

COUNCIL OF DELEGATES
Geneva, 1 - 2 December 1995

**SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT OF
THE RED CROSS, RED CRESCENT
AND PEACE**

ON THE CONCLUSIONS OF ITS MEETING ON 20 OCTOBER 1995

(Item 5 of the provisional annotated agenda)

Document submitted by
the Commission on the Red Cross,
Red Crescent and Peace

Geneva, 1995

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INTRODUCTION

The present report complements the report of the Commission on the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Peace which the members of the Council of Delegates received as 95/CD/5/1. It covers the work of the Commission at its meeting on 20 October 1995. It furthermore clarifies the Commission's conclusions and recommendations (Annex 1). Lastly, the Commission submits a draft resolution (Annex 2).

I. THE MOVEMENT'S CONTRIBUTION TO RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

1. Health, AIDS and Human Rights

The Commission took cognizance with deep interest of the Federation's oral report on Health, AIDS and Human Rights.

Though there are many diseases throughout the world for which health programmes should be pursued and developed, the Commission noted the special nature of AIDS and its consequences.

Contrary to many other health problems, prevention of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and care required by persons with AIDS raise issues related to human rights. It cannot be overlooked that persons with AIDS are often excluded from health and social services, out of fear of the disease, thereby worsening their isolation.

All discrimination against persons with AIDS must therefore be combated if we are to carry out an effective fight against this pandemic.

The effectiveness of prevention and care however requires the commitment of all to respect human dignity and human rights. Discrimination and lack of respect for these rights can be not only the consequence but also the cause of this pandemic.

The Commission thus fully supported the Federation's report and underscored the important link between the application of the Fundamental Principles, the Movement's ideal, its contribution to respect for human rights and National Society commitment to combating all forms of discrimination and their participation in health programmes.

2. Reuniting families

The Commission took cognizance with deep interest of the conclusions and recommendations of the symposium organized by the Henry-Dunant Institute and the Hungarian Red Cross on reuniting families, held in Budapest from 23 to 26 November 1994. The objective of this symposium, based on concrete case studies, was to identify the common problems confronting National Societies in regard to bringing families together. The resolution prepared by this symposium not only

recalls existing provisions and the respective roles of the components of the Movement, it also includes two new aspects. States are invited, on the one hand, to bear in mind cultural differences with regard to the family concept when requests for reuniting families are submitted to them and, on the other, to include a "humanitarian clause" in the legislation facilitating bringing families together when separation is a result of conflict.

The Commission noted that the ICRC, in cooperation with the Federation, is pursuing its activities in this area and will present a report and a relevant resolution to the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent to be held in Geneva in December 1995.

3. The Movement's Contribution to Respect for Children's Rights

A. Children in armed conflicts: the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's Plan of Action

As a complement to its approach to the Movement's contribution to respect for children's rights, the Commission was given additional information on the problem of children in armed conflicts and in particular on the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's plan of action in favour of children confronted with such situations, which has been produced by the Henry-Dunant Institute.

Although the Commission was aware that the Council of Delegates will have the opportunity to discuss this issue, under a separate item on its agenda, it nevertheless wished to support the recommendations proposed in document 95/CD/10/1, prepared by the ICRC and the Federation. This plan addresses preventive activities which the Movement could deploy to promote the principle that children under the age of eighteen should not be enlisted and participate in armed conflicts. Its objective is also to propose concrete measures to protect and assist children victims of armed conflict and to help their reinsertion and rehabilitation.

B. Study on street children

The Commission heard the progress report on the Henry Dunant Institute study, and felt this was an important area where the National Societies can be particularly effective. This study could be extremely useful for National Societies, particularly with regard to prevention, just like the study on prevention of conflicts where minorities are involved. Marginalization, exclusion, poor treatment, exploitation, forced labour and child prostitution are among the problems particularly affecting street children. In this way, National Societies can take concrete, direct action in favour of children in such situations of vulnerability and thus greatly contribute to respect for children's rights. The Commission recommended encouraging National Societies already active in this area to pursue such activities and inviting those not yet involved to develop it. The Commission members also wished to recall the importance of pursuing and developing the exchange of information between National Societies, more specifically on the problem of street children.

4. Other vulnerable groups

The Commission expressed the wish that humanitarian mobilization in favour of respect for the rights of the most vulnerable groups (women and elderly and disabled persons) should be pursued, following the example of the proposed approach of a contribution to respect for children's rights and in light of the Federation's Strategic Work Plan.

II. THE MOVEMENT'S CONTRIBUTION TO PEACE

1. Minorities:

As the Commission gives great importance to the search for concrete solutions, it feels it important to disseminate the study "Minorities and prevention of conflicts. Role of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies". It suggests National Societies translate it into their country's native languages so as to pursue the institution of a spirit of tolerance and mutual understanding between the different ethnic, social, cultural and religious groups.

It furthermore encourages the National Societies to meet regionally in order to foster exchanges of experience in regard to this sensitive problem and the role they may be called on to play in the context of prevention of conflicts linked to the problems of minorities.

Lastly, the Commission is of the opinion that the role of National Societies in the prevention of conflicts involving minorities is clearly in line with the idea of promoting peace as defined by the Movement and as contained in the preamble to its Statutes.

2. Arms transfer

Among the topics the Commission felt important to follow up is the problem of arms transfer and its humanitarian impact. It therefore expressed the wish that the Movement's role and attitude concerning the problem of the arms transfer be studied and clarified.

III. THE COMMISSION'S CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission clarified or confirmed the recommendations contained in its report, bearing in mind, on the one hand, that the Council of Delegates in Birmingham (1993) decided to end the Commission's work in 1995 and, on the other, that reflection on the prevention of conflicts should be pursued within the Movement. The additions or amendments to its recommendations are contained in Annex 1 of the present report.

THE COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission confirmed the general recommendations contained on **pages 18 and 19 of its report in document 95/CD/5/1**, with the exception of the first point which it has modified and which should now read as follows:

1. In view of the influence that the Movement, which upholds and propagates the values of tolerance, solidarity and dialogue, has exercised or can exercise through its work for the prevention of tensions and conflicts, whether internal or international (special attention being paid to the dissemination of international humanitarian law and the principles and ideals of the Movement and the promotion of respect for fundamental human rights), the Commission considers that these questions, which are absolutely basic for the Movement, should be discussed in one of its smaller bodies calling on the cooperation of the Henry Dunant Institute, if appropriate.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

A. THE MOVEMENT'S CONTRIBUTION TO RESPECT FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

The Commission confirmed the recommendations already contained on **pages 19 and 20 of its report in document 95/CD/5/1**, and added two other ideas.

1) Bearing in mind that it is essential to develop and exchange experiences regarding children, and more specifically the problem of street children and exploited children (forced labour, child prostitution), the Commission recommends:

a) that the efforts undertaken in favour of street children be pursued either through National Society activities or by encouraging the follow-up of the study entrusted to the Henry Dunant Institute, subject to its funding and the appointment of a project head, so as to analyse what the Movement and in particular the National Societies are doing in this area and the concrete actions which could be undertaken.

2) Bearing in mind the importance of the problems confronting children in armed conflicts, the Commission

a) *expresses its support for the recommendations contained in the Movement's Plan of Action for children in armed conflicts, to be presented under item 10 of the Council of Delegates' agenda.*

B. HEALTH, AIDS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

1. Bearing in mind the importance of combating all forms of discrimination against persons victims of AIDS, Underscoring also the importance of the link between the application of the Fundamental Principles, the Movement's ideal, its contribution to respect for human rights and National Society commitment in their combat against all forms of discrimination, the Commission recommends:

a) *that the "AIDS, Health and Human Rights" manual be widely distributed and that National Society volunteers and staff be trained so as to make a more active contribution to the strengthening of justice and peace in the world through the promotion of respect for human rights in the field of health.*

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COUNCIL OF DELEGATES

ITEM 5 ON THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

Draft resolution

Red Cross and Red Crescent action for peace

The Council of Delegates,

having considered the final report of the Commission on the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Peace on its activities since the 1991 session of the Council of Delegates in Budapest, and the Commission's recommendations,

recalling all the resolutions adopted and the efforts made to promote peace, in particular the "Programme of Action of the Red Cross as a Factor of Peace" and the "Fundamental Guidelines for the Contribution of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to a True Peace in the World", adopted respectively by the World Red Cross Conference on Peace, Belgrade 1975 and the Second World Red Cross Conference on Peace, Aaland - Stockholm 1984,

reaffirming the importance of the preamble to the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement which recalls the Movement's definition of peace and declares that "by its humanitarian work and the dissemination of its ideals, the Movement promotes a lasting peace, which is not simply the absence of war, but is a dynamic process of co-operation among all States and peoples, co-operation founded on respect for freedom, independence, national sovereignty, equality, human rights, as well as on a fair and equitable distribution of resources to meet the needs of peoples",

aware of the influence that the Movement, which upholds and propagates the values of tolerance, solidarity and dialogue, wields or can wield through its activities to reduce tension and prevent armed conflicts, thereby contributing to a climate conducive to peace,

stressing the need for the Movement to pursue its work in this regard and for the Movement's contribution to peace to be regularly re-examined in the light of constant changes in the present international situation and the new challenges to humanitarian action as a result of the increase in the number of both internal and international conflicts and the concomitant sharp rise in violations of the fundamental rights of human beings,

1. *takes note* of the final report of the Commission and thanks it for its work and its contribution to the Movement's action for peace,
2. *reaffirms* the importance of implementing the resolutions adopted to promote peace and respect for human rights on the basis of the work and recommendations made by the Commission on the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Peace,
3. *requests* the National Societies, the ICRC and the International Federation, in cooperation with the Henry Dunant Institute, to pursue implementation of the Programme of Action of the Red Cross and Red Crescent as a Factor of Peace, and of the Fundamental Guidelines for the Contribution of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to a True Peace in the World,
4. *calls upon* all components of the Movement to undertake specific actions to strengthen understanding between the different cultures and ethnic, social, cultural and religious groups designed to reduce tension and prevent conflict, in conformity with the study on minorities and conflict prevention, presented by the Henry Dunant Institute,
5. *strongly recommends* the implementation of the proposals submitted by the Commission regarding children and respect for their rights and supports, in particular the pursuit of efforts made in favour of children in armed conflicts and street children,
6. *stresses and reaffirms* the importance of keeping issues linked to examination of the Movement's contribution to peace, particularly through activities conducive to reducing tension and preventing conflicts, at the centre of the Movement's concerns.
7. *desires* that the Movement's role and attitude concerning the problem of arms transfer be studied and clarified,
8. *decides* to include an item on the promotion of activities contributing to peace and respect for human rights regularly on its agenda, thereby reaffirming the need for the follow-up to such issues to be the object of special attention in its discussions.

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