair, the president of the IFRC and the president of the ICRC. The Council of Delegates expressed deep concern about the “magnitude of human suffering caused by armed conflicts, violence, disasters and other crises”, the safety and well-being of particularly vulnerable people and of everyone in need of protection and assistance, as well as all forms of impediment to access and to the provision of relief by neutral and impartial humanitarian organizations. Particularly unacceptable is the persistence of violence and threats against humanitarian workers, including new, emerging forms of abuse and pressure, such as cyber-attacks, disinformation and misinformation.

The Movement reaffirmed its commitment to its Fundamental Principles and its resolve to pursue efforts to reduce the risk and humanitarian impact of crises. It appealed to States and other stakeholders to take proactive steps to safeguard principled humanitarian action and to facilitate the provision of humanitarian relief for those in need including to prevent, stop and remedy deliberate and unjustified attacks, abuses and pressures that harm the physical, psychological, reputational and digital integrity of these populations and of the humanitarian organizations, volunteers and workers serving them.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Postponement to 2024 of the next Council of Delegates and 34th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

The Council of Delegates noted the Standing Commission’s decision to postpone the 34th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, owing to the exceptional circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Conference should be held in Geneva, tentatively from 28 to 31 October 2024. Consequently, the Council of Delegates decided that its next meeting would be held on dates (yet to be decided) between 24 and 28 October 2024 ([Resolution 13](#)).

Award ceremony



At the 2022 Council of Delegates, the [Henry Dunant Medal](#), the Movement's highest distinction, was awarded in an emotional ceremony.

Lucia Chocarro and Majesi Mubarak, representing respectively the youth of the Spanish Red Cross and the Uganda Red Cross Society, acted as joint masters of ceremony.

The Standing Commission chair and members read out a tribute summing up the achievements of each winner and presented the Medal to them or their representatives:

- **Ligia Leroux de Ramirez** (1937–2020, posthumous)
Former president of the Dominican Red Cross, represented by her daughter, Ligia Ramírez Leroux.
- **Ivan Usichenko** (1938–2021, posthumous)
Former president of the Ukrainian Red Cross, represented by his son, Tara Usichenko.
- **Mohammed Al Maadheed**
Former president of the Qatar Red Crescent Society and IFRC vice-president.
- **Tadateru Konoe**
Former president of the Japanese Red Cross and IFRC, represented by Otohiko Hori head of delegation of the Japanese Red Cross.
- **Christine Lightbourne**
Life-long volunteer in the Abaco branch of the Bahamas Red Cross.

- **Philippe Gaillard**
Former ICRC delegate and head of delegation.
- **Manuel Salazar Alvarez**
Veteran member of the Costa Rican Red Cross.

The ceremony was also an opportunity to recognize [25 outstanding nurses](#) for their exceptional courage and devotion to the victims of armed conflict or natural disaster. They had been named recipients of the [Florence Nightingale Medal](#) on 12 May 2021, International Nurses Day.

As she introduced the awards, the Standing Commission chair, Mercedes Babé, recalled the words of Silvia Gélvez, the Colombian Red Cross youth president and vice president of the IFRC Youth Commission about the “bonhomie” at the opening ceremony: “Simplicity of character, work for the good of coexistence, solidarity, altruism and philanthropy are the values of bonhomie”. She added that “these values are reflected in the people who [...] receive the Henry Dunant Medal today. I deeply admire each one of them, as I do the 25 nurses whose admirable work in the service of others have earned them the Florence Nightingale Medal.”



Presentation of the Henry Dunant Medals, 22 June 2022 (photos: [Eric Roset](#).)

>> Walk the Talk - from resolutions to actions

In 2019, the 33rd Council of Delegates adopted [eight resolutions](#). These were supplemented by voluntary commitments from participants in the form of [151 pledges](#). The Council of Delegates adopted [12 resolutions](#) in 2019 and [13 resolutions](#) in 2022. 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.

Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organizations: sustaining momentum, meeting our commitments together

The IFRC and ICRC approved and signed the [Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organizations](#) in May 2021, following which it was opened for signature. Since then, it has been warmly embraced across the humanitarian sector.

History: At the 33rd International Conference in December 2019, the IFRC, ICRC and several National Societies [committed](#) to adapt their ways of working and to develop a simple, accessible and aspirational Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organizations to support and promote greater efforts within the humanitarian sector to address climate and environmental crises.

Development of the Charter was led by the ICRC and IFRC, and guided by an Advisory Committee of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, local, national and international NGOs, humanitarian networks, UN agencies and academics, researchers and experts in the humanitarian, development, climate and environmental fields.

Engagement to date: As of late June 2022, [over 290 humanitarian organizations](#) have signed the Charter, including some 116 National Societies, as well as NGOs from over 80 countries, international humanitarian NGOs and UN agencies. Organizations that have signed the Charter, including National Societies, are expected to translate their commitments into time-bound targets and action plans.

The number of signatories and their diversity demonstrates the humanitarian community's commitment to responding effectively to these crises – together. It also demonstrates that we have reached a consensus on what the humanitarian community needs to do.

This year, we have also seen a growing number of countries commit to supporting a stronger humanitarian response to the climate and environment crises. While the charter is for humanitarian organizations, States and other entities can sign as [“Supporters”](#) of the Charter. Seven state supporters have done so already, beginning with Switzerland and followed by the United States, Norway, Germany, Denmark and the EU and in June, Spain. We hope that many others will follow.

We have inspired others. In March, at the European Humanitarian Forum, France and the European Commission invited humanitarian donors to sign up to a new [declaration on climate, the environment and humanitarian action](#) that echoes and builds on the commitments in the Charter.

What is our ongoing role? The Movement has an important role to play in this collective effort. Our presence in communities across the world means we see first-hand the consequences of the climate crisis, and the role of humanitarians in addressing them.

In June of this year, the statutory meetings of the Movement discussed climate action and the Charter. The [23rd session of the IFRC General Assembly](#) discussed the role of the International Federation and National Societies in mobilizing the power of humanity to address the humanitarian challenges of climate change and preserve our common home. The [Council of Delegates](#) passed a [resolution](#) endorsing the Charter on behalf of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and affirming the importance of supporting one another as we work to implement its commitments.

We invite all National Societies to sign the Charter

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themselves and to turn ambitions and commitments into action. Most importantly, commitments must lead to results. The next step is to ensure that strategic plans – of which many are being developed in the final quarter of this year – include concrete objectives for climate action.

Signing the Charter is only the beginning of the journey. The true test is how commitments are turned into reality, and how action makes a difference to the people we serve. Organizations signing the Charter commit to adopting targets and implementation plans within a year. 17 organizations have now shared their targets. Many more have indicated that theirs will be shared shortly. This is exciting: targets are a way for organizations to clarify their ambitions, orient their efforts, and learn from one another. We will continue to support this work, and we look forward to the progress we will make

together over the coming year.

If you are interested to learn more go to www.climate-charter.org.

By

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>> Standing Commission members' corner

A talk with Peter Maurer



Peter Maurer is the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Dr. Maurer has been a member of the Standing Commission since 2012, when he took over the presidency of the ICRC.

2022 marks your tenth and final year as president of the ICRC before you hand over to your successor at the end of September. Which ICRC and Movement achievements have brought you the most satisfaction during these ten years?

It has been my honour and a privilege to serve as ICRC president for the last ten years. The role has brought with it a huge responsibility that we – as ICRC and together as the Movement – must deliver for people in need around the world. One collective achievement of which I am especially proud is that we have continued to remind the world of the protective power of the red cross and red crescent emblems and of international humanitarian law to minimise the harm to communities during conflict. As just one example, I am reminded of how the Movement, along with civil society, have worked to mobilise communities and states to the devastating human impacts of nuclear weapons, culminating in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

And what would you say are the few major challenges that you are currently most concerned about and that the Movement, its components and statutory bodies should give priority attention to in the next two years?

Around the world the needs of people are skyrocketing: as wars rage and as people suffer from natural disasters, disease and abuse of their rights. Throughout the history of our

Movement, each generation of volunteers and staff has had to step up in the face of human suffering. During my visits to conflict zones, I have always made a point of speaking with local Red Cross and Red Crescent teams to hear about their work and challenges. From Syria to the Sahel region, from Afghanistan to Ethiopia, Colombia, Myanmar, Ukraine...and beyond: I have been enormously impressed by the life-saving and life-changing work of the National Societies, under the most dangerous and difficult of circumstances. These lasting impressions of professional humanitarian action are ones that I will take with me into the future; of people who come together fuelled by a determination and passion to alleviate human suffering.

The challenge today for the Movement is of meaningful transformation that meets the demands of intractable humanitarian crises and escalating needs. It is clear to me that the components of the Movement must mutually strengthen each other with the sole purpose of delivering impact for people. It is a question of finding complementarity across the different capabilities of actors to together improve protection, service delivery and long-term resilience of fragile communities.

The scale and intractability of the crises we face require local responders who know their communities, who can mobilize quickly and who can remain long after the crisis has passed;

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international responders with a network and legitimacy to connect with opposing parties in the context and beyond – who can support local actors, contribute to strengthening their capacity and reinforce neutral, impartial action in volatile and politicized situations. It is true too that innovation and digital solutions will ensure that we can adapt, speed and scale our humanitarian response to meet the unprecedented needs.

It is not the first time that Movement colleagues have heard my appeal on this, at several Council of Delegates meetings and through ongoing dialogue, as I truly believe that a collective transformation to harness the strengths of local, national and international levels will yield improved, sustainable impact for communities. I have been pleased to see the steps taken already to promote a more inclusive approach to responding to humanitarian needs and I provide all encouragement for this work to continue. I have seen the positive potential of responses that mobilize different capacities in the Movement and also connect with other actors. For example, the work

underway on essential services in the Middle East that harnesses the collective expertise of humanitarian actors, development finance and development actors to better protect and restore water supply and sanitation services to people in crises.

Finally, as we transform, I underscore that we need to be accountable to affected people and design, implement and adapt solutions that lead to the best possible outcomes and results for them. Being accountable means carrying out our work in an ethical and socially responsible manner and is also an effective means to build trust and acceptance, all of which ultimately enhances the impact and relevance of our work. As conflict and crises continue to push people to the brink, there seems little other choice for us than to re-energise, transform, to step up and answer their call.

>> Opinion

Making accountability to affected people a reality

This year's Council of Delegates included a report on the 2019 [resolution on the Movement-wide Commitments for Community Engagement and Accountability](#) (CEA). The report highlights some progress, but much more needs to be done to achieve the aims set out in the resolution. The Movement's experience is similar to other initiatives around [Accountability to Affected People](#) (AAP) in the aid sector – there has been steady advances, but we are still very far from meeting our accountability commitments to vulnerable and affected people.

Despite the growing attention to AAP, the concept is still often misunderstood. The danger is that discussions around accountability becomes bogged down in a confusing set of acronyms (Is it AAP? Or CEA? Or something else?) and other competing initiatives – rather than seeing AAP as fundamental to orienting all aspects of how humanitarian action is organised and implemented.

Put simply, AAP is about achieving effective results for people, in line with their own needs and priorities. It is about protecting and enhancing their rights and dignity. And it is about maintaining relationships based on trust and respect between vulnerable people and the organisations that support them.

Towards people-centered accountability

To be truly accountable, results, rights, relationships cannot be decided by organisations in isolation: people and communities need to be fully engaged – and listened to – to understand what they want and expect from organisations. Accountability cannot be selectively defined, applied and measured using different criteria depending on the organisation. We need – and vulnerable people and communities deserve – a common and coherent people-centred approach to defining accountability, applied equally by all organisations and assessed against criteria reflecting what people and communities value as important to them.

This is precisely what the [Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability](#) (CHS) intended to do when it was developed in 2014. The CHS's Nine Commitments are based

on what people, communities and other local actors told us on what accountability means to them. It includes a set of actions that help organisations achieve those commitments consistently across all programmes.

From Fundamental Principles to the Core Humanitarian Standard

Much of how the CHS describes accountability draws from a rich history of the Movement's leadership on community engagement and accountability issues. As an example, the full set of seven Fundamental Principles adopted by the Movement in 1965 anticipated many of the themes under discussion today: preserving humanitarian space, protection and safeguarding, diversity and inclusion; participation and engagement; localised actions; cooperation and coordination; equitable partnerships – all find a place in the CHS.

Later efforts like the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief, the Humanitarian Charter and the Sphere Minimum Standards were key to building awareness of the need for organisations to be more accountable. These initiatives were critical to the later development of the CHS. (The 2017 Council of Delegates' CEA resolution draws on the foundation provided by CHS, adapted to the specific context of the Movement).

What makes the CHS unique is that it corrects a major shortcoming made by so many other previous accountability commitments: the lack of a framework to assess, measure and track progress. Any cursory review of previous efforts, including many Council of Delegates or International Conference resolutions, shows just how much a challenge it is to move beyond well-intentioned declarations to actual, sustained changes in the ways we work. (It should be noted that the Council of Delegates' CEA resolution did include a draft performance monitoring framework).

A vital issue of trust for people and for communities

The recently launched CHS Revision process is unique opportunity to return the focus of the accountability debate

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back to people and communities and reaffirm and validate what accountability means to the people who need it most from us. The process is also an opportunity to engage with and draw on the Movement’s experience supporting accountability over many years, while also looking towards finding greater alignment and coherence to the multiple accountability initiatives currently facing the sector.

More importantly, reaffirming our collective accountability commitments to people, and using a common framework to organise, monitor and measure our performance against these commitments, may be one way of rebuilding trust and confidence in a sector that has seen too many avoidable accountability failures in the recent past. And it can bring us

one step closer to ensuring that people and communities can truly “hold us to account” - the stated aim of so many policy declarations and commitments repeated over the years.

By Philip Tamminga

Philip is a leading expert on humanitarian effectiveness and accountability. His experience includes directing several important research and consultation processes, including the process that led to the development of the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS). He has supported various organisations to design and implement capacity-strengthening, performance measurement, quality assurance, and accountability strategies, policies, and procedures. He was involved in developing the Movement’s CEA resolution and is currently co-lead of the CHS Revision global consultation process.

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