

GENEVA 1999

TWENTY-SEVENTH
INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE
OF THE
RED CROSS AND
RED CRESCENT



RED CROSS RED CRESCENT

the power of humanity



**REPORT OF THE
27th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
OF THE RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT**

**INCLUDING THE SUMMARY REPORT OF THE 1999
COUNCIL OF DELEGATES
AND OF THE CONSTITUTIVE MEETING OF
THE 13th SESSION
OF THE STANDING COMMISSION**

**Prepared by the International Committee of the Red Cross
and the
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies**

**GENEVA, 31 OCTOBER TO 6 NOVEMBER 1999
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTRE**

**BIBLIOTHEQUE - CICR
19, AV. DE LA PAIX
1202 GENÈVE**

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The 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent and the 1999 Council of Delegates were hosted by the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

The Standing Commission was composed of:

Chairman

H.R.H. Princess Margriet of the Netherlands (Netherlands Red Cross)

Vice-Chairman

Mr Tadateru Konoe (Japanese Red Cross Society)

Members

Professor Mamoun Yousif Hamid (Sudanese Red Crescent),
nominated to fill the vacancy left by

Dr B.R.M. Hove (Zimbabwe Red Cross Society)

General Georges Harrouk (Lebanese Red Cross Society), nominated to
fill the vacancy left

by *Dr Guillermo Rueda Montaña (Colombian Red Cross)*

Ms Christina Magnuson (Swedish Red Cross)

Representatives of the ICRC

Mr Cornelio Sommaruga, President

Mr Yves Sandoz, Director

Representatives of the International Federation

Dr Astrid N. Heiberg, President

Mr Georges Weber, Secretary General

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**LETTER TO ALL
NATIONAL SOCIETIES**

Geneva, 29 April 1999

CONVOCATION OF THE COUNCIL OF DELEGATES

Geneva, 29 and 30 October 1999

In conformity with the Statutes and Rules of Procedure of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the next session of the Council of Delegates will be held on 29 and 30 October 1999. It will open at 6 p.m. on 28 October with the award ceremony for the Henry Dunant Medal and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Prize for Peace and Humanity.

This convocation is being sent to the members of the Council (recognized National Societies, the ICRC and the International Federation) and to National Societies that the Standing Commission has agreed to invite as observers.

Please find enclosed the provisional agenda prepared by the Standing Commission, which takes into account the comments made by National Societies as requested in the letter sent to them by the Chairman of the Standing Commission on 2 December 1998. Working documents for the Council will be sent in due course.

Yours faithfully,

Astrid N. Heiberg
President
International Federation of
Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Cornelio Sommaruga
President
International Committee
of the Red Cross



From left to right: *Dr Astrid N. Heiberg, President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Ambassador Jean-François Kammer, Secretary-General of the International Conference, Professor Mamdouh Gabr, Chairman of the International Conference, Mr Jean-Luc Blondel, Assistant Secretary-General of the International Conference, Ms Yolande Camporini, Assistant Secretary-General of the International Conference, Mr Cornelio Sommaruga, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Ambassador Philippe Kirsch, Chairman of the Drafting Committee, H.R.H. Princess Margriet of the Netherlands, Chairman of the Standing Commission*

CONVOCATION

of the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Geneva, Switzerland, 31 October to 6 November 1999

Geneva, 30 April 1999

The Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent has asked the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to host the 27th International Conference, which will be held in Geneva, Switzerland,

from 31 October to 6 November 1999.

The International Conference will be preceded by the Executive Council and the General Assembly of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the Council of Delegates of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

This convocation is being sent to the members of the Conference, which, pursuant to Article 9 of the Statutes of the Movement, are:

- the duly recognized National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies,
- the International Committee of the Red Cross,
- the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies,
- the States party to the Geneva Conventions.

In accordance with Rule 5 of the Rules of Procedure of the Movement, this convocation is also being sent to observers of the Conference.

The Conference is expected to:

- issue a solemn declaration;
- adopt a plan of action;
- elicit pledges by individual members on action they intend to take.

Please find attached:

- an information note;
- the provisional agenda of the Conference;
- the draft Plan of Action of the Conference;
- a note on pledging by individual members;
- a note on workshops at the Conference;
- a note on the election of Standing Commission members;
- voting procedures for the election of Standing Commission members at the 27th International Conference;
- a profile for candidates for election to the Standing Commission;
- practical information on registration;
- the Conference registration form, a list of hotel prices, a hotel registration form (to be completed and returned to the address given on the form, by the date indicated) and a map of Geneva.

Rule 6.2 of the Rules of Procedure of the Movement requires that “observations, amendments or additions to the provisional agenda must be received by the Standing Commission at least sixty days before the opening of the Conference”. You are therefore requested to send any comments you may have to the following address prior to 1 September 1999:

Secretariat of the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent
Villa Moynier
120b, rue de Lausanne
1202 Geneva 19
Switzerland

The Standing Commission is pleased to nominate Ambassador Jean-François Kammer, who has been put at its disposal by the Swiss Government, as the Commissioner responsible for assisting the co-hosts in their preparations for the Conference.

Astrid N. Heiberg
President
International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Cornelio Sommaruga
President
International Committee
of the Red Cross



**PROGRAMME OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS
AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT MEETINGS
Geneva, 23 October - 6 November 1999
International Conference Centre**

SATURDAY, 23 OCTOBER

9.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon Orientation session for the
General Assembly of the
International Federation of Red
Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Partnership Café
12.30 p.m. to 2.00 p.m. Opening of the 12th session of the
2.00 p.m. General Assembly

SUNDAY, 24 OCTOBER

9.00 a.m. and 2.00 p.m. 12th session of the General
Assembly
12.30 p.m. to 2.00 p.m. Partnership Café
end of GA meeting Reception for all members of the
General Assembly

MONDAY, 25 OCTOBER

9.00 a.m. and 2.00 p.m. 12th session of the General
Assembly
12.30 p.m. to 2.00 p.m. Partnership Café
end of GA meeting Meeting of African National
Societies on the 5th Pan African
Conference

TUESDAY, 26 OCTOBER

9.00 a.m. and 2.00 p.m. 12th session of the General
Assembly
12.30 p.m. to 2.00 p.m. Partnership Café
end of GA meeting Meeting of African National
Societies on the African RC/RC
Health Initiative (ARCHI)
end of GA meeting Meeting of Asia and Pacific
National Societies on follow-up
to the Hanoi 5th Regional Con-
ference

WEDNESDAY, 27 OCTOBER

9.00 a.m. and 2.00 p.m. 12th session of the General
Assembly
12.30 p.m. to 2.00 p.m. Partnership Café
end of GA meeting Meeting of all European National
Societies

THURSDAY, 28 OCTOBER

9.00 a.m. and 2.00 p.m. 12th session of the General
Assembly
6.00 p.m. Opening ceremony of the Council
of Delegates of the International
Red Cross and Red Crescent
Movement

FRIDAY, 29 OCTOBER

9.00 a.m. and 2.00 p.m. Council of Delegates

SATURDAY, 30 OCTOBER

9.00 a.m. and 2.00 p.m. Council of Delegates

SUNDAY, 31 OCTOBER

10.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. Meeting of National Societies of
the Americas
4.30 p.m. Opening ceremony of the 27th
International Conference
of the Red Cross and
Red Crescent
6.30 p.m. Opening events, reception and
show at the Geneva Arena

MONDAY, 1 NOVEMBER

9.00 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. 27th International Conference of
the Red Cross and Red Crescent
Drafting Committee of the 27th
International Conference
5.00 p.m. Workshops of the 27th Interna-
tional Conference

TUESDAY, 2 NOVEMBER

9.00 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. 27th International Conference
9.00 a.m. Drafting Committee working
group
9.00 a.m. Drafting Committee
5.00 p.m. Workshops

WEDNESDAY, 3 NOVEMBER

9.00 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. 27th International Conference
9.00 a.m. Drafting Committee working
group
9.30 a.m. Drafting Committee
5.00 p.m. Workshops

THURSDAY, 4 NOVEMBER

9.00 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. 27th International Conference
9.00 a.m. Drafting Committee working
group
9.00 a.m. Drafting Committee
5.00 p.m. Workshops

FRIDAY, 5 NOVEMBER

9.00 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. 27th International Conference
9.00 a.m. Drafting Committee working
group
9.00 a.m. Drafting Committee
2.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m. Workshops
6.30 p.m. 27th International Conference
7.00 p.m. Standing Commission

SATURDAY, 6 NOVEMBER

9.00 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. 27th International Conference

LIST OF DELEGATES / LISTE DES DÉLÉGUÉS / LISTA DE DELEGADOS

MEMBERS OF THE CONFERENCE / MEMBRES DE LA CONFÉRENCE / MIEMBROS DE LA CONFERENCIA

In accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Movement, the alphabetical order of the members of the Conference shall be the alphabetical order of the French names of their respective countries. All details pertaining to the composition of delegations are in the language chosen by the delegation.

Selon le Règlement du Mouvement international, l'ordre alphabétique des membres de la Conférence est celui des noms de leur pays dans la langue française. Les indications relatives à la composition des délégations sont dans la langue choisie par la délégation.

De acuerdo con el Reglamento del Movimiento Internacional, el orden alfabético de los miembros de la Conferencia es el de los nombres de sus países en francés. Las indicaciones relativas a la composición de las delegaciones están en el idioma escogido por la propia delegación.

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Mr Mawlawi Hafez Sayed Esmatullah Asem
Mr Abdul Rahim Daoud
Mr Abdul Wadood Sanaf Abdul Ghafour
Mr Ahmad Zhia Yaftali

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* L'enregistrement de cette délégation n'a aucune implication quant à la succession juridique de l'Ex République socialiste fédérale de Yougoslavie

* La inscripción de esta delegación no tiene relación alguna con la sucesión legal de la ex República Federal Socialista de Yugoslavia

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Special Adviser, Department of International Protection

- Ms Kristin Barstad
Associate Programme Officer (Refugee Children),
Division of Operational Support
- Mr James Lattimer
Senior Change Management Officer, Division of
Operational Support
- Ms Erin Baines
Stagiaire, Health and Community Development
Section, Division of Operational Support
- Ms Valérie-Zia Galichet
Stagiaire, Promotion of Refugee Law Section,
Department of International Protection

UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTE FOR TRAINING AND RESEARCH

- Head of Delegation*
- Mr Jacques Tassin
Senior Special Fellow

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF HUMANITARIAN LAW

- Head of Delegation*
- Prof. Jovan Patrnogic
President
- Dr Rolph Jenny
Vice-President
- Dr Stefania Baldini
Secretary General
- Dr Jacques Meurant
Member of the Council
- Prof. John Crabb
Member
- Ms Maria Siemens
Secretary General
- Col. Frederick De Mulinen
Member
- Ms Elisabeth Iliano
Stagiaire

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC RELIEF ORGANIZATION

- Head of Delegation*
- Dr Adnan Khalil Basha
Secretary General
- Dr Fawzia Al-Ashmawi
Representative in Geneva

KAZAKH RED CRESCENT AND RED CROSS SOCIETY

- Head of Delegation*
- Dr Erkebek Kambarovich Argymbaev
President
- Ms Karlygash Amandosova
Head International Department

LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES

- Head of Delegation*
- H.E. Mr Saad Alfarargi
Ambassador, Permanent Observer, Geneva
- Mr Mahmoud Hassan Elsayed
Minister Counsellor
- Dr Hussein Hamouda
Director of the Health Department
- Mr Samer Seif El-Yazel
Third Secretary

- Dr Osmane El Hajje
Member
- Mr Salah Aeid
Member

MAGEN DAVID ADOM

- Head of Delegation*
- Mr Dov Frankel
Acting President MDA
- Mr Rafi Swed
Chairman of the Sub-Committee for Foreign Affairs of
the Executive Committee
- Mrs Rina Amikam
Director International Department
- Prof. Yoram Dinstein
Legal Adviser
- Dr Jean Choukroun
Member
- Mrs Jacqueline Goldman
Member

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AT GENEVA

- Head of Delegation*
- Ms Sally-Anne Corcoran
Special Assistant to the Director-General

ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY

- Head of Delegation*
- Mr Venant Wege Nzomwita
Deputy Permanent Observer
- Mr Desta Negousse
Minister Counsellor

ORGANISATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE

- Head of Delegation*
- Dr Nanguyalai S. Tarzi
Ambassador, Permanent Observer
- Mr Jafar Olia
Deputy Permanent Observer

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

- Head of Delegation*
- Ms A. Cassam
Director of the UNESCO Liaison Office, Geneva
- Ms Kerstin Holst
Liaison Officer

INTERNATIONAL CIVIL DEFENCE ORGANISATION

- Head of Delegation*
- Mr Sadok Znaïdi
Secretary General
- Mr Pascal Gondrand
Private Secretary
- Mr Wladimir Kakusha
Assistant to the Secretary General

WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION

- Head of Delegation*
- Mr Robert C. Landis
Director of the World Weather Watch Department
- Dr Michael S.J Harrison
Chief of Climate Information and Prediction
- Mr G. Arduino
Acting Chief of Water Resources Division

WORLD ORGANIZATION AGAINST TORTURE – SOS TORTURE

Head of Delegation

- M. Eric Sottas
Directeur
- Mrs Claudine Haenni
Secretary General
- M. Fernando Mejia
Directeur adjoint
- Mr Rogier Huizenga
Programme Officer
- Mme Anne-Laurence Lacroix
Chargée de programme
- Mme Carla Benninger-Budel
Chargée de programme

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

Head of Delegation

- Dr Xavier Leus
Director, Department of Emergency and Humanitarian Action
- Dr Jean-Paul Menu
Senior Adviser
- Mr Joel Colf
Junior Professional Officer
- Dr Roberta Ritson
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PAN-PACIFIC AND SOUTH-EAST ASIA WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Head of Delegation

- Mrs Clarissa Starey
Representative to the Geneva Office of the United Nations

PAX CHRISTI INTERNATIONAL

Head of Delegation

- Fr. Paul Jozef Marie Lansu
Programme Coordinator

WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

Head of Delegation

- Dr Tun Myat
Director of Resources and External Relations
- Mr Werner Schleiffer
Director, WFP Geneva Liaison Office
- Mr Jean Luc Siblot
Deputy Director, Geneva
- Mr Carlo Scaramella
Senior Programme Adviser, Technical Support

RED CROSS SOCIETY OF MOLDOVA

Head of Delegation

- Ms Larissa Byrca

INTERNATIONAL SERVICE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Head of Delegation

- Mr André Jacques
President
- Mr Adrien-Claude Zoller
Director
- Mr Mark Thomson
Deputy Director
- Mr John Southalan
Counsellor
- Ms Kathrin Buchmann
Fellow
- Ms Monica Kunkel
Fellow

INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL SERVICE

Chef de Délégation

- Mme Anna Rosa Loiacono
Responsable de la Division des Cas

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

Chef de Délégation

- Mme Brigitta Gadiet
Membre du Conseil national suisse, Présidente du Groupe suisse de l'Union interparlementaire
- Mme Luisa Ballin
Chargé de l'Information
- M. Anders B. Johnsson
Secrétaire général
- Mme Christine Pintat
Sous-Secrétaire générale
- Mlle Karem Jabre
Chargée de programme adjointe

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Head of Delegation

- Mrs Cathy Sabety
Information Officer

WORLD VISION INTERNATIONAL

Head of Delegation

- Dr Eric Ram
Director

GUESTS

- Dr Sadzida Rasidagic
(President, Red Cross Society of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo)
- Mr Marinko Simunovic
(Secretary-General Red Cross Society of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo)
- Mr Svanimir Djokic
(Secretary-General Red Cross Society of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Pale)

- Ms Alganesh Kidane
(Secretary-General, Red Cross Society of Eritrea)
- Dr Michael Mussie-Gebre
(Executive Chairman, Red Cross Society of Eritrea)
- Mr Roger Mayou
(Director, International Red Cross and Red Crescent Museum)
- Mrs Niki Rattle
(Secretary-General, Cook Islands Red Cross Society)

II COUNCIL OF DELEGATES

28-30 october 1999

2.1 AGENDA

I. Elections, agenda and procedural matters

1. Opening of the meeting by the Chairman of the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent and award of the Henry Dunant Medal
2. Election of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretaries of the Council of Delegates
3. Adoption of the agenda

II. Substantive items

4. Work of the Standing Commission
The Standing Commission will report on its work (the emblem, the Council of Delegates and the 27th International Conference) and on the Council of Delegates resolutions pertaining thereto.
5. 27th International Conference
 - 5.1. *Adoption of the provisional agenda of the Conference*
 - 5.2. *Declaration and Plan of Action*
 - 5.3. *Proposals of persons to fill the posts of Chairman, Vice-Chairmen, Secretary-General, Assistant Secretaries-General and other officers of the Conference*
6. Implementation of the Seville Agreement on the Organization of the International Activities of the Components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, November 1997 (*Resolution 6 and 7 of the 1997 Council of Delegates*)
7. Advocacy
Definition, Principles and guidelines for a Movement policy
8. Peace, international humanitarian law and human rights
General debate on Movement's contribution to peace, international humanitarian law and human rights with special focus on children, the International Criminal Court, the Movement's strategy on landmines and arms transfers (Resolution 8 and 5 of the 1997 Council of Delegates)
9. Miscellaneous — Communication Forum Report
10. Date and venue of the next meeting of the Council of Delegates

2.2 COUNCIL OF DELEGATES OFFICERS

Chairman

Mr Cornelio Sommaruga (ICRC)

Vice-Chairman

Mr Miguel Carmona Jiménez (Vice-President of the International Federation and President of the Costa Rica Red Cross)

Secretaries

Mrs Angela Gussing (ICRC)

Mr Evgeni Strijak (International Federation)

2.3 SUMMARY RECORD

FIRST MEETING

- Opening of the meeting by the Chairman of the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent and award of the Henry Dunant Medal

SECOND MEETING

- Election of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretaries of the Council of Delegates
- Adoption of the agenda
- Work of the Standing Commission
- 27th International Conference

THIRD MEETING

- Implementation of the Agreement on the Organization of the International Activities of the Components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, November 1997 (Resolution 6 and Resolution 7 of the 1997 Council of Delegates)
- Advocacy

FOURTH MEETING

- Peace, international humanitarian law and human rights
- Children affected by armed conflict
- Street children

FIFTH MEETING

- Movement strategy on landmines
- The International Criminal Court
- Arms availability
- Miscellaneous - Communication Forum Report
- Date and venue of the next Council of Delegates

2.4 RESOLUTIONS OF THE COUNCIL OF DELEGATES

- 1 - Work of the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent
- 2 - Emblem
- 3 - Agenda and programme of the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent
- 4 - Officers of the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent
- 5 - Implementation of the Seville Agreement
- 6 - The Movement's policy on advocacy
- 7 - Red Cross, Red Crescent and Peace
- 8 - Children affected by armed conflict
- 9 - Street children
- 10 - Movement strategy on landmines
- 11 - International Criminal Court
- 12 - Arms availability and the situation of civilians in armed conflict and post-conflict situations

2.3 SUMMARY RECORD

FIRST MEETING

Thursday, 28 October 1999
6.00 p.m.

SUMMARY: Opening of the meeting by the Chairman of the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent and award of the Henry Dunant Medal.

Item 1 of the agenda: OPENING OF THE MEETING BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE STANDING COMMISSION OF THE RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT AND AWARD OF THE HENRY DUNANT MEDAL

H.R.H. Princess Margriet of the Netherlands, Chairman of the Standing Commission, opened the 1999 Council of Delegates by underscoring the need to achieve harmony within the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement through mutual respect, trust and the ability to listen to one another. She compared the work of the Red Cross and Red Crescent to an unfinished symphony, whose first movement had been composed by Henry Dunant. The Council of Delegates and the 27th International Conference would provide the Red Cross and Red Crescent with an opportunity to tune its instruments for the next movement of its "symphony" to alleviate human suffering.

The Chairman of the Standing Commission then awarded the Henry Dunant Medal, the Movement's highest distinction, to the persons listed below, in recognition of their outstanding services and great devotion to the cause of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. She thanked the Australian Red Cross for providing the medals and invited the Council to observe one minute's silence in honour of the posthumous recipients.

Ms Ute Stührwoldt, a registered paediatric nurse and a member of the German Red Cross. As a health delegate with the ICRC and the International Federation in Africa and central Asia, she had set up and supervised feeding centres, cared for and evacuated the war-wounded and trained medical personnel. Thanks to her extraordinary compassion and high professional standards, she had made a difference in the lives of countless people.

Dr Byron R.M. Hove, posthumously. A lawyer and a social activist, Dr Hove had been a founding member and

Chairman of the Zimbabwe Red Cross Society for many years. As Vice-Chairman of the Standing Commission, he had promoted transparency and strengthened relations among the Movement's components. He was known for his integrity and personal commitment in upholding and fighting for Red Cross and Red Crescent principles. Had fate not decided otherwise, he would have served as Chairman of the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

Mr Donald Tansley, a former Executive Vice-President of the Canadian International Development Agency, who had devoted his life to public service. As study director of the Joint Committee for the Reappraisal of the Role of the Red Cross, he had published one of the most important and comprehensive reports on the Movement's history: *An Agenda for the Red Cross* (1975). He was still a dedicated volunteer of the Canadian Red Cross Society, giving speeches worldwide in order to create an "agenda for discussion".

Dr Guillermo Rueda Montaña, posthumously. A surgeon, Dr Rueda had been active in the Colombian public health sector and taught medicine at various Colombian universities. He had served as President of the Colombian Red Cross for 20 years and held different posts within the Movement. In 1995 he was elected to the Standing Commission, which he served with dedication until his death in 1998.

Mr Tansley spoke on behalf of all the recipients and saluted former medalists. He thanked his team for its contribution to his report and the Canadian Red Cross Society for conferring on him its highest award, the Companion of the Red Cross. He suggested the time had come for the Red Cross and Red Crescent to raise its voice, the voice of compassion and reason, without, however, abandoning its neutrality.

The meeting rose at 7.00 p.m.

SECOND MEETING

Friday, 29 October 1999
9.00 a.m.

SUMMARY: Election of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretaries of the Council of Delegates — Adoption of the agenda — Work of the Standing Commission — 27th International Conference — Work on the emblem

Item 2 of the agenda: ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN, VICE-CHAIRMAN AND SECRETARIES OF THE COUNCIL OF DELEGATES

Princess Margriet, Chairman of the Standing Commission, proposed that Mr Cornelio Sommaruga, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), chair the meeting and that Mr Miguel Carmona Jiménez, Vice-President of the International Federation and President of the Costa Rica Red Cross, act as Vice-Chairman. Ms Angela Gussing (ICRC) and Mr Evgeni Strijak (International Federation), both members of the Standing Commission's ad hoc group on the Council of Delegates, were nominated as joint secretaries.

It was so decided.

Mr Sommaruga (ICRC), Chairman of the Council of Delegates, thanked the Council for having elected him to chair the meeting once again. He welcomed the participants and congratulated Mr Didier Cherpitel for his appointment as Secretary General of the International Federation at the General Assembly. Since the Movement would be defending its humanitarian agenda before governments at the upcoming 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, he stressed that its duty was to mobilize them and warned against the pitfalls of politicization, which could endanger the Movement's independence and neutrality. Two years after the implementation of the Seville Agreement, significant progress had been made in bringing about awareness of its true significance, but much remained to be done. He expressed his delight at the spirit of cooperation reigning within the Movement and emphasized the importance of the Movement's identity.

Item 3 of the agenda: ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The Chairman recalled the rules of procedure governing debates (Article 15, paragraph 3 of the Statutes) and the tradition of adopting resolutions by consensus (Rule 19 of the Rules of Procedure). Differing views on proposed texts would be ironed out in small groups, which would then submit final drafts for adoption. Speakers, with the exception of those introducing agenda items, should limit their statements to five minutes. At times the list of speakers would be closed in accordance with Rule 18 of the Rules of Procedure. A daily schedule of events would be provided for all delegates.

The agenda was adopted.

Item 4 of the agenda: WORK OF THE STANDING COMMISSION

Princess Margriet (Standing Commission Chairman) presented the Standing Commission's report covering its work over the previous four years and reviewed the history of the Council of Delegates since the early 1990s. The Commission's work had been guided by Resolution 3 of the 1995 Council of Delegates, in particular the recommendation that a transparent information policy be implemented and a

continual process of review and adaptation undertaken. Since the adoption of the Seville Agreement, the Commission had done its best to include National Societies in the decision-making process by bringing their leaders together in ad hoc groups and consulting the Societies at regional conferences on the Commission's work. Indeed, the agenda of the present Council of Delegates had been the subject of extensive consultations. An arbitration board had moreover been set up to settle any disputes between components of the Movement in the implementation of the Seville Agreement. The Commission's chief preoccupations were to prioritize issues of concern for the Movement in the immediate and long-term future, to maintain the Council of Delegates as the Movement's highest deliberative body, the only meeting in which all the components had a voice, and to continue enhancing the International Conference as a deliberative and decision-making forum to which all humanitarian actors could contribute. The Commission's future work would depend on continued financial support from National Societies. Princess Margriet thanked all the National Societies that had generously contributed to the Commission's budget and the ICRC and the International Federation for underwriting its operating costs. She also expressed deep gratitude to the Commission members for their invaluable work and to the ICRC and the International Federation for their unwavering support.

The Chairman thanked Princess Margriet for her stimulating report and the excellent work she had carried out as Chairman of the Standing Commission. He pointed out that the draft resolution had been numbered CD 99/PR4/1.

Ms Thomas (British Red Cross) congratulated the Standing Commission Chairman, members and secretariat on their efforts to implement more fully the Commission's statutory functions and to carry out the mandates conferred on it by the Council of Delegates. The Commission's role in consulting and communicating with National Societies was greatly appreciated. The Commission was the ideal body to lead debate within the Movement, to work on Movement strategy and to hear the concerns of all components between meetings of the Council of Delegates and the International Conference. The Commission could count on the continued support of the British Red Cross. She suggested that the new Commission consider ways of involving appropriate State representatives in its work, i.e., in the follow-up to the 27th International Conference and in preparations for the next one.

Mr Muheim (Swiss Red Cross) thanked Princess Margriet for her excellent work as Chairman of the Standing Commission. He pointed out that the Commission's duties would be further enhanced should the draft resolution entrusting it to develop a strategy for the Movement be adopted. The Commission's resources and infrastructure were insufficient, as illustrated by the imbalance between the infrastructure enjoyed by ex officio and elected members. He emphasized the particular importance of operative paragraph 4 of the draft resolution inviting the Standing Commission to draw up practical measures allowing it to

carry out its work effectively, and stated that he fully supported the draft resolution.

Mr Jean-François (Haitian National Red Cross Society) endorsed the Standing Commission's report and expressed his support for the draft resolution. He agreed that the Commission should be entrusted with the task of developing a strategy for the Movement and stressed that all components should be involved.

Ms Powell (Jamaica Red Cross) commended Princess Margriet and the Standing Commission for their hard work and dedication to the Movement. She expressed her appreciation for the opportunity given to all National Societies to make nominations for the Henry Dunant Medal, which also recognized those individuals who had contributed without being called on to do so.

Mr Talib (Indonesian Red Cross Society) voiced his gratitude to the Standing Commission and its Chairman for their excellent work and expressed the hope that the Commission would continue to support the endeavours of the National Societies.

The Chairman asked for comments on the text of draft resolution CD99 PR4/1 before proceeding with its adoption. No comments were made.

The Council of Delegates adopted the resolution relating to the work of the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (Res. 1).

Item 5 of the agenda: 27TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

The Chairman pointed out that there were two draft resolutions, CD99 PR5/1 and CD99 PR5/2.

Ms Magnuson (Standing Commission) stated that the aim of the International Conference was to facilitate the Movement's humanitarian activities and outlined the structure and work of the Conference. The Declaration and the Plan of Action were the two main Conference documents. Governments and all the Movement's components had taken part in the preparatory work leading up to the Plan of Action, which would be negotiated in a drafting committee. The Standing Commission encouraged all National Societies to participate actively in the debates and plenary sessions. To accommodate all speakers, statements would be limited to five minutes per delegation. Two additional and innovative features of the Conference were the pledges and the workshops. Generous support had been received from private-sector sponsors for the Arena show, the proceeds of which would be used for the Movement's water-supply projects. The Commission had decided to open the Conference to the press, which would have access to all plenary meetings but not to the Drafting Committee sessions. A note had been distributed to delegates regarding the procedure for electing the Standing Commission members. The Commission felt that the Council of Delegates should adopt the provisional agenda of the Conference in order to demonstrate that the Movement had full political control over the Conference and to limit opportunities for Conference members to raise points of order that might involve political considerations. Ms Magnuson urged the Council of Delegates to adopt draft resolution CD99 PR5/1.

Mr Weber (International Federation) stated that there appeared to be a difference in wording between the French and English versions of the draft resolution. He felt that the French wording "transmet à la XXVII^e Conférence internationale" more faithfully reflected the proper legal meaning and should replace the word "submits".

Dr Hamzeh (Syrian Arab Red Crescent) asked Ms Magnuson whether each National Society would be able to speak once on each topic, rather than just once during the entire meeting.

Ms Magnuson (Standing Commission) stated that National Society delegations would have only one opportunity to speak (five minutes) owing to time constraints; however, they would be able to take part in the Drafting Committee's meetings, where the most important work relating to the Plan of Action would be accomplished.

The Council of Delegates adopted the resolution on the provisional agenda and programme of the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (Res. 3).

Ms Magnuson (Standing Commission) said that the Statutes also entrusted the Council of Delegates with the task of nominating candidates for election as Conference officers. The list of candidates was provided in document 27IC/2. Every effort had been made by the Standing Commission to ensure a balance between National Societies, government representatives and geographical regions. The list was to be formally adopted in draft resolution CD99 PR5/2.

The Chairman expressed his gratitude to all members of the Movement willing to be Conference officers and proposed that the Council adopt the draft resolution.

The Council of Delegates adopted the resolution on the officers of the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (Res. 4).

Mr Sandoz (ICRC) noted with satisfaction that the "spirit of Seville" had been very present during the preparatory work for the 27th International Conference. The Conference had become a major humanitarian forum at which representatives of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and governments engaged in frank discussions of humanitarian law issues. The 27th International Conference would be welcoming members of the press and observers from governmental organizations and NGOs. It would be dynamic, with workshops on different topics, and its Plan of Action, an innovative feature, would be devoted to the protection of war victims with an emphasis on respect for humanitarian law, universality, national legislation and weapons.

Mr Weber (International Federation) agreed with Mr Sandoz about the significance, spirit and distinguishing features of the 27th International Conference. With regard to humanitarian action in times of armed conflict and other disasters, he pinpointed four major needs relating to disaster response. They were: better preparedness measures; strengthened cooperation and coordination mechanisms between States, the Movement and other humanitarian players; a clear framework within which disaster victims and humanitarian personnel could be better protected; and a shared understanding of the respective rules of the political, military and humanitarian protagonists. Building a strategic partnership to improve the lives of vulnerable people was important because the Conference needed to support the domestic role of National Societies by strengthening cooperation between States and National Societies to improve health, launching new initiatives to reduce violence and discrimination in the community, and increasing national capacities and effective partnership with States.

The Chairman stated that the members of the Council of Delegates had to decide what their role should be as members of the Conference. National Societies should bear in mind that they were independent of their governments. Each country would be represented at the Conference by a

delegation from its National Society and a delegation from the government. From a substantive point of view, the main elements of the Conference would be the Conference Declaration, the Plan of Action, the pledges and the workshops. The members of the Council of Delegates should carefully consider their contributions to those points.

Dr Ali (Libyan Red Crescent) stated that the Plan of Action to be put before the Conference was not strictly speaking an issue for the Drafting Committee and should be discussed first at the Council of Delegates. Part I of the Plan of Action appeared to have been drafted somewhat hastily because no reference was made in the introduction to the Movement's history, achievements or experience. The commitments and duties of the National Societies and governments should be clearly and expressly spelled out. The Movement should be much more demanding of governments who violated international humanitarian law and the Council of Delegates should decide how to present key issues to the governments at the Conference.

The Chairman assured the Libyan delegate that some of the points he had raised would be addressed in the speech he was to deliver as President of the ICRC at the opening ceremony of the Conference.

Ms Harmon (Brazilian Red Cross) endorsed the Libyan position on the Plan of Action. She believed that the Movement's unity stemmed from unity among the National Societies. Like the Libyan representative, she admired the people who had prepared the Plan of Action but underscored the need for bringing up major current issues in relation to the Movement's history and achievements.

The Chairman urged those National Societies who had not yet registered for the International Conference to do so.

Mr Jean-François (Haitian National Red Cross Society) asked if a workshop agenda was available.

The Chairman replied that Mr Weber and Mr Sandoz would answer his question at a later point in time.

Mr Sandoz (ICRC) found it encouraging that the National Societies wanted to get involved. It was important to make the Conference as concrete and positive as possible, which meant adopting the Plan of Action. The Movement must be united behind its principles. There were official Movement positions on some points but not all. The Drafting Committee was open to everyone and National Societies should attend, showing their commitment and bearing in mind the need for consensus.

Mr Weber (International Federation) made three observations regarding the Plan of Action. First, it was important to understand the context in which the Plan of Action had been prepared. From 1986 to 1995 few governments had had much experience of International Conferences. The 1995 International Conference had aroused new interest among governments in key areas of the humanitarian agenda. By 1999 the context had changed markedly, with a different level of commitment from governments and a greater understanding on their part of the event and of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Secondly, with regard to the text of the Plan of Action, he reassured the Council of Delegates that progress made at the 1995 Conference regarding sanctions and child soldiers would serve as a foundation upon which to build at the 1999 Conference. National Societies should take advantage of their participation in the Drafting Committee and Conference proceedings to ensure that the progress made was in no way undermined. Lastly, governments and observers had submitted over 30 workshop topics, but only 14 could be scheduled for reasons of time. The workshops

would be co-hosted by several National Societies, with similar themes grouped in one workshop.

The Chairman also urged National Societies to take an active part in the Drafting Committee in order to ensure that the Plan of Action was not "diluted" with additions. He then proposed that the Council return to item 4 of the agenda.

Item 4 of the agenda: THE WORK OF THE STANDING COMMISSION (cont'd)

Ms Magnuson (Standing Commission) gave an account of the work of the Standing Commission's ad hoc group on the emblem since the 1997 Council of Delegates, with special emphasis on Resolutions 2 and 4 adopted at that time. In accordance with Resolution 2, the ad hoc group had drafted a new consultation paper which was submitted to groups of legal and diplomatic experts and National Society representatives in January 1999; the proposals it contained had been found acceptable. In the summer of 1999, the Standing Commission had met in consultation with experts designated by the governments of various States party to the Geneva Conventions and of the five permanent members of the Security Council. The aim of the meeting had been to obtain a clear view of what was regarded as acceptable and feasible and which direction further work should take. It was made clear to the experts that a solution must be acceptable to the Movement, a basic condition being that the red cross and red crescent must be kept as emblems. The government representatives and experts had recommended that the 27th International Conference set up a working group composed of State and Movement representatives to examine the matter further and possibly initiate negotiations. The Commission had agreed to consult the 1999 Council of Delegates on that proposal and had prepared draft resolution CD99 PR4/2, which called for the establishment of a joint working group composed of government and Movement representatives so that a lasting, comprehensive solution to the emblem problem could be rapidly found. Ms Magnuson urged that the resolution be adopted.

Dr Potravnova (Russian Red Cross Society) endorsed the draft resolution. She described the emblem as one of the most sensitive issues faced by the Movement and pointed out that consultations with National Societies were useful.

A representative of the Red Cross Society of China commended the Standing Commission for its work on the emblem. He agreed that a solution should be sought to satisfy all parties involved but added that new resolutions should not have a negative impact on the protection of victims and on the Movement's unity and universality. To combat misuse of the emblem, Chinese National Society volunteers were disseminating information on proper use and the Chinese government had enacted a law in 1996 regulating use of the emblem.

Ms Katevas de Sclabos (Chilean Red Cross) expressed surprise that not all National Societies had endeavoured to promote legislation on use of the emblem. Chilean legislation on the emblem had been passed in 1939 and updated in 1997. She fully supported the draft resolution.

Dr Hamzeh (Syrian Arab Red Crescent) praised Ms Magnuson and Princess Margriet for their excellent reports. The National Society of Syria, with the support of the ICRC, had prepared a draft bill on protection of the emblem to be submitted to the Syrian parliament. If the point of the draft resolution was to prevent misuse, then it was welcome, but the Movement should not consider the possibility of having more emblems.

Dr Vejarano Laverde (Colombian Red Cross) expressed the desire of his National Society to take part in the proposed

joint working group because of the importance and respect attached to the emblem in Colombia, especially in view of the vital protection it afforded to Colombian Red Cross volunteers.

A representative of the Nigerian Red Cross Society said that, as a National Society facing the emblem problem, the Nigerian Red Cross endorsed the resolution and supported the work of the ad hoc group.

Amb. Omran El Shafei (Egyptian Red Crescent Society) thanked Ms Magnuson for her guidance of the working group on the emblem. Like the Syrian representative, he would have liked the text to contain a reference to previous work done in that regard and expressed the hope that the alternatives presented so far would constitute the substance of future study on the issue. While in agreement with the resolution, he had a number of observations. To begin with, the first preambular paragraph did not appear to reflect the actual situation regarding the emblem as an obstacle to the universal application of the 1949 Geneva Conventions. The need to involve the States so as to remove any obstacles was paramount and that issue should be discussed at the International Conference. Secondly, operative paragraph (b) on the new working group, which would represent the shared responsibility of the Movement and the States regarding the emblem, appeared awkward. While the Standing Commission had set up working groups in the past, it had not referred to shared responsibility between the Movement and the States. He asked for clarification on that point. Lastly, operative paragraph (c) was vague with regard to discussing practical arrangements with the States and required further explanation.

Mr Kayanga (Zambia Red Cross Society) expressed his full support for the draft resolution because misuse of the emblem was a common problem in his country. He found the section about practical arrangements with States very encouraging.

Ms Harmon (Brazilian Red Cross), while agreeing with the Egyptian Red Crescent about the wording of the resolution, believed that the problem could be dealt with by the Drafting Committee. She made the following suggestions: (i) in paragraph (a), the Drafting Committee should insert a reference to legislation protecting the emblem; (ii) in paragraph (c), the words "and their National Societies" should be added so that practical arrangements would be made not only with States, but with National Societies as well; (iii) with regard to paragraph (d), National Societies would like to be consulted should the joint working group come up with anything feasible before the 2001 Council of Delegates. She expressed her firm support for the draft resolution.

A representative of the Canadian Red Cross Society thanked Ms Magnuson for her effective leadership and pointed out that the working group had successfully performed its tasks under difficult circumstances. The resolution had his unconditional support, but he also stressed that the Movement needed to be more united in the face of present conflicts and disasters and that the emblem should not be a source of division. The Movement needed to present an image of greater unity to the world. Further dialogue was essential.

Dr Usichenko (Ukrainian Red Cross Society) drew attention to the excellent work of the Standing Commission under Ms Magnuson and expressed support for the draft resolution. In cooperation with the Federation Secretariat and the ICRC, the Ukrainian parliament had adopted a law on the emblem.

Ms Basque (Red Cross Society of Côte d'Ivoire) commended the Standing Commission and its ad hoc group for its valuable work on the emblem. Her National Society was working with the government and the ICRC, an interministerial committee had been set up and legislation on the emblem would soon be submitted to the National Assembly. She fully supported the resolution.

Mr Pesmazoglu (Hellenic Red Cross) commended the Standing Commission and the President of the Swedish Red Cross for their excellent work on a thorny issue. While he hoped that the problem could be solved, it was equally if not more important to inspire worldwide respect for the emblem and ensure protection for those bearing it.

Mr Faghihi (Iranian Red Crescent Society) thanked the Syrian representative for his comments and pointed out that the Iranian National Society had withdrawn its previous emblem in the interest of Movement unity. He was not in favour of a proliferation of emblems and expressed support for the draft resolution drawn up by the working group.

Mr Ahouangbevi (Togolese Red Cross) expressed his appreciation to Ms Magnuson and the Standing Commission. In his view, there were many disadvantages to withdrawing an emblem or changing it from one day to another. The Togolese Red Cross, with the support of the ICRC, had drawn up draft legislation on the protection and misuse of the emblem, and the bill was presently before parliament. He gave his support to the draft resolution.

Dr Ali (Libyan Red Crescent) expressed his gratitude to Ms Magnuson for her untiring efforts in dealing with the emblem issue. The Libyan Red Crescent fully agreed with the Canadian representative's statement regarding the emblem's significance. However, it was necessary to consider the history and achievements of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in order to obtain positive results in the Council of Delegates. He expressed his support for the draft resolution and suggested that a sentence be added to paragraph (c) requesting the Standing Commission to report back to the 2001 Council of Delegates and to the 28th International Conference on the joint working group's progress.

Mr Moteane (Lesotho Red Cross Society) fully supported the draft resolution because experience had shown that use of the emblem, the only form of protection for Red Cross staff and volunteers, had to be thoroughly understood by all.

Mr Price (Antigua and Barbuda Red Cross Society) expressed support for the establishment of the working group on the emblem. His government had put forward legislation to combat misuse of the emblem and he called upon all National Societies to work alongside the Standing Commission, to be vigilant and to police misuse of the emblem.

Mr Aidoo (Ghana Red Cross Society) welcomed the Standing Commission's report on the emblem and expressed support for its continued work on the issue. He stated that Ghana had a statute providing for protection of the emblem, but that it was difficult to ensure its enforcement. He requested a clarification of part "a" in the report regarding the establishment of a working group by the Standing Commission. Had the group been set up by the International Conference, the Movement would have been in a stronger position to call on governments to show more respect for the emblem.

Mr Al-Shehabi (Bahrain Red Crescent Society) commended the ad hoc group on the emblem and the Standing Commission Chairman for their outstanding work. He expressed full support for the draft resolution and the amendment proposed by the Brazilian Red Cross and

seconded the comments made by the National Society of Egypt.

Mr Talib (Indonesian Red Cross Society) expressed unconditional support for the draft resolution and suggested adding a sentence to stress that the emblem, as a symbol of humanity, should be fully recognized and protected by national law. All the components of the Movement should speak as one in urging the States to draft national laws on the emblem to prevent its misuse.

Mr Siby (Senegalese Red Cross Society) spoke in favour of the draft resolution and expressed hope that the working group would find an acceptable solution to the substantive and procedural problems posed by the emblem.

Ms Magnuson (Standing Commission) thanked the National Societies for their support, questions and comments. She underscored the importance of the national laws in force in each country or being considered by governments or the appropriate authorities, adding that such legislation would strengthen the network of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies throughout the world.

The Chairman, before proceeding to the adoption of the resolution, suggested that the Libyan Red Crescent proposal

be taken into account by redrafting paragraph 1(d) to make it clear that the working group set up by the Standing Commission would first have to report to the Standing Commission and then to both the Council of Delegates and the International Conference.

Mr De Graaf (Netherlands Red Cross), after having consulted with Dr Ali about the amendment, stated that the Netherlands Red Cross preferred to keep the joint working group in the text. The amendment could be modified as follows: "to request the joint working group to report back, through the Standing Commission, to the 2001 Council of Delegates and the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent".

The Chairman agreed with the Netherlands Red Cross proposal, although he thought it was superfluous because the ad hoc working group would always report through the Standing Commission, and put the resolution to the floor for adoption.

The Council of Delegates adopted the resolution on the emblem as amended (Res. 2).

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.

THIRD MEETING

Friday, 29 October 1999
2.00 p.m.

SUMMARY: Implementation of the Seville Agreement on the Organization of the International Activities of the Components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement — Advocacy.

Item 6 of the agenda: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SEVILLE AGREEMENT ON THE ORGANIZATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE COMPONENTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The Chairman drew attention to draft resolution CD 99 PR6/1 REV1.

Mr Weber (International Federation), introducing the draft resolution on the Seville Agreement, gave a progress report, including a slide show, on implementation of the Agreement since its adoption. The Agreement covered not only the international activities of the ICRC and the Federation Secretariat, but also those of the National Societies. While focusing on international relief activities, it dealt with all aspects of international programming where closer cooperation was needed between components of the Movement. The Agreement did not restrict the sphere of competence or impair the work of any component. Its preamble was just as important as the articles, because it outlined the Agreement's purpose and scope (para. 3) and provided for a common Movement strategy.

Two concepts were central to understanding the Agreement: (i) the lead role related to fixed responsibilities conferred on the components by the Geneva Conventions and the Statutes of the Movement; and (ii) the lead agency concept was an organizational tool for managing international activities, mainly large-scale relief operations. The capacity of a lead agency to assume its responsibilities, and to defend the interests and respond to the concerns of all the components involved, needed to be addressed more thoroughly.

Feedback from the Movement's components showed that they were willing to pool resources to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness, but consultation mechanisms and transparency in the planning phase of joint activities still had to be improved. Better understanding and respect for the different mandates of the components was crucial to achieving enhanced cooperation within the Movement.

As for international relief, it was difficult to maintain a balance between efficient coordination and diversity of interests owing to media pressure, political factors, funding problems and publicity relating to the profiles of individual components.

A National Society was primarily responsible for its own development. Improvements were, however, necessary in the planning and implementation phases of development co-operation programmes, where shortcomings in the consultation process among the components and a certain lack of transparency in budgetary planning had been identified. New strategies should be devised to ensure sustainable funding for National Society development, as only strong National Societies would be able to assume the responsibilities outlined in the Seville Agreement.

Mr Sandoz (ICRC) stated that while many initiatives had been taken to increase understanding among Movement staff of the Seville Agreement, both at ICRC headquarters and in delegations in the field, much remained to be done. Effective communication was also important to convey the "spirit of Seville". In most of the situations in which the Agreement had been implemented, as for example during the Balkans operation, it had had a positive impact on cooperation within the Movement. The Agreement needed to be strengthened, however, and a strategy developed for the Movement based on the goals set forth in the Agreement.

Mr Carlton (Australian Red Cross), speaking in support of the revised draft resolution, said it was more specific about action that needed to be taken to resolve certain issues. He stressed that both the Seville Agreement, which should serve as the basis of the Movement's future operations, and the International Federation's Strategy 2010 should remain intact.

Coordination problems regarding the activities of the Movement's various components could be resolved through objective analysis. The establishment of an ad hoc group on the conduct of international relief operations (para. 2) was a positive step that could be furthered by independent external advice. He called on National Societies to provide financial support for the constantly expanding activities of the Standing Commission.

Mr Cotte (Colombian Red Cross Society) expressed support for the draft resolution. For the Colombian Red Cross, the Seville Agreement was a living document that needed to be applied in a flexible manner and was adaptable to every country. Its successful implementation required transparency, training, functional cooperation and management, and, most importantly, respect. The Colombian Red Cross supported the Seville Agreement as an important tool for coordination, mutual respect and action on the ground.

Mr Usichenko (Ukrainian Red Cross Society) expressed unconditional support for the draft resolution. The Seville Agreement was well enforced in Ukraine, as illustrated by the joint flood relief operations of the Federation Secretariat and the National Society. To ensure effective implementation, the Agreement would have to be studied at every level of the National Society and the Movement's components would have to act harmoniously, which called for mutual respect and a sense of responsibility.

A representative of the Gambia Red Cross Society compared the Seville Agreement to a marriage contract between the three components of the Movement. The Agreement required a period of adaptation, especially in the field, and adjustments needed to be made with regard to the role of the lead agency and the resourcing of relief operations in conflict situations. He welcomed the conclusions of the report and expressed support for the revised draft resolution, in particular paragraph 2, which would enable rapid and effective relief to be provided to victims of armed conflict and natural disasters. National Societies should always be fully informed and involved throughout all stages of operations, but that would require a change of attitude.

Dr Potravnova (Russian Red Cross Society) stated that unity was essential if the Movement was going to survive and that each component depended on the support of the others. The Movement had to adapt to new ways of thinking. As for operational activities, the components had to work together to set up new cooperation and consultation mechanisms for better coordination, especially in the field. Any matters of discord between Movement components within a region should be resolved swiftly using mechanisms established in Geneva and respected at the national level. Periodic evaluations should be carried out whenever a situation involved the long-term presence of representatives of the International Federation and/or of the ICRC so that the role of each component could be studied. The Russian Red Cross fully agreed with the draft resolution, in particular with the provisions for the establishment of an ad hoc group that included National Societies.

Mr Pesmazoglu (Hellenic Red Cross) believed that the Seville Agreement was generally sound but had a few weak points that required rapid attention if chronic difficulties were to be avoided. In the past two years the Movement had had to face overwhelming challenges in the form of conflicts and disasters throughout the world; that situation could not have been envisaged in a written document like the Seville Agreement. An evaluation of the Agreement's implementation since its adoption should be carried out with a view to making the necessary improvements. The need for participating National Societies to be active in certain areas should not be seen as a negative factor (competition) but as a point to be taken into account when implementing the agreement. The Hellenic Red Cross agreed in general terms with the draft resolution, but emphasized that the Standing Commission should exercise its authority and powers of supervision rapidly and thoroughly. There should also be a time limit for the ad hoc group to present its report.

Mr Muriu (Kenya Red Cross Society) welcomed the Seville Agreement but raised some concerns about implementation. His National Society had had practical experiences in which the working relationships between the three components had not always been satisfactory. Training was important so that all the components understood how to operate under the terms of the Seville Agreement. Unless the role of each component was respected, it would not be possible to implement the Agreement. The Kenya Red Cross supported the resolution and proposed that National Societies with operational experience be consulted about which areas to include in such training.

Mr Muheim (Swiss Red Cross) welcomed the Seville Agreement with great satisfaction as his National Society had been deeply involved in the negotiations leading to its adoption. Considerable progress had been made during the past two years towards more harmonious relations between all the components of the Movement. Full implementation of the Agreement should remain the Movement's top priority because there were still many difficulties to be overcome. The Balkan crisis had brought to light serious incompatibility regarding management of the new system, which could be corrected by asking critical questions on prospects for the future. But the Agreement was only the first step. It was unfortunate that the Movement still had no common strategy. It was legitimate to wonder whether the Movement could still afford the luxury of two organizations working at the international level, when both faced serious financial constraints and recurrent problems in the joint management of crises. The Movement should make an active effort to become more integrated and united. The establishment of an ad hoc group to examine how to reach the goals set forth in

the Seville Agreement was an excellent initiative. Reflection on the strategy should be closely linked to a study of the organizational matters. The Movement would have to adapt to a constantly changing world, where competition had increased in all areas, including in the humanitarian sphere.

Mr Konoe (Japanese Red Cross Society) expressed support for the draft resolution and took stock of the many natural and man-made disasters which had occurred since the adoption of the Seville Agreement. The Japanese Red Cross Society wished to make a number of observations based on its participation in international relief operations. First, the International Federation and the ICRC should make maximum use of National Society emergency response units, so as to enhance the Movement's ability to start relief operations without losing time. Secondly, the ICRC and the International Federation were to be commended for their exemplary cooperation during the Kosovo crisis. A further observation was that, in general, the struggle to be the lead agency was merely a domestic issue within the Red Cross family. In the eyes of the victims and the donors, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement was a single humanitarian organization and it was to be hoped that unity would prevail. Lastly, there was a large gap in resources between the ICRC and the International Federation, the result being that the latter had limited emergency funding at its disposal for disaster relief and had to secure funding through emergency appeals before launching large-scale operations. The delay in the International Federation's response undermined the effectiveness of its operations. The Japanese Red Cross Society urged closer regional cooperation and called upon each component of the Movement to complement every other and to make up for its weaknesses.

Ms Basque (Red Cross Society of Côte d'Ivoire) said that her delegation was in favour of the draft resolution. She pointed out that the Seville Agreement had already borne fruit in the area of regional cooperation, giving the example of the Lomé Group, and stressed the importance of teaching field personnel about the Agreement.

Ms Sanchez (Dominican Red Cross) outlined the measures that her National Society had taken to disseminate the Seville Agreement to all its members, including special workshops held with the support of the ICRC regional delegation. She recommended that dissemination of the Agreement be broadened and that the possibility of taking measures to penalize those who breached the Agreement be examined. The Dominican Red Cross stood ready to support the Agreement's dissemination within the Movement.

Mr Dantas dos Reis (Red Cross of Cape Verde) stated that the Seville Agreement should be viewed as a temporary measure for drawing the Movement's components closer together. While the report was very encouraging, the Movement should advance more quickly using the means available.

Mr Bompese (Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of the Congo) recalled that all the Movement's components represented in Kinshasa were striving to ensure application of the Seville Agreement, notably through training sessions. He asked for guidelines to involve National Societies in these efforts so that their operational activities could become more effective and expressed support for the draft resolution.

Prof Ganesalingam (Sri Lanka Red Cross Society) expressed support for the draft resolution and said that all the Movement's components should be more strongly committed to the Seville Agreement. Successful implementation would require a change in attitude, regular feedback from components in the field to the Geneva-based organizations and the establishment of a commission to monitor the

implementation process, study tactical difficulties and propose suitable remedies.

Mr Rodriguez (American Red Cross), while supporting the efforts that had been made to enhance the cooperative activities of the Movement, in particular those embodied in the Seville Agreement, pointed out that all the components needed to gain a greater understanding of each other's procedures and develop better strategies for communication and coordination. An ideal structure should be defined that would lead to improved effectiveness and efficiency within the Movement. The American Red Cross was in favour of the draft resolution.

Mr Younger (British Red Cross) acknowledged that the aspirations stated in the Seville Agreement had become thoroughly embedded in the language and consciousness of the Movement, as well as in its operations, as exemplified by joint regional cooperation in the Balkans. However, more needed to be done by all the components in a changing external environment and the Movement had to present a united face to the world if it was to fulfil its potential. The British Red Cross therefore supported the establishment of working groups to look at the critical area of relief operations with a view to ensuring that, within the context of the lead agency concept, every component was operating in a coordinated fashion and to develop an overall strategy for the Movement. His delegation agreed with the Swiss Red Cross that the Council of Delegates needed to be ready to consider the issues critically in order to move forward.

A representative of the Togolese Red Cross acknowledged the virtues of the Seville Agreement and emphasized the need for continued training to further understanding of its contents by the National Societies. Referring to paragraph 2, which provided that modifications could be proposed by experts, he encouraged testing of the Agreement by experts and field personnel and, if necessary, putting forward new solutions to make up for any shortcomings.

Mr Forster (ICRC) described the situation within the Movement before and after the adoption of the Seville Agreement. Much had been achieved, but much remained to be done. The ICRC attached great importance to training its own staff and to supporting National Societies in that task, as only through a better understanding of the Agreement's provisions would staff and volunteers be able to perform the tasks set out therein to the full. The Seville Agreement had started bearing fruit in places such as Afghanistan, Colombia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and in other more difficult contexts the Agreement had made it possible to spark dialogue among the Movement's partners in order to find solutions and develop cooperation. Priorities included the evaluation of specific points of the Agreement and full participation by the National Societies in its implementation. The ICRC commended the International Federation for the development of Strategy 2010, reiterated its commitment to helping develop a strategy for the Movement and expressed full support for the draft resolution.

Dr Subashi (Albanian Red Cross) stated that the Kosovo crisis had provided an opportunity to implement the Seville Agreement in the Balkans and drew three conclusions from that experience: (i) the Albanian Red Cross had successfully applied the Seville Agreement during the crisis, and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement had been the most efficient agency on the spot, the joint visit of the Presidents of the ICRC and the International Federation being a clear expression of the "spirit of Seville"; (ii) coordination between different components could always be improved in crisis situations; and (iii) humanitarian action

could not be carried out effectively without a strong National Society in the country affected by the crisis. The Albanian Red Cross was in the process of drafting a new five-year development plan to strengthen its operating capacity.

Dr Heiberg (International Federation) commended the Chairman for his excellent leadership of the meeting and stated that the field tour they had conducted together in the Balkans was one of the most important exercises in cooperation ever to have taken place between Movement components.

Since the adoption of the Seville Agreement the Movement's components had been acting in harmony, which was important because common resources were then used more effectively and efficiently to assist the victims and vulnerable people. Cooperation should extend beyond the supply of relief, leaving the affected National Society in a stronger position than before the cooperative action began. The Standing Commission's work on strategy would undoubtedly unite the Movement in a common approach to National Society development. For the time being, however, the strategy would not be a response to a changing world because it was more important to be able to respond to humanitarian needs effectively in a spirit of transparency, trust and mutual dialogue.

Dr Mijanovic (Yugoslav Red Cross) said that the Seville Agreement was indeed an important step towards the coordination of international humanitarian aid in cases where the Movement was required to respond swiftly to different kinds of disasters. On the whole, the Movement's various components had cooperated effectively in Yugoslavia during the Balkans crisis, accepting the ICRC as lead agency. Heavy bombing had destroyed communication infrastructure, preventing rapid estimates to be made of the needs of the most vulnerable people in the field. Joint teams, which had been set up near areas potentially requiring aid, had produced notable results. Their job was to assess needs in conjunction with the local Red Cross branches, quickly send through requests for emergency aid, and then review possible long-term activities in the area and propose programmes they considered would be necessary. He recommended the use of such teams as one way of implementing the Seville Agreement and pointed out that it was important that projects approved as a result be carried out through existing structures, primarily those of the National Societies.

Dr Hassan (Somali Red Crescent Society) stated that the adoption of the Seville Agreement was a milestone in the history of the Movement. He stressed that all the Movement's components should be extensively and continuously trained in the spirit and substance of the Agreement, referring to Article 10.2 thereof. He expressed support for revised resolution CD99 PR6/REV1, in particular operative paragraph 2.

Mr Eteki Mboumoua (Cameroon Red Cross Society) observed that the "spirit of Seville" was truly present in central Africa, as attested by the regular joint meetings of the Movement's components, mutual participation in seminars held by regional delegations, concerted strategies for National Society capacity-building through training and support to development projects and the joint organization of special events. Joint assistance in relief operations for National Societies faced with disaster and armed conflict was vital. Like the Japanese delegation, the Cameroon Red Cross Society suggested that it would be advisable for the ICRC and the delegations to harmonize their working methods and that the National Societies should be consulted before delegates were appointed. He expressed unconditional support for the draft resolution.

Ms Harmon (Brazilian Red Cross) commended the authors of the report for showing that the Seville Agreement was not an immediate solution to the Movement's problems, but a foundation on which to build. Despite their cultural differences, the Movement's members were bound together by the Fundamental Principles, including unity based on mutual respect. She expressed the wish that the "spirit of Yverdon", which she considered the starting point in the quest for unity, should never die.

A representative of the Indonesian Red Cross Society said that the Seville Agreement's international relief operations mechanism became more complicated when the terms "lead role" and "lead agency" were introduced. He preferred the current language, "coordinating role" and "coordinating agency", with the National Societies as full participants in international relief operations conducted by a component of the Movement as "operational coordinator". The National Societies concerned should have a thorough grounding in the technical aspects of humanitarian operations, but also required professional training and internal promotion backed by the ICRC and the International Federation. In addition to the two factors mentioned earlier by Mr Weber, the success of the relief operations mechanism would depend on a united approach by the Movement's components in meeting the needs of the victims of all kinds of humanitarian tragedies.

Mr Bennouna (Moroccan Red Crescent) firmly supported the draft resolution and agreed with the Australian delegate's appeal for National Societies to take part in financing the work of the Standing Commission.

Dr Ali (Libyan Red Crescent), whose National Society had helped draw up the Seville Agreement, stated that one of the Agreement's most important achievements was that it guaranteed cooperation instead of tension and involved the National Societies. One of the Movement's weak points had been its failure to provide a mechanism for reporting on its activities. He expressed support for the draft resolution, especially as regarded the setting up of the working group, with the following amendment after paragraph 3: "taking into account the comments made by some National Societies".

Mr Mahmoud (Sudanese Red Crescent) said that the Seville Agreement provided the necessary framework for improved coordination among the components of the Movement, especially as regarded relief operations. The Sudanese Red Crescent had suffered from negative competition between the Movement's components in Sudan, and it was unthinkable to carry out relief operations in a country without involving its National Society and without it being the lead agency. Funds should be allocated to building National Society capacity to ensure that weak Societies were not further marginalized. The Sudanese delegation expressed support for the amendment proposed by the Libyan Red Crescent.

Dr Mahere (Zimbabwe Red Cross Society) expressed complete support for Red Cross and Red Crescent efforts to implement the Seville Agreement and noted with satisfaction that the three goals proposed in 1995, namely the strengthening of National Societies, rapid and effective action by the Movement during emergencies and the promotion of the Movement's principles, were still valid. He reported that all National Society secretaries-general in southern Africa had received training, in cooperation with the International Federation and the ICRC, and that functional cooperation within the Movement was working well. He thanked the Standing Commission for recognizing the immense contribution made by Dr Byron Howe, former Chairman of the

Zimbabwe National Society, towards furthering Red Cross and Red Crescent ideals.

Mr Al-Soyeilem (Saudi Arabian Red Crescent Society) congratulated the Chairman for his leadership of the Council of Delegates and commended the efforts of the Standing Commission and the Movement as a whole in adopting the Seville Agreement. In the words of the Japanese representative, the Movement should speak with one voice without diminishing the independence of National Societies. The latter needed to be consulted and given greater responsibility in carrying out relief operations and following up post-disaster developments. The establishment by the Standing Commission of an ad hoc group to monitor implementation of the Seville Agreement was a good proposal. The Saudi Arabian Red Crescent recognized the importance of financial support for National Societies and pledged to maintain its donations.

The Chairman announced that the Council of Delegates had expressed great support for the draft resolution, with only one formal proposal for an amendment, from the Libyan Red Crescent. He asked the Libyan representative for a final version of the amendment.

A representative of the Libyan Red Crescent said that the proposed amendment was to insert: "further taking into account the comments made by some National Societies" after paragraph 3 of the draft resolution. That would cover both the report and the resolution.

The Chairman suggested a slight change: "further taking into account the comments made by the National Societies during the discussions of the Council of Delegates". That change was endorsed by the Council.

Mr Weber (International Federation) had three comments. First, the Seville Agreement had passed the test, though further adjustments might be necessary. The Movement's Balkans operation had gone beyond the articles of the Agreement but had stayed in line with its preamble, spirit and intent. The results of the Balkans operation were being evaluated, with the help of outside experts, in order to determine what improvements needed to be made and to ascertain whether the operation could serve as an example in other situations. Secondly, training to promote knowledge and a common interpretation of the Agreement would bring about the mutual respect and consent demanded by National Societies when a lead agency was involved. Regional delegations of the ICRC and the International Federation would support such training at all levels, that being one of their specific responsibilities. Thirdly, it was satisfying to note that so many National Societies supported the move to devise a strategy for the Movement. The Agreement should not be seen as relating solely to international relief operations, but also to building National Society capacity and to ensuring that local operating National Societies were left in a stronger position after relief operations to carry out humanitarian operations in the future.

Mr Sandoz (ICRC) made three observations regarding the discussion that had just taken place. First, the future should not be looked at through rose-coloured glasses but should be a subject of continued reflection based on the Seville Agreement. Secondly, reflection on the Movement's strategy should not diminish efforts to implement the Agreement. Training and endeavours to improve the Agreement were important. Lastly, the working group and the subgroup should not be too dogmatic or seek bureaucratic solutions. Field problems should be resolved in the field, and no complicated structures created to handle them. Working

groups should include not only thinkers, but operational experts as well.

The Chairman read out the following amendment, to be added at the end of paragraph 3 of the resolution: "further taking into account the comments made by the National Societies, the International Federation and the ICRC during the discussions of the Council".

The Council of Delegates adopted the resolution on the Seville Agreement as amended (Res. 5).

Item 7 of the agenda: ADVOCACY

Princess Margriet (Standing Commission) described the process leading up to the resolution on advocacy presently before the Council. Advocacy covered a whole range of activities which the Movement had traditionally undertaken, i.e., quiet diplomacy, presenting the Red Cross and Red Crescent perspective in meetings with other humanitarian players or launching public awareness campaigns. Because international campaigns could be extremely sensitive and affect the image and credibility of all the components of the Movement, the basic guidelines set out in the resolution should be followed. The Standing Commission felt that the Movement should not compromise its traditional activities, yet it should not be too reluctant to speak out forcefully on issues which had been shown to be of great humanitarian concern.

The Chairman drew attention to draft resolution CD99 7/1 REVI and opened the floor for discussion.

Mr Pedersen (Danish Red Cross) expressed support for the revised draft resolution as it was important to have a clear policy on advocacy and noted that the issue was not a new one for the Movement. The revised version was an improvement over the original because it gave greater emphasis to conflict victims and vulnerable people as the focus of advocacy endeavours.

Ms Powell (Jamaica Red Cross) agreed that advocacy was part of the Red Cross and Red Crescent mission, as it promoted service to the community. The reminders that advocacy did not always involve forceful public statements and could be effected through private means, such as bilateral approaches to government authorities, served to inject a necessary note of caution. The perception of advocacy as being initially promoted by the ICRC and the International Federation was of great support to local National Societies and gave it more credence as far as local authorities were concerned. As soon as an issue to be advocated had been decided upon, the National Society should take over and follow through.

Ms Kusmierczyk (Polish Red Cross) stated that acts were the greatest strength of the Movement, but in a world dominated by the media and competition from NGOs, practical activities did not seem to have the same force of persuasion as before unless they were accompanied by a clear, convincing message. The recent world campaign to mark the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions had been well received in Poland, with encouraging results. Advocacy campaigns should reach the local population because that was where the vulnerable people requiring assistance were. The Movement needed to ask itself whether it had the preparation required to involve itself to such a great extent in advocacy campaigns and should be cautious without losing sight of the importance of advocacy to the Red Cross and Red Crescent. The Polish Red Cross expressed support for the draft resolution and its guidelines and requested that tools be

developed to help National Societies advise those interested in advocacy issues.

Mr Wharram (Canadian Red Cross Society) said that advocacy work was an important part of the Movement's relief and development activities and underscored the need to consider the implications of advocacy campaigns for all components of the Movement. Sharing information and real-life examples of advocacy would help clarify the components' different perceptions and heighten collective understanding of the challenges inherent in international public advocacy. It might be helpful to have a mechanism or informal forum where components could discuss advocacy issues and campaigns between meetings of the Council of Delegates. The link between advocacy and National Society capacity-building should be reinforced; advocacy work required expertise beyond that of project implementation. The Movement's efforts in this area could be strengthened by pinpointing specific concerns and determining how to incorporate them into development workshops and inter-regional conferences of the International Federation.

Dr Potravnova (Russian Red Cross Society) said that the Movement needed to work more effectively and in a more targeted fashion to adapt to a changing world. The Movement could not speak out on all matters, yet it was often criticized when it did not do so. It was crucial to define which areas of advocacy could be focused on at the national and international levels. Good results at little cost could be achieved through bilateral (quiet) diplomacy with governments to promote the Movement's position and spread awareness of its activities. If that approach failed, the Movement should consider public advocacy exercises to marshal public opinion, while clearly targeting activities and maintaining good working relations with governments.

A representative of the British Red Cross thanked the Standing Commission Chairman for summing up the pros and cons of public advocacy for the Movement. With the help of the Communication Forum, which had done a great deal of work on advocacy within the Movement, she proposed a few minor changes to the resolution: (i) the wording of paragraph 2 should be brought in line with that of paragraph 5 of the preamble ("noting that whereas advocacy may normally be pursued") by inserting "confirms that whereas advocacy initiatives may normally involve dialogue and private diplomacy, public campaigns and other means" and replacing "as" with "may be"; (ii) the "b" written next to "such campaigns" on the next page should be alongside the previous paragraph, replacing the arrow before "international public campaigns", which would be more clearly expressed as "internationally promoted public campaigns"; (iii) in paragraph (b), the sentence "the timetable and launch of any internationally led advocacy campaign to be discussed and agreed by both the ICRC and the International Federation" should be inserted after "the launching of the campaign". The British Red Cross supported the resolution, subject to those amendments.

Mr Zuluaga (Colombian Red Cross) endorsed the Standing Commission's statements and said he was in favour of the proposed resolution and continued advocacy endeavours. The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement had a great deal to say and do; it should encourage the community to become interested in the problem of violence and speak on behalf of its victims. Public advocacy campaigns, such as the successful Colombian Red Cross project, "Farewell to Violence" ("Adiós violencia"), served to unite and motivate the Movement and to show the world that the Movement did not aim solely to provide assistance in armed conflicts or disasters, but was interested in social

problems as well. Advocacy campaigns were serious undertakings and required three to five years to be effective.

Ms Kraus-Gurny (ICRC) stated that creating public awareness of international humanitarian law, and of the need to respect it, was a key activity of each component of the Movement which the ICRC was very involved in furthering. However, many of the ICRC's endeavours in that regard did not lend themselves to national or international advocacy campaigns, as they were confidential in nature. When the Movement at the international level or a group of National Societies at the regional level decided to launch a public campaign, it was important for the project to be backed by sound legal, operational and professional expertise. All advocacy campaigns required courage and perseverance because the Movement would encounter opposition from the groups, individuals and governments that did not share its convictions and objectives. The Movement should not hesitate, at the forthcoming 27th International Conference, to defend its principles and the application of international humanitarian law on behalf of the victims and vulnerable people, and should seek the best way to raise awareness among governments and other wielders of power; that included public-awareness campaigns of humanitarian interest.

Ms Oksanen (Finnish Red Cross) endorsed the resolution and thanked the Danish Red Cross for its work on the item. Past advocacy campaigns had proven to be a good networking experience for all the components of the Movement. It was important to recall that National Societies served as auxiliaries to the public authorities in providing services for the community, on the basis of agreements between them and the governments concerned. Different means of communication were vital and should be taken into account when adopting strategies for advocacy work. A regional approach was necessary to produce good results: it created more opportunities for National Societies to improve their networking and benefit from one another.

Mr Örn (Swedish Red Cross) strongly supported the draft resolution and agreed with the Danish Red Cross view that the Council of Delegates should look into the Movement's history to determine how to deal with the notion of advocacy in a more constructive way. Advocacy should be perceived as part of the Red Cross/Red Crescent mission: advocacy was about conveying messages that were deeply rooted in the Movement's humanitarian values, experiences and mission. Every National Society and governing body of the Movement should be responsible for drawing up advocacy plans and every member and volunteer of the Red Cross family should be ready to advocate humanitarian values. The challenge to be met as a Movement was to unite in advocacy.

Mr O'Regan (Australian Red Cross) was in favour of the revised draft resolution. Although opportunities for the Movement to engage in advocacy were limited by the Fundamental Principle of neutrality, such opportunities did exist. In a number of well-publicized cases tragedy could have been averted and the reputation of the Movement enhanced had someone spoken out. The Australian Red Cross did not undervalue the importance of private as opposed to public advocacy with regard to governments, but points had to be identified that could be argued publicly and with conviction.

Ms Courtenay (Belize Red Cross Society) welcomed the Movement's policy on advocacy and endorsed the draft resolution. Her National Society would find it very helpful to receive support from the ICRC and the International Federation for advocacy activities.

Mr Gebreselassie (Ethiopian Red Cross Society) was impressed by the thought that had gone into the draft resolution. Advocacy work should be conducted at the national level after having been carefully planned by advocacy experts. National Societies required considerable financial support, the guidance of experts and training in the necessary skills. Global advocacy campaigns required diplomacy and cautious encouragement; governments should not be antagonized.

Ms Preyssas (French Red Cross) stated that her delegation was in favour of advocacy as a means of creating public awareness in the tradition of Henry Dunant. She suggested rewording paragraph 3 of the resolution with regard to international advocacy campaigns. The phrase: "International advocacy campaigns should be launched under the auspices of the ICRC and the International Federation" should be amended to read: "should be launched within the framework and general guidelines issued by the ICRC, the International Federation or jointly by the two components". The original wording could pose problems in the national management of international advocacy campaigns, in particular when those campaigns were carried out in conjunction with other NGOs. The French Red Cross supported the draft resolution subject to that amendment.

Mr Panico (American Red Cross) expressed support for the draft resolution, subject to the addition to paragraph 3(a) of the following phrase: "Any decision by the Movement to launch international public campaigns must be reached through a rigorous formal and transparent process". He endorsed the development of a decision-making framework which would identify those issues of greatest importance to the Movement as a whole.

Dr Jean-François (Haitian National Red Cross Society) expressed unconditional support for the resolution, which addressed a fundamental issue. The type of approach chosen, whether quiet diplomacy or public advocacy, was secondary and depended on the context, the time and the available resources.

Mr Nolan (New Zealand Red Cross) supported the draft resolution but proposed an amendment to paragraph 3(a), first bullet point, which required a National Society considering the launch of a campaign to bear in mind the need to do so in such a way as to maintain positive relations with the government or other organizations that would be affected by the campaign. While this should not override the Movement's obligation to speak out, the National Society should be aware of the consequences. The text "the need to do so in such a way as to maintain positive relations" should therefore be replaced by the words "the likely consequences on relations".

Mr Davey (International Federation) agreed with the Canadian suggestion that a maximum effort should be made to learn as much as possible about National Society experiences of advocacy, which could be feasible without necessarily creating a special mechanism. The New Zealand proposal with regard to paragraph 3a) would modify the way in which the issue of relations with governments was treated. It was important to maintain positive relations with governments without compromising the Movement in those relations. He noted that while a few suggestions had been made for amendments, no opposition had been voiced to the substance of the resolution.

The Chairman summed up the three proposals for amendments. The British Red Cross had suggested rewording operative paragraph 2 to read: "whereas advocacy initiatives may normally involve dialogue and private

diplomacy, public campaigns and other means may be deemed necessary, taking into account the mandates as defined in the Statutes of the Movement, and the capacities and operational environment of the different components of the Movement". The American Red Cross had suggested that the introductory words of paragraph 3, "decides with regard to public campaigns", be followed by "any decision by the Movement to launch international public campaigns must be reached through a rigorous, formal and transparent process". This would entail a change in numbering. The New Zealand Red Cross had suggested that the first bullet point should read: "the likely consequences on maintaining positive relations with the governments or other organizations affected by the campaign". There had been no objections to the amendments.

A representative of the Cameroon Red Cross Society stated that he had no objections as such, but admitted that he had had trouble following the explanation.

The Chairman explained the amendments in French and added that the proposal for new letter (c) read: "internationally promoted public campaigns for wider respect for international humanitarian law". There were no objections.

Ms Preyssas (French Red Cross) recalled her delegation's proposal to amend the end of the introductory paragraph, with "under the auspices " being replaced by "should be launched within the framework and general guidelines issued by the ICRC, the International Federation or jointly by the two components".

A representative of the Cameroon Red Cross Society stated that he had no objections to the French position, but expressed concern with regard to former point (b). He suggested that the American Red Cross proposal be included in that point rather than in a separate one.

The Chairman believed there was no contradiction between the French and the American proposals and no problem with regard to substance.

A representative of the Cameroon Red Cross Society stated that he had no objections to the French proposal.

The Chairman asked the American delegation if it had any objections.

Mr Panico (American Red Cross) agreed with the Chairman's original proposal to keep the suggestion as a point under paragraph 3. He said that the American Red Cross did not refer to the framework as a criteria, but rather with regard to public campaigns. It was preferable to maintain that the Movement should decide upon a rigorous formal and transparent framework or process to decide that framework.

The Chairman asked the Council if the British Red Cross proposal could be inserted under former point b). A second bullet point would be added to c) after the introductory sentence, "such campaigns must respect the following criteria", and would read: "the timetable and launch of any internationally-led advocacy campaign to be discussed and agreed by the ICRC and the International Federation".

Justice Leonor I. Luciano (Philippine National Red Cross) suggested that the proposals be given to a committee on style and review so that they are placed under the proper headings.

The Chairman asked the Standing Commission Chairman to designate representatives of the International Federation and the ICRC, accompanied by representatives of the British, American, New Zealand and French National Societies, to be convened that evening so that a clear text could be presented the following day.

The Chairman expressed his deepest sympathy to the Armenian Red Cross Society and the Armenian people after the tragic events which had recently occurred in Yerevan.

The meeting rose at 7.20 p.m.

FOURTH MEETING

Saturday, 30 October 1999
9.00 a.m.

SUMMARY: Peace, international humanitarian law and human rights — Children affected by armed conflict — Street children.

The Chairman opened the meeting with the announcement that the Council would proceed first with item 8 and return to item 7 later.

Mr Weber (International Federation) informed the meeting that the International Federation and the Indian Red Cross Society had responded quickly and effectively to the cyclone that had hit India. Tens of thousands of people had been evacuated and their basic needs were being met. An appeal would be launched as soon as a complete assessment had been carried out. Further details could be obtained from Mr Geoffrey Dennis, Head of the Federation's regional delegation in India.

Item 8 of the agenda: PEACE, INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The Chairman, after expressing sympathy for the victims of the cyclone and their families, introduced item 8 and its sub-items, with a detailed explanation of the proceedings.

Mr Konoe (Standing Commission) explained that the Movement could be instrumental in conflict prevention by taking action to prevent tension, reduce the escalation of violence and ensure that the fundamental human rights of all were respected. The agenda item on peace, international humanitarian law and human rights would be reviewed by the Council of Delegates on a regular basis in order to define conflict prevention and enable the Movement to translate that notion into action, to discuss strategies for preventing the outbreak or worsening of conflicts and to determine which authorities should be responsible for and capable of implementing them. New and traditional activities of the Movement would be explored as a factor in easing tensions and contributing to peace. The National Societies of Sweden and Denmark had drawn up a working document and would introduce the items in the proposal.

Mr Pedersen (Danish Red Cross) recalled that the item was not a new one for the Movement. In the past it had been considered primarily a conceptual issue rather than one with practical operational consequences, the common attitude being that the Movement's routine operational work in emergencies was the best and only expression of its contribution to peace. The world situation had changed, however, and new perspectives were needed for peace-building. There were two areas of major interest: (i) human rights law as an important complement to international humanitarian law, providing a more solid basis for practical humanitarian action; and (ii) government interest in contributing to conflict prevention through dialogue with National Societies. That interest had led to the report on conflict prevention, with contributions from the National Societies of Belgium, Great Britain, Spain and Sweden. An abridged report had been distributed to the Council of Delegates. National Societies needed to devote more resources to teaching non-violence and tolerance and become active partners in forthcoming UN events for building peace. The UN was becoming increasingly aware of how humanitarian aid could reduce the likelihood of conflict, as underscored in the "Local capacities for peace" project. The draft

resolution submitted by the Danish Red Cross and the Swedish Red Cross and co-sponsored by the National Societies of Algeria, Canada, Colombia, Croatia, Iran, Japan, Mozambique, Sierra Leone and Spain encouraged interested National Societies to draw up action-oriented conflict-prevention programmes.

Mr Moteane (Lesotho Red Cross Society) fully endorsed the draft resolution, but was concerned by the words "encourages interested National Societies" in the last paragraph. He suggested that "interested" be replaced by a more appropriate word, for it implied that some National Societies were not interested in peace.

A representative of the Finnish Red Cross thanked the Swedish and Danish Red Cross Societies for their contributions to the resolution. The key to enhancing peace was the dissemination and promotion of certain values, including those of the Movement. The promotion of peace had a major impact on all stages of humanitarian aid operations (planning, implementation and evaluation) and long-term consequences in terms of building local capacities and strengthening humanitarian values. Special attention should also be paid to post-conflict situations, to rebuilding confidence and respect between former enemies. Emphasis was placed on action-oriented programmes, youth activities, educational programmes and local programmes that mobilized different sectors of society, and on the importance of ensuring that the Movement's staff and the members of its governing bodies represented all ethnic groups, religions, genders and cultures with a view to promoting tolerance and understanding.

Mr Kosirnik (ICRC) welcomed the proposal but thought that the term "conflict transformation" was ambiguous and should be changed to read: "prevention and mitigation of violence".

Dr Samedy (Cambodian Red Cross Society) joined the previous speakers in praising the proposal and expressed his country's deep gratitude to François Bugnion for his outstanding contributions to peace in Cambodia. Further efforts in the areas of dissemination and training should be aimed at civilians, armed groups and those in power so as to encourage them to cooperate with the ICRC – the guardian of humanitarian law – in its peace-building mission.

Mr Pasmazoglu (Hellenic Red Cross) stated that the preservation of peace was a moral and humanitarian obligation stemming from many International Conference resolutions and suggested that the Red Cross could and should play a major role as a mediator and seek solutions for peace.

Mr Davey (International Federation) said that if the Movement was to play a useful role in conflict prevention, it should have a clear understanding of its limits and potential and of how to proceed without compromising its neutrality. To be effective, the Movement should be very clear about how it carried out its work, reflect further on how its members behaved as individuals and within Red Cross/Red Crescent organizations and step up its efforts to promote the Red Cross/Red Crescent principles. He recalled that the Plan of Action to be presented at the 27th International Conference

contained a specific reference to working with the Movement's principles to promote a culture of non-violence.

Dr Ali (Libyan Red Crescent) expressed support for the resolution and suggested that point 4 be changed to read: "asks the Standing Commission, in consultation with the ICRC, the International Federation and interested National Societies, to elaborate Movement programmes on the prevention of violence, conflict transformation and peace building".

A representative of the Colombian Red Cross endorsed the proposal, which his National Society had cosponsored, and described the Colombian Red Cross "Farewell to Violence" ("*Adiós violencia*") campaign as the kind of effort to forge a culture of peace and tolerance described in point 3 of the resolution.

A representative of the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society endorsed the resolution and expressed his deep appreciation to the ICRC, the International Federation, the British Red Cross and other participating National Societies for their unwavering support of the victims of rebel atrocities in his country. There was much the Movement could do in the area of peace and conflict resolution. Unfortunately, there were times when such opportunities had not been seized. In a country like Sierra Leone, where young people were routinely recruited to fight, the ICRC, with its dissemination activities and contacts behind rebel lines, was in a unique position to work with youth on such issues. Dissemination activities put strong emphasis on the law of war, but not enough on peace and conflict prevention and resolution. The Movement should develop peace initiatives using local capacities and past experience, because prevention was better than a cure.

Prof Hamid (Sudanese Red Crescent) congratulated the recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize, *Médecins sans Frontières*, and stated that the Movement's neutrality should be more active. Although aware that this was a sensitive issue, he suggested that the ICRC could play a positive role in mediation and that doing so should not be considered a breach of neutrality. The International Federation and the National Societies could also be more active in mediation work.

Mr Oliveira-Soares (Portuguese Red Cross) expressed support for the resolution and proposed an amendment to paragraph 4: "encourages all National Societies to meet and elaborate action-oriented programmes on violence prevention, minimization of post-conflict consequences and the strengthening of peace".

Mr Faghihi (Iranian Red Crescent Society) believed that it was high time the Movement got involved in the mediation of conflicts, rather than stepping in after the hostilities had ended. International initiatives, such as the International Year for Volunteers, provided a good opportunity for the Movement to push those issues through on a wider front.

The Chairman asked the Danish Red Cross to convene a drafting committee in order to produce an acceptable amendment to paragraph 4, as there had been many proposals.

Mr Pedersen (Danish Red Cross) agreed to do so on behalf of the Danish Red Cross.

Dr Burki (Pakistan Red Crescent Society) expressed support for the resolution as a means of showing the Movement's deep concern for peace and helping it perform its humanitarian tasks more effectively.

A representative of the Indonesian Red Cross Society suggested that preambular paragraph 3 of the resolution,

which read "recognizing that human rights law is complementary to international humanitarian law in practical work in the field", be amended as follows: "recognizing that international humanitarian law is complementary to human rights law in certain action-oriented practical work in the field". That would avoid differing interpretations of practical work by different countries.

Ms Museminali (Rwandan Red Cross) welcomed the proposed draft resolution and was particularly in favour of ongoing reflection on the Movement's contribution to conflict prevention and peace-building. There was a need to show, for example through the implementation of programmes for vulnerable people, how the Movement, in particular the National Societies, Red Cross branches and volunteers, intended to prevent and manage conflicts. It was vital that humanitarian programmes address potential sources of conflict such as poverty.

A representative of the Bahrain Red Crescent Society said that his country had created a human rights commission whose aim was to safeguard human dignity and values. A group of young people in charge of social affairs took part in the commission's work. He referred to the Memorandum of Understanding signed by his government and the ICRC and concluded that his National Society would support any new idea in favour of humanity.

Item 8, sub-item on children affected by armed conflict

Mr Konoe (Standing Commission) pointed out that children affected by armed conflict were a matter of concern to all the components of the Movement. Children were one of the most vulnerable groups affected by armed conflict and no stone should be left unturned in the effort to prevent minors from participating in armed conflicts. Mechanisms needed to be created to adopt appropriate national laws and recruitment procedures. National Societies had an important role to play in helping child victims of armed conflict to resume normal lives within their families and society and in giving them physical, social and psychological support. In 1995 the Council of Delegates had endorsed a Plan of Action aimed at promoting the non-recruitment of children under 18 and the implementation of concrete measures to assist and protect child victims of armed conflicts. That had led to the creation of the Children Affected by Armed Conflict (CABAC) programme, involving representatives of five National Societies, the ICRC and the International Federation. After introducing a video presenting the case of a child soldier, Mr Konoe urged that the Council adopt draft resolution CD99 PR8/1, of which the French version was the original.

Mr Suarez del Toro (Spanish Red Cross) reiterated the ideas presented by Mr Konoe and added that the Movement should look at how to improve its efforts to trace the families of unaccompanied minors and conflict victims, how to facilitate reintegration and how to promote development projects allowing the Movement to work in emergency situations without neglecting National Society endeavours in the areas of advocacy and dissemination. It was essential that the Movement's components exchange information. He proposed amending point 3 of the resolution to include the National Societies, along with the ICRC and the International Federation, in that commitment.

Mr Ng'elu (Kenya Red Cross Society) expressed support for the draft resolution and proposed the establishment of rehabilitation centres for children affected by armed conflict, psychological counselling for those children in the framework of refugee programmes and further support for tracing services.

Mr de Mestral (Canadian Red Cross Society) thanked his colleagues from the ICRC, the International Federation, National Societies and the International Coordinating Group who had spearheaded efforts to meet the special needs of children affected by armed conflict. He expressed concern at the absence of adequate mention of the National Societies in the ongoing work of the Movement to ensure the rehabilitation of children and their reintegration into their communities. He endorsed the proposal of the Spanish Red Cross to add a reference to the National Societies in paragraph 3 and suggested that paragraph 5 be amended by adding the words "in conjunction with National Societies" immediately after "International Federation". The Canadian Red Cross Society supported the resolution, subject to those amendments.

Mr Nery (International Federation) said that the use of children as soldiers and the effect of conflicts on children were issues of deep concern to the International Federation. Though National Societies had been actively engaged in the implementation of the Plan of Action aimed at promoting the principle of non-recruitment and non-participation of minors in armed conflicts, and although the International Coordinating Group had undertaken active efforts in the members' respective countries to raise awareness of the issue, more needed to be done. Clear policies had to be developed and programmes and activities coordinated with all the parties concerned. The approach should be community-based and multicultural, and neighbouring National Societies should exchange experiences. Children had to be involved in special youth programmes.

Prof Gebreselassie (Ethiopian Red Cross Society) suggested that the Movement sponsor studies in selected areas of the world on the ramifications of the involvement of children in armed conflict, whose true magnitude was not well known. He proposed that paragraph 5 be amended to draw special attention to drug rehabilitation programmes: "focus rehabilitation programmes on integrating them back into normal society by looking into such socially and psychologically disabling problems as drug and substance abuse".

Mr Eteki Mboumoua (Cameroon Red Cross Society) was in favour of a preventive approach that involved combating poverty, developing education and trying to eliminate the causes of conflict. In Africa, rebel groups or so-called liberation groups, not the armed forces, recruited child soldiers. All the Movement's components, in particular the National Societies, should work together with NGOs and professional organizations in an effort to put a stop to that phenomenon. The Cameroon Red Cross Society expressed support for the draft resolution.

Ms Guisan (ICRC) expressed unconditional support for the resolution and said that the Movement should unite its efforts to tackle the problem. In particular, it should make preventive action possible and should allow children to carve a place for themselves in society through rehabilitation and reintegration programmes. In that context, it was essential to preserve the family unit and to foster respect for the general and specific rights and protection granted to children by international humanitarian law. With regard to the draft optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the ICRC had developed a public position advocating that the instrument be binding on all parties to a conflict, apply to all situations of armed conflict and prohibit any involvement of children in hostilities or their recruitment. The international community had become more aware of the issue and the Movement should take the opportunity to show children that there was an alternative to fighting: the practice

of humanitarian values, for example as Red Cross youth volunteers.

Mr Weil (Colombian Red Cross) said that his National Society was firmly committed to cooperating with the ICRC in assisting and protecting child victims of armed conflict and in efforts to prevent the recruitment and participation of minors in war. He described the social factors (poverty, lack of education, displacement, loss of family) that made children vulnerable to recruitment and other dangers such as child prostitution in terms of Colombia's ongoing experience with internal conflict. He urged National Societies to work together to build a healthy society for the world's youth and expressed support for the resolution and the amendments put forward by the delegations of Canada and Spain.

Mr Bradshaw (Barbados Red Cross Society) commended the International Coordinating Group for its efforts to encourage the authorities not to involve minors in armed conflict and pressed for preventive measures, not only in favour of children affected by armed conflict, but also of all children and civilians caught up in a growing culture of violence, arms availability and the illegal drug trade. The Movement should call on the authorities and aid agencies to facilitate long-term care of the permanently disabled and those who might never be fully reintegrated into their social and work environment.

Ms Teixeira (Mozambique Red Cross Society) expressed her delegation's full support for the recommendations and work of the International Coordinating Group. She suggested that the problem be addressed in the same way as the landmines issue and that all components draw up concrete plans for tackling it. She would have liked the report on children affected by armed conflict to cover related issues, such as the sexual abuse of children.

Mr Younger (British Red Cross) said that the key problem lay with children younger than the current international limit of 15 years and that more work needed to be done to disseminate existing international legal standards. He proposed that a new preambular paragraph be added to paragraph 3, as follows: "gravely alarmed and concerned by the fact that children under the age of 15 years are recruited in armed forces and armed groups in violation of international humanitarian law, which prohibits the recruitment and participation of children under the age of 15 years in hostilities". Moreover, operative paragraph 4 needed to reflect faithfully the wording agreed in previous resolutions of the Council of Delegates and the concern to make such an instrument binding on non-governmental groups in armed conflicts; it should be reworded as follows: "encourages all National Societies to support, particularly through contacts with their governments, the adoption of an international instrument reflecting the principle of non-participation and non-recruitment of children below the age of 18 years in armed conflicts and applying to all situations of armed conflict and to all armed groups".

The Chairman asked the representative of the British Red Cross to prepare his proposal in writing for the drafting group.

Mr Willie (Liberian Red Cross Society) described his National Society's efforts to assist children by taking them away from the front lines and opening schools for them with the support of the Swedish Red Cross. Women, too, were greatly affected by armed conflict; many had been forced to take up arms. The Liberian Red Cross was running a programme for women affected by war, sponsored by the Spanish Red Cross. He suggested that women be considered in the resolution as well.

Mr Shahid Ali (Pakistan Red Crescent Society) expressed the fear that unless alternatives such as education and vocational training were made available to children so that they would be able to find their true vocation in life rather than take to unnatural acts of violence, drugs or participation in armed conflict, it would be difficult for any laws or resolutions adopted on their behalf to be effective. He fully supported the resolution.

Mr Malachowski (Polish Red Cross) a member of a generation of children tragically affected by war, spoke in favour of the resolution.

Mr Hussein (Somali Red Crescent Society) expressed unconditional support for the resolution and was confident that the Movement could play a major role in preventing the participation of children in armed conflicts and in enabling their rehabilitation and reintegration into the community.

Mr Mahmoud (Sudanese Red Crescent) expressed concern about the situation of children in armed conflicts, where they needed special assistance and protection. His National Society was cooperating in this field with the ICRC, notably in the area of tracing. Programmes had been developed for children and young people, seeking to reintegrate them into their families and social environments as full members of the community.

Mr Nhan Nguyen (Red Cross of Viet Nam) requested that children who were victims of "agent orange" during the Vietnam War (1961 to 1975) be included in the resolution and in the Plan of Action so that they, too, could benefit from rehabilitation and other relevant programmes.

Mr De Graaf (Netherlands Red Cross) thanked the International Coordinating Group, the ICRC and the International Federation for their child protection activities and their reports. While the Plan of Action featured many prevention projects, more emphasis was needed on rehabilitation activities in war and post-war zones to be carried out by National Societies with the help of the Movement. The Netherlands Red Cross endorsed the amendment proposed by the Canadian Red Cross and suggested that in operative paragraph 5 the wording be changed from "asks the National Societies" to "urges the National Societies".

Ms Museminali (Rwandan Red Cross) welcomed the draft resolution and urged the Movement not to lose sight of the fact that not just child soldiers, but other children (those living in child-headed households and in orphanages and other establishments) were affected by armed conflict. She commended the ICRC for its excellent tracing services. Much could be gained by close cooperation and coordination with other National Societies and agencies working in the same field and paragraph 5 should be amended to that effect by inserting "and in consultation with the organizations concerned" after "in conjunction with National Societies".

Mr Burchelson (Jamaica Red Cross) expressed support for the resolution and the recommendations made by the National Societies and pointed out that the solution to problems affecting children in armed conflicts was closely related to the issue of arms proliferation. He called upon the Council of Delegates to encourage National Society and government action in that area and to inform countries, especially those that produced or manufactured arms, about the dangers of supplying weapons to armies or non-governmental armed groups where children were involved.

The Chairman suggested that a drafting group work on the proposed amendments to the resolution. He recalled that the text had been introduced by an International Coordinating Group (the National Societies of Colombia, Iceland,

Mozambique, Spain and Sweden, the ICRC and the International Federation). He proposed that the representatives of the National Societies of Canada, Ethiopia, the Netherlands, Rwanda, the United Kingdom and Viet Nam join the group in order to clarify the text, with the ICRC as chair. He urged the delegates to be brief in their discussions of subsequent items and drew attention to the next sub-item on the agenda, the issue of street children.

Item 8, sub-item on street children

Mr Konoe (Standing Commission) presented the written report on street children and a video on the life of Marisel, a street girl in the Philippines. Many street children lacked adequate food, shelter and educational opportunities to meet their physical, psychological and developmental needs and were exploited in the labour market and sex trade, suffering from physical and emotional abuse, drug and alcohol addiction, rejection and alienation from society. The phenomenon, prevalent in Asia and South America, was spreading to eastern Europe and Africa as a result of economic and political instability, the AIDS epidemic, natural disasters and armed conflict. The Movement's expertise in meeting the needs of street children and its extensive network of volunteers made it more than capable of alleviating the suffering of children, which was part of its humanitarian mandate. A task force composed of five National Societies, the ICRC and the Federation Secretariat had been set up by the International Federation in accordance with Resolution 8.2 of the 1997 Council of Delegates to draw up a plan of action in favour of street children.

Mr Muriu (Kenya Red Cross Society) commended the Standing Commission for its excellent report and agreed with its recommendations. He proposed that strong emphasis be placed on fund-raising and assistance projects for street children. He firmly supported the request for adequate funding that would enable National Societies to implement related programmes and saluted the Finnish Red Cross for its contributions to the fund-raising concert hosted by the Movement during the 27th International Conference.

Mr Gabr (International Federation) said that it was important, for the good of society as a whole, to work harder to address street children's needs. In that respect, the International Federation was moving forward with Strategy 2010 and its task force on street children, with a Plan of Action aimed at providing the guidance and tools needed by National Societies to expand their activities in that area. National Societies would have to play an active role in backing the task force as it sought to develop a strategy to address the issue of street children and those at risk of becoming street children.

The Chairman asked delegates to limit their statements to three minutes.

A representative of the Sudanese Red Crescent pointed out, on the basis of his experience in the Henry Dunant study group on street children, that while National Societies were aware of the problem, they were at a loss as to how to help street children effectively. He expressed support for the resolution and task force on street children, but stated that a good plan of action should focus on fund-raising methods and on developing effective programmes which could be pursued in the long term.

Mr Gyedu-Adomako (Ghana Red Cross Society) commended the working group for its clear presentation of the issue and expressed support for the resolution. The findings of a recent Ghana Red Cross Society study on the needs of

street children in Accra had revealed that girls were "the most vulnerable among the vulnerable", as they were often raped by bigger street boys and had their valuables stolen. A shelter had been provided for street girls by the National Society of Ghana with the help of the Swiss Red Cross and a metropolitan assembly.

Mr Cabezas (Ecuadorian Red Cross) expressed support for the draft resolution. The Council of Delegates was an ideal forum for discussion of the issue, and it was vital to promote a culture of respect for the rights of the child. The Movement's scope for action and coordination tasks needed to be clearly defined, and National Societies should join together with a sense of commitment to the work of the Movement.

A representative of the Finnish Red Cross mentioned the strong connection between the Movement's work on behalf of child soldiers and street children. She was pleased that street children had been included in the Plan of Action for the 27th International Conference. The Finnish Red Cross was actively engaged in helping street children, and more than 50 National Societies had activities in that field, aimed primarily at enabling children to take control of their lives. The Movement should focus on long-term strategies like advocacy and prevention, use its volunteer network wisely and involve children in its activities. The Finnish Red Cross urged the Council of Delegates to support the work of the International Federation's task force on street children and ask pertinent questions relating to financing, organization, human resources and the possibility of discussing the issue in the Federation's General Assembly.

Ms Mundeta (Zimbabwe Red Cross Society) expressed support for the resolution and stressed the importance of point 4.2 relating to programme development. Projects to generate income for health education and psycho-social assistance were a key concern. The strong network of street children themselves could be put to good use by National Societies in carrying out their activities. Her National Society thanked the Danish Red Cross for having made an HIV workshop possible in Zimbabwe. Though some rehabilitation centres had been set up in Zimbabwe by the government and other organizations, street children had not been very keen to join.

Ms Basque (Red Cross Society of Côte d'Ivoire) said that the plight of street children was well known in her country, where they were called "children in difficult situations". She expressed her appreciation to the Spanish Red Cross for helping to defray the costs of medicines for street children and to the French Red Cross for pledging financial assistance for the building of a vocational centre.

Mr Eteki-Mboumoua (Cameroon Red Cross Society) said that activities for street children were an important part of his

National Society's development programme and that children's health needs were a priority. A medical team sponsored jointly by the National Society and the ICRC provided basic health care for street children and a medical-social centre had been set up at National Society headquarters to handle serious cases. The training programme had not yet started, owing to the lack of funds, qualified personnel and infrastructure, but negotiations with the Belgian Red Cross were under way to launch the project. The Movement's Plan of Action should feature support for National Societies.

Mr Almonte (Dominican Red Cross) expressed support for the draft resolution and requested that the task force on street children keep the National Societies informed of its progress. National Societies requiring financial help to work in that area could perhaps look to stronger Societies or to governments for funding. The Dominican Red Cross had included the issue in its programme, in compliance with the Seville Agreement, but had not been able to move forward on implementation for lack of financial resources.

Ms Guisan (ICRC) expressed unconditional support for the draft resolution, stressing that street children required more than emergency assistance to prevent them from losing their dignity and their grip on life. Addressing the needs of these children would give National Societies an opportunity to strengthen their traditional activities, widen their scope of action and build up expertise in that field. Psychological and social rehabilitation programmes for children affected by armed conflict would be instrumental in preventing them from becoming street children and similarly, preventive assistance programmes could help keep street children from becoming child soldiers. The ICRC looked forward to taking part in the International Federation's task force on street children and would continue to help implement its Plan of Action.

A representative of the Baphalali Swaziland Red Cross Society said that the issue of street children was complex and intertwined with the basic cultural values of his country, where children were generally not raised by their biological parents but by the community. National Societies should concentrate on poverty and educational programmes. Many street children had lost their parents to AIDS; tracing other family members and placing orphans with relatives would be cost-effective and promote cultural values.

Mr Strijak (Council of Delegates Co-Secretary) announced that the pledging desk had recorded 108 pledges. He asked National Societies to encourage their respective government delegations to make pledges as soon as possible.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.

FIFTH MEETING

Saturday, 20 October 1999

2.00 p.m.

SUMMARY: Street children (cont'd.) — The Movement's strategy on landmines — International Criminal Court — Arms availability — Miscellaneous — Communication Forum Report — Date and venue of the next Council of Delegates meeting.

Dr Inomzoda (Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan) expressed support for the draft resolution on street children. He stressed the issue's importance for his National Society, which considered it an important part of its work and an illustration of the humanitarian nature of its mandate. He also underlined the importance of the problem of homeless children in regions affected by armed conflict. Those children required special attention and needed to be considered as one of the most vulnerable groups. They required specific social and psychological rehabilitation, and humanitarian and medical assistance in all situations covered by the Seville Agreement.

Mr Quenum (Red Cross of Benin) endorsed the draft resolution and thanked the working group for its efficient preliminary work. He emphasized that his National Society needed to receive sustained assistance in its work, which was highly appreciated by the public authorities and the community. In particular, it had produced reliable statistics on street children in Benin. His delegation expressed its appreciation to the Spanish Red Cross and the Belgian Red Cross for their invaluable support.

A representative of the Red Cross of Viet Nam said that endorsing resolutions and calling for better coordination of work carried out by all the agencies concerned would only address one aspect of the problem. Children needed to be actively involved in all of the Movement's undertakings. His National Society praised the public-awareness campaign "Save the children", which had been launched throughout Viet Nam by the Ministry of Education in conjunction with the Swedish Government. Though Viet Nam had signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990, most Vietnamese children were not aware of their rights. The Red Cross of Viet Nam endorsed the draft resolution and suggested that point 4 be amended as follows: "urges National Societies to carry out such activities emphasizing the principle of child participation and with due regard for the need for effective collaboration within and outside the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement".

A representative of the Burkinabe Red Cross Society expressed firm support for the draft resolution and welcomed the establishment of the working group on the issue. In Burkina Faso religious leaders sent children to beg on the street and often the children ended up staying there. Recently the National Society of Burkina Faso, the Belgian Red Cross and the Ministry of Social Affairs had sponsored an educational project for street children. "An open environment".

Ms Stoimenova (Bulgarian Red Cross) thanked the members of the Standing Commission for their excellent work and expressed full support for the draft resolution. She suggested that National Societies reinforce their cooperation with governments and other NGOs striving to improve the lives of street children. The Bulgarian Red Cross was successfully implementing several projects in partnership with the National Societies of Germany, the Netherlands and Spain and expressed its gratitude to them for their help. It was

also working with the national authorities to provide assistance for street children in Bulgaria.

Mr Odonchimed (Mongolian Red Cross Society) said that street children had become one of Mongolia's main social problems, mostly owing to the economic crisis in the country. He then referred to an initiative he had taken in organizing a national conference on the issue of homeless children. The conference, which had been attended by governmental and non-governmental organizations, had identified common tasks in the struggle to help solve the problem of street children. A special programme had also been established in child development centres to give them an understanding of humanitarian matters. His National Society fully supported the task force on street children while regretting the limited number of National Societies involved in it. He added that the Mongolian Red Cross had expressed its interest in closer cooperation with the task force and the exchange of experiences with other National Societies. He concluded by stressing that his National Society stood ready to implement and support the draft resolution.

Dr Zaidan (Syrian Arab Red Crescent) endorsed the resolution on street children, which dealt with a major problem. He suggested that every region should tackled the issue through cooperation between National Societies. Poverty seemed to be a common reason why children were left to fend for themselves.

Mr Gebreselassie (Ethiopian Red Cross Society) expressed his support for the draft resolution. While agreeing that action necessarily took place at National Society level, he pointed out that there had to be cooperation with governments as programme facilitators, NGOs, international organizations and civil society since the National Societies could not operate alone. In view of the fragmentary manner in which programmes for street children had been set up so far, provision should be made in the preamble for the establishment of a consortium of institutions, with the National Societies playing a leading role and the ICRC and the International Federation mobilizing resources and expertise within the Movement by working more closely with UN agencies and the private sector.

The Chairman asked the International Federation to consider the idea of a consortium and to ensure that it worked more closely with international organizations and other institutions involved in street children projects.

Dr Heiberg (International Federation) agreed that the suggestions were useful and said that they would be taken into account.

The Chairman pointed out that the issue of key concern to the Vietnamese delegation, namely child participation, was covered in paragraph 4 and asked if that delegation would consider withdrawing its proposal so that the resolution could be adopted.

A representative of the Red Cross of Viet Nam expressed general agreement with paragraph 4, but believed that greater emphasis could be placed on the issue by rephrasing the text as follows: "urges National Societies to carry out such

activities emphasizing the principle of child participation and the need for".

The Chairman said that he did not understand what could be gained by mentioning child participation twice in the same sentence.

A representative of the Red Cross of Vietnam said that he had consulted fellow delegates, as English was not his mother tongue, and pointed out that the words "due regard to the principle of child participation" might not give the proper emphasis; hence the use of the word "emphasizing".

The Chairman concluded that paragraph 4 of draft resolution CD99 PR8/2 would read "urges National Societies to carry out such activities emphasizing the principle of child participation and the need for effective collaboration within and outside the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement".

The Council of Delegates adopted the resolution on street children as amended (Res. 9).

Item 8, sub-item on the Movement's strategy on landmines

Mr Harrouk (Standing Commission) opened the debate by presenting an ICRC video about the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on their Destruction (the Ottawa treaty). He said that the ICRC, with the International Federation's support, had participated actively in the finalization, ratification and implementation of international instruments on landmines, notably the Ottawa treaty and amended Protocol 2 to the 1980 UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. Many National Societies had played a key role in the ratification process and in the promotion of national legislation on the issue. It was now up to the States party to the Ottawa treaty to ensure care and rehabilitation of landmine victims and to set up preventive programmes. Article 6 of the Ottawa treaty recognized the Movement's specific role with respect to implementation. The Movement's landmine strategy set out clear measures to be taken and provided a framework for mobilizing the Movement's resources in the long term. The Movement's tasks were to ensure ratification and implementation of landmine treaties, to take measures aimed at protecting civilians, to help set up preventive programmes and to ensure that medical, psychological and social care was provided for landmine victims. The strategy proposed a more integrated approach to financing the Movement's landmine activities and defined the role of each component. He encouraged the Council of Delegates to adopt the Movement's strategy on landmines.

Mr Molleklev (Norwegian Red Cross) expressed strong support for the resolution. The Norwegian government had pledged 120 million dollars towards mine-related activities, including 20 million dollars for the Red Cross/Red Crescent mine victims programme. The ICRC's Special Fund for the Disabled, considered a priority by the Norwegian Red Cross, was providing crucial long-term assistance for orthopaedic workshops throughout the world and should be a forum in which the Movement's components joined forces to meet a common goal. The ICRC should continue to support National Societies in their efforts to ensure that the Ottawa treaty was signed and implemented and to provide mine victims with lifelong support; the International Federation should play a key consultative role, especially with regard to community-based mine-awareness programmes.

Mr Forster (ICRC) encouraged the Council of Delegates to adopt the resolution and seconded the previous speaker's statement. The Movement was in a better position than most international bodies to bring relief to mine victims and mine-

affected communities by means of medical, rehabilitation and mine-awareness programmes. The strategy on landmines was a response to the mandate which the Movement had received in the Ottawa treaty and would ensure mid- to long-term sustainable commitments. There was a need for ongoing funding to ensure that the activities became a reality on the ground; a current example was the ICRC's five-year appeal for mine action, which included assistance for new activities launched by other components, in particular National Societies. Resources would indeed be shared with them for mine-awareness and rehabilitation programmes.

Mr Barnes (Canadian Red Cross Society), welcoming the proposed Movement strategy on landmines, stressed that the ICRC's leadership role should be more specifically defined to include action and plans for the coordination of all the Movement's components engaged in mine action. Closer coordination was required between National Societies of mine-affected countries and participating National Societies. Qualitative and quantitative objectives for victim assistance, the promotion of international norms and mine awareness should be developed and then coordinated with other organizations, including the UN and donor governments. The International Federation's role should be clearly defined in terms of the services and initiatives it intended to support and adopt. A proposal should be included in the resolution calling for a new international information campaign to keep public attention focused on the issue, perhaps centred on the stigmatization of anti-personnel mines worldwide. Two major landmine-awareness initiatives were being launched in Canada: a joint commemoration of the second anniversary of the Ottawa treaty by the Government and the Canadian Red Cross Society and the "Survive the Peace" campaign led by the National Society. Sister Societies interested in conducting similar campaigns were welcome to examine sample materials.

Ms Wahlström (International Federation) expressed firm support for the resolution and highlighted the strengths of the strategy: it employed a holistic approach; it made it clear that the Movement was not in the mine-clearing business, but could play a forceful role in encouraging others to do that job; it emphasized that there were other organizations concerned about the landmines issue and that cooperation with them was essential; and the ICRC took responsibility for mobilizing resources not just for its own programmes but also for the work of other components.

Ms Mikos-Skuza (Polish Red Cross) fully supported the resolution. Although the National Society had not been able to persuade the government to ratify the Ottawa treaty, it had spread knowledge of the existing humanitarian rules and principles among the general public, NGOs and the media. By raising public awareness, the Polish Red Cross hoped to foster a climate in which appropriate action could be taken by the authorities and to show that the human costs of not adopting new legal instruments were too high.

Mr Morgan (Australian Red Cross) expressed strong support for the resolution and announced that the Australian government had destroyed its stock of anti-personnel mines. The Movement's "Landmines Must Be Stopped" campaign had been instrumental in changing the government's policy on those weapons. The Australian Red Cross had undertaken a host of successful awareness-raising initiatives, employing quiet and loud diplomacy aimed at the general public and the government, which could be used as models in future campaigns.

Dr Ahmed (Somali Red Crescent Society) expressed full support for the resolution and thanked the ICRC for its

leadership role in promoting the Ottawa treaty. In partnership with the Norwegian Red Cross, the Somali Red Crescent was providing orthopaedic appliances and physiotherapy services for mine victims and other disabled persons in various rehabilitation centres, including the recently inaugurated centre in Galkayo. He expressed gratitude to the Norwegian Red Cross and the government and people of Norway for their technical and financial support.

Mr El-Bashir (Sudanese Red Crescent) said that he had been confronted as a doctor with the tragic effects of anti-personnel landmines. The Movement should use all possible means in the struggle against that scourge. His National Society had acted on its concern by organizing a workshop and taking care of those wounded by mines. He also referred to the cooperation between his National Society, the German Red Cross and the ICRC.

Mr El Asbali (Libyan Red Crescent) thanked the ICRC for the excellent Movement strategy on landmines and said that his National Society fully supported all efforts made in that connection. He proposed that the resolution be amended to exhort National Societies to work with their governments towards the ratification of existing legal instruments.

Ms Ngampolo (Congolese Red Cross) commended the Movement for its remarkable work on the landmines issue, especially in Angola, and expressed enthusiastic support for the draft resolution.

A representative of the Lesotho Red Cross Society expressed full support for the resolution and thanked the ICRC for its key role in getting the Lesotho government to sign the Ottawa treaty. The National Society was engaged in mine-awareness projects and was educating its volunteers and the general public about the Ottawa treaty.

Dr Samedy (Cambodian Red Cross Society) expressed deep gratitude to the ICRC, the International Federation, donor countries, the Australian Red Cross, the American Red Cross and the other sister Societies and organizations that had done so much for landmine victims, in particular by providing support for the Cambodia Mines Action Committee. As a representative of one of the world's most heavily mine-infested countries, the Cambodian Red Cross Society firmly supported the resolution.

The Chairman noted that the Libyan Red Crescent's proposal for amendment appeared to overlap with the strategy, which stated: "National Societies will work with their governments to ensure that the treaties are implemented" and "National Societies are asked to encourage their governments to accede to the Ottawa treaty". He asked the Libyan delegation if it maintained its proposed amendment.

Mr El Asbali (Libyan Red Crescent) agreed to withdraw the proposed amendment since it was already reflected elsewhere in the text.

The Council of Delegates adopted the resolution on the Movement's strategy on landmines (Res. 10).

Mr Harrouk (Standing Commission) concluded by underlining that all the statements made had enriched the Movement's discussion of the landmines issue and highlighted the far-reaching results of the Movement's action in that respect.

Item 8, sub-item on the International Criminal Court

Mr Harrouk (Standing Commission) urged the Council of Delegates to adopt the resolution relating to the International Criminal Court (ICC), which was relevant for four reasons: (i) ICC trials were complementary to criminal trials held by national authorities to enforce the provisions of international

humanitarian law; (ii) the ICC was a means of combating the impunity of war criminals; (iii) the ICC had an impact on the Movement's activities in that the Rome Statute provided a clear legal basis on which to charge those who attacked Red Cross, Red Crescent staff and to punish those who misused the emblem; and (iv) the need for universal accession to the Rome Statute. In view of those points, the Movement should encourage States to ratify the Rome Statute and to implement national legislation aimed at bringing war criminals in particular to trial; devise a strategy aimed at promoting the Rome Statute within the Movement and enabling National Societies to play a key role in sparking national debate on the issue; encourage States not to make the declaration provided for in Article 124 of the Rome Statute, giving ratifying States a seven-year exemption period in accepting the Court's jurisdiction over war crimes; ensure that the elements of crime reflected existing international humanitarian law in order to guarantee uniformity of jurisprudence at the international and national levels.

Ms Petitpierre (ICRC) spoke enthusiastically in favour of the resolution and the establishment of the ICC mainly because the Court would combat the impunity of war criminals and grave breaches of international humanitarian law in both international and non-international armed conflicts, and because the Statute itself provided a number of valuable legal definitions. The ICRC was actively promoting ratification of the Rome Statute. It was part of a committee set up to negotiate the drafts and ensure that international humanitarian law was integrated and implemented at all decision-making levels. The ICRC's legal services could play an important role in reconciling the implementation of laws and basic needs on the ground and in helping States to adopt national legislation allowing implementation of the Rome Statute. The ICRC would work closely with National Societies to determine the best way to promote the adoption of war crimes legislation. It was necessary for the Movement as a whole to commit itself to the Plan of Action.

Ms Durham (Australian Red Cross) strongly supported the resolution and commended the ICRC for its excellent work in promoting the ICC and providing substantial legal and technical assistance to States in their deliberations. She was delighted that point 3 of the proposed resolution mentioned the need for consultation and exchange of information between the components. The resolution provided National Societies with a valuable opportunity to discuss with their governments the need for full implementation of enforcement mechanisms in accordance with the Geneva Conventions. A combination of domestic and international enforcement of international criminal law was necessary to abolish impunity for those who committed atrocities.

Mr Younger (British Red Cross) fully agreed with the previous speaker and spoke in favour of the resolution. He suggested that the language of the resolution be brought in line with that of the Geneva Conventions by referring to the obligations of States to suppress and repress violations of international humanitarian law in the second preambular paragraph, and by discussing existing obligations under international humanitarian law to suppress and repress violations of that law at the end of the first operative paragraph.

Mr Coumans (Belgian Red Cross) expressed support for the draft resolution, commended the ICRC for its part in the negotiations resulting in the Rome Statute and said that National Societies should encourage their governments to

ratify the Statute rapidly and to adopt national measures of compliance.

Mr Bandiare (International Federation) stressed the importance of supporting the ICRC in its work relating to negotiations on the elements of crime in order not to compromise the development of international humanitarian law. He also pointed out the key role the National Societies played in encouraging States to ratify the Rome Statute but not to make the declaration regarding the exemption period relating to jurisdiction over war crimes. He warned that the testimony of Red Cross/Red Crescent volunteers and staff in court, a highly sensitive issue, could undermine the Movement's neutrality. The International Federation stood ready to help National Societies by providing appropriate advice and assistance, in cooperation with the ICRC, and requested that funds be made available for that purpose.

Mr Pedersen (Danish Red Cross) expressed appreciation to the ICRC and the International Federation for their prompt and useful information and guidance, which had facilitated Danish Red Cross efforts to promote the issue while keeping in focus the Movement's humanitarian principles of impartiality and neutrality and the wish that war criminals be brought before a court. The Danish Red Cross endorsed the resolution and promised to support the work of the ICRC and the International Federation in every possible way.

Mr Harrouk (Standing Commission) thanked all those who had taken the floor, in particular Mr Bandiare and Ms Petitpierre.

The Chairman, summing up the proposed amendments to the draft resolution, recalled the British Red Cross proposal. The second preambular paragraph would read: "recalling the obligations of States to suppress and repress violations of international humanitarian law"; the end of operative paragraph 1 would read "with their existing obligations under international humanitarian law to suppress and repress violations of this law", instead of "with their existing obligations under international humanitarian law".

The Council of Delegates adopted the resolution on the International Criminal Court as amended (Res. 11).

Item 8, sub-item on arms availability

Mr Harrouk (Standing Commission) encouraged the Council of Delegates to adopt the resolution. Owing to the increased availability of weapons, in particular of small arms, it had become more difficult to promote respect for international humanitarian law and to come to the aid of those in need. A wave of unprecedented violence and a refusal to grant humanitarian organizations a safe area in which they could carry out their humanitarian activities had ensued. The present Council of Delegates had been asked to examine the conclusions of the ICRC's study, "Arms availability and the situation of civilians in armed conflict", and to clarify the Movement's role and position in relation to that fundamental issue. The draft resolution confirmed the conclusions of the study, first that arms availability was an important humanitarian issue which could not be ignored and secondly that the Movement's role was to heighten public awareness of the cost in human lives of the availability of arms and ammunition on a large scale and its implications for international humanitarian law. While the Movement had the right and responsibility to encourage governments to tackle the issue effectively, the resolution discouraged Movement participation in public debates on specific arms transfers to specific players, as that could jeopardize the Movement's neutrality and put Red Cross/Red Crescent personnel at risk.

Mr Molleklev (Norwegian Red Cross) said that the ICRC study clearly showed that an over abundant supply of arms, in particular small arms and light weapons, had contributed to a change in the nature of armed conflicts around the world. The Norwegian Red Cross was actively engaged in arms-related initiatives aimed at spreading awareness of the problem in accordance with the intent of the resolution. National Societies were encouraged to work for responsible national legislation concerning arms production, export and use, including a firm commitment from States not to export any arms to States that did not adequately respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law. The Norwegian Red Cross proposed an amendment, co-sponsored by 16 other National Societies, to be added to paragraph 3: "As a minimum first step, States should halt arms transfers to parties committing or tolerating serious violations of human rights or of international humanitarian law".

Mr Forster (ICRC) spoke in favour of the resolution, which accurately reflected the Movement's position on the issue, and agreed with the points made by Mr Harrouk. The ICRC's study on arms availability had demonstrated that there was a strong link between the proliferation of weapons and high levels of civilian casualties during and after periods of conflict. There was no doubt that the unregulated transfer of weapons and ammunition could heighten tensions, increase the number of civilian casualties, prolong conflicts and make post-conflict reconciliation more difficult. The ICRC called on States urgently to review their policies regarding the manufacture, availability and transfer of arms and ammunition in the light of their responsibility to respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law. States should include criteria based on respect for that law in their national policies and decision-making on arms transfers and in related international codes of conduct. The Movement was well placed to make a substantial contribution, but its impact would be greatest, and the risks of speaking on such a sensitive issue minimized, if its actions were firmly based on its Fundamental Principles of humanity, independence and neutrality.

Mr Bandiare (International Federation) expressed support for the resolution and said that the Movement had a role to play in drawing the attention of governments to possible contradictions between their intentions when ratifying the Geneva Conventions and omissions or actions when they authorized the unregulated flow of arms. To avoid putting its neutrality on the line, the Movement could play a role in a more general debate: it could point out that not only did unregulated arms availability create a favourable environment for violations of international humanitarian law, it also tended to foster a culture of violence and insecurity.

Mr Younger (British Red Cross) suggested the following amendments: i) in operative paragraph 2, the inverted commas around "respect and ensure respect" should be removed to make sure that the text did not become a matter of legal debate and the words themselves replaced with "ensure respect for international humanitarian law"; ii) in operative paragraph 3, the words "calls on States which have not already done so to elaborate rules based on respect for international humanitarian law and other relevant norms" could be added without affecting the Norwegian amendment pointing out that some States had drawn up rules. He also asked whether the Norwegian amendment to paragraph 3 was in contradiction to operative paragraph 6.

Ms Harmon (Brazilian Red Cross), a co-signer of the Norwegian resolution, supported the resolution as amended

by the Norwegian Red Cross for the same reasons as those given by the previous speakers.

A representative of the Cameroon Red Cross Society expressed support for the resolution, subject to an amendment to paragraph 5 to include the idea of "a culture of peace". Widespread insecurity was the main cause of arms proliferation in Africa, leading to the establishment of militia and paramilitary groups for protection; other factors included former combatants who failed to reintegrate into society and took to banditry, and open borders with neighbouring countries in situations of armed conflict. The Movement should build on preventive action, raise public awareness of the issue and promote a culture of peace and a moratorium on arms.

Dr Sramany (Lao Red Cross) commended the group of experts and fully supported the resolution, with the Norwegian amendment. His National Society had closely followed the government's initiatives to collect weapons.

Mr Ng'elu (Kenya Red Cross Society) saluted the ICRC for its successful study on arms availability and suggested that the draft resolution call for a further study to be conducted by the ICRC on the sources of arms transfers. He proposed that public advocacy campaigns on arms availability be undertaken to combat the culture of violence prevailing in Africa and that international humanitarian law and human rights law be disseminated to educate all parties about the consequences of arms availability.

Mr Toumoye (Togolese Red Cross) expressed unconditional support for the resolution. States should be encouraged to review their policies regarding the manufacture, availability and transfer of arms and ammunition as part of their responsibility to respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law and to assist and protect civilians. A step in the right direction had been the recent moratorium, signed in Nigeria by West African governments and the Economic Community of West African States, on the import, use and manufacture of light weapons in Member States.

Prof Ganesalingam (Sri Lanka Red Cross Society) expressed full support for the proposal and suggested that the ICRC, the Federation and all National Societies work together to put pressure on States to spread awareness of it.

Ms Preyssas (French Red Cross) was in favour of the resolution but considered that the amendment put forward by the Norwegian Red Cross had political connotations and that the Movement should remain faithful to its Fundamental Principles. The French delegation agreed with the wording proposed by the British Red Cross.

Mr Willie (Liberian Red Cross Society) endorsed the resolution and described National Society and government efforts, such as collecting and destroying weapons, to deal with the arms problem in Liberia.

Dr Duplessis (Canadian Red Cross Society) expressed full support for the resolution as amended by the Norwegian Red Cross. That amendment provided a logical basis for the action asked of States and clarity in specifying that action. Setting limits to the availability of arms in States that blatantly failed to respect international humanitarian law was a major priority.

Mr Panico (American Red Cross) noted that the amendment put forward by the Norwegian Red Cross, calling upon States to take a specific course of action, was not recommended in the ICRC study on arms availability and suggested that it would be preferable to allow States to take

into consideration the study recommendations before telling them what precise course of action should be adopted. The American Red Cross was in favour of the draft resolution with the British Red Cross proposal to amend paragraph 3.

A representative of the Ethiopian Red Cross Society asked for clarification regarding the following points: on what basis could the Movement determine when an inflow of arms was appropriate or excessive when requiring nations to exercise restraint as to arms transfer; and what could be done in countries where the right to bear arms was advocated, as their governments would not be likely to control the flow of arms.

Mr Burchelson (Jamaica Red Cross) proposed that paragraphs 2 and 3 of the resolution be expanded to include the transfer of spare parts and other devices as follows: "arms, ammunition, explosives and other related materials".

Mr Mollekleiv (Norwegian Red Cross) thanked the British Red Cross for its constructive comments. While the Norwegian Red Cross did not object to the British delegation's suggestions regarding operative paragraph 3, it maintained that there was no contradiction between current paragraph 6 and the amendment proposed by the Norwegian delegation. Paragraph 6 dealt with public debates, whereas the Norwegian Red Cross amendment was simply a proposal for National Societies to call on all States, as a minimum first step, to halt arms transfers to parties committing or tolerating serious violations of human rights or of international humanitarian law.

Mr Forster (ICRC) made a number of comments regarding the overall discussion of the issue. It was not necessary for the ICRC to embark on a study of the sources of arms and particular exports since that data could be readily obtained from other sources, such as the Swedish International Peace Research Institute. The British Red Cross proposed amendment was valid. The Council of Delegates should aim for as broad a consensus as possible.

The Chairman recalled the amendments put forward by the National Societies of Cameroon, Jamaica and the United Kingdom and asked the Council if there were any objections. There were none. He asked the representatives of the American Red Cross and the French Red Cross if there were any changes in their positions.

Ms Preyssas (France) thought, perhaps mistakenly, that the Norwegian Red Cross had accepted the amendment put forward by the British Red Cross. The French Red Cross withdrew its amendment with regret, and requested that its proposed amendment nonetheless be put on record.

The Chairman said that he had understood that the Norwegian Red Cross had on the contrary maintained the text of its proposed amendment and asked the French Red Cross if it would agree to withdraw its objection.

Ms Preyssas (French Red Cross) agreed.

Mr Panico (American Red Cross) asked if the proposal of the British Red Cross was still on the floor.

The Chairman asked the American Red Cross representative if he was referring to the British Red Cross proposal for an amendment to paragraph 3 of the resolution.

Mr Panico (American Red Cross) replied affirmatively.

The Chairman asked the American delegation if it would withdraw its objection to the Norwegian proposal.

Mr Panico (American Red Cross) said that he agreed with the British Red Cross proposal but maintained his objections to the Norwegian amendment.

The Chairman asked the British Red Cross to clarify its position.

Mr Younger (British Red Cross) stated that he had put a question to the Norwegian Red Cross rather than stating a position and that his delegation would be prepared to go along in broad terms with what was clearly the consensus of the Council of Delegates. He suggested that the language of the Norwegian Red Cross amendment be softened to read "as a first step calls on States to halt arms transfers".

The Chairman asked the American Red Cross if it would agree to the previous speaker's modification and thus accept the Norwegian Red Cross proposal.

Mr Panico (American Red Cross) said he would agree with the wording, "States should consider halting arms transfers".

The Chairman asked the Norwegian Red Cross if they agreed with the previous statement.

Mr Mollekleiv (Norwegian Red Cross) said that he appreciated the constructive manner in which the British Red Cross had replied and agreed with their last change in wording; he asked the American Red Cross to join the rest of the Council in accepting the amendment.

The Chairman suggested that the American Red Cross could make a statement for the record, should the matter be decided by consensus. However, it seemed that what the British Red Cross had proposed was in line with the American position.

Mr Panico (American Red Cross) agreed to concede the point in terms of the language that had been presented and was prepared to debate the issue further if necessary.

The Chairman read out operative paragraph 3 as amended: "calls on States which have not already done so to elaborate rules based on respect for international humanitarian law and other appropriate norms governing the transfer and availability of arms and ammunitions. As a minimum first step, the Council calls on the States to halt arms transfers to parties committing or tolerating serious violations of human rights or of international humanitarian law".

Mr Younger (British Red Cross) said that the suggestion had been to delete the word "minimum", simply saying "as a first step".

The Chairman asked the Council to adopt the amended resolution.

The Council of Delegates adopted the resolution on arms availability as amended (Res. 12).

Mr Harrouk (Standing Commission), in his capacity as President of the Lebanese Red Cross, expressed his full agreement with the statement of the Norwegian Red Cross, as he could personally attest to the fact that most victims of weapons in developing countries had been the target of light weapons.

Ms Gussing (Council of Delegates co-Secretary) gave the delegates a breakdown of the texts which had been distributed as requested by the Chairman before proceeding to the adoption of pending resolutions.

The Council of Delegates adopted the resolutions on advocacy CD99 PR7/1 REV2 (Res. 6) and on Red Cross Red Crescent and Peace CD99 PR8/6 REV1 (Res. 7).

Item 9 of the agenda: MISCELLANEOUS — COMMUNICATION FORUM REPORT

Mr Tuur Hoste (Belgian Red Cross) outlined the main objectives, achievements, obstacles and recommendations mentioned in the Communication Forum Report, which had been submitted to the Council for adoption. The objectives included positioning the Movement as the world's primary emergency and health organization, and promoting knowledge of and respect for the emblems and everything that they stood for. Among the significant achievements were the Movement's new Website and the Red Cross/Red Crescent pin campaign. Obstacles to effective communication by the Movement were the increasingly complex and competitive communication environment, the Movement's structure and the resources it used for communication purposes. The challenge was to overcome imbalances in communication ability between National Societies and to tackle the problems posed by information cultures within the Movement. Among the proposals put forward to enable the Movement to be more competitive in that sphere was to include a communication component in all projects undertaken by the ICRC, the International Federation and National Societies, with financing equal to at least one percent of the total project budget. Much had been accomplished with limited means to coordinate Movement-wide communication, but it was clear that more sustainable resources would have to be found. By adopting the report, the Council would renew the mandate of the Communication Forum, whose future tasks would be to initiate proactive and practical communication projects, to provide professional communication advice on important issues, and to stimulate and strengthen regional communication networks by acting as a channel for the exchange of information. The Forum would require financial support from the entire Movement to carry out those tasks. It recommended that the slogan "the power of humanity" be maintained for another four years.

The Chairman thanked Mr Hoste for his comments and encouraged the Council of Delegates to adopt the Communication Forum Report.

Ms MacLean (International Federation) endorsed the Communication Forum's proposal to maintain the slogan "the power of humanity" as a simple but effective way of conveying the Red Cross and Red Crescent message, promoting the Movement's visibility and ensuring protection of the emblem. She rated the Movement's performance in communicating and following up on urgent matters as good, but felt that it needed to improve its ability to provide information on long-term programmes. A new global project in which all National Societies should participate would soon be proposed, with the motto "through humanity to peace". It was crucial to build trust between the Movement as a whole (as opposed to its separate components) and the people who needed its assistance.

The Chairman thanked Ms MacLean for her statement and proceeded to the adoption of the resolution on children in armed conflict CD99 PR8/1REV1. He said that the drafting group shared the concerns of the Red Cross of Viet Nam regarding the long-term effects on children of "agent orange", a problem he believed was covered by the resolution, and requested that the statement be put on record.

The Council of Delegates adopted the resolution on children affected by armed conflict (Res. 8).

Item 10 of the agenda: DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT COUNCIL OF DELEGATES

The Chairman proposed that the next Council of Delegates be held in Geneva in 2001 and that the details be decided by the Standing Commission.

It was so decided.

The Chairman was pleased to announce that by all accounts it appeared that the 27th International Conference would open without political or participation-related pro-

blems, but should any arise, members of the Movement should honour the Fundamental Principle of neutrality by abstaining from voting. He then bid farewell to the Council of Delegates after 12 years of fruitful cooperation, expressing his appreciation to all those who had made the meeting possible, and called on the Movement to continue fighting with conviction for what it believed in and to communicate its enthusiasm to the younger generations who would make up the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement of the future. United, the Movement represented a great source of power: the power of humanity.

Princess Margriet (Standing Commission) expressed the Council's deep gratitude to the Chairman for his vigour, guidance and attentive handling of the meeting, as well as his outstanding contribution to the Movement during his term as President of the ICRC.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 6.00 p.m.

2.4 RESOLUTIONS OF THE COUNCIL OF DELEGATES

1

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

The Council of Delegates,

having taken note of the report submitted by the Standing Commission on its work since December 1997,

commending the Standing Commission for the structural changes it instituted since 1995 and its policy of greater information-sharing in order to carry out successfully its statutory mandate,

reaffirming the recommendations and decisions entailed in Resolution 3 of the 1995 Council of Delegates and Resolutions 1 and 6 of the 1997 Council of Delegates,

1. *requests* the Standing Commission to establish a Working Group for an overall strategy for the Movement, as referred to in Resolution 5 of this Council of Delegates relating to the implementation of the Seville Agreement.
2. *urges* the Standing Commission to continue to actively promote cooperation among the components of the Movement and to make proposals to enhance this cooperation,
3. *encourages* the Standing Commission to pursue its efforts to further develop its communications and to enhance its involvement in regular meetings including the various components of the Movement,
4. *invites* the Standing Commission to develop practical measures to enable its members to carry out their important work for the Movement.

2

Emblem

The Council of Delegates,

recognising the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's Fundamental Principle of universality and the common goal of States, which are parties to the Geneva Conventions, and of the Movement to remove any obstacles to the universal application of the 1949 Geneva Conventions,

further recognising the current problems in some States and National Societies regarding the emblems of the red cross or red crescent,

taking into account and commending the work and consultations undertaken since 1995 by the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent at the request of the Movement, and in particular Resolution 2 of the 1997 Council of Delegates,

1. *calls upon* the 27th International Conference
 - a) *to invite* the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent to establish a joint working group from the Movement and States on the emblems with a mandate to find a comprehensive solution, as rapidly as possible, which is acceptable to all parties in terms of substance and procedure;
 - b) *to invite* the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent to nominate the membership of the joint working group which will represent the shared responsibility of the Movement and States on the emblem, and to establish its terms of reference;

- c) *to request* the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent to establish the practical arrangements with States to carry out the tasks of the joint working group;
- d) *to request* the joint working group to report back, through the Standing Commission, to the 2001 Council of Delegates and to the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

3

Agenda and programme of the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

The Council of Delegates,

having examined the provisional agenda and programme of the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent,

adopts this document and *transmits* it to the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

4

Officers of the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

The Council of Delegates,

having examined the list of candidates nominated for election as officers of the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent,

endorses the list of candidates and *transmits* it to the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

- Chairman of the Conference (NS):
- Président de la Conférence (SN):
- Presidente de la Conferencia (SN):

Dr Mamdouh GABR (Egyptian RC)

- Vice-Chairmen (NS):
- Vice-Présidents (SN):
- Vicepresidentes (SN):

M. Franz E. MUHEIM (CR Suisse)

Sra Zoy KATEVAS DE SCLABOS (CR Chilena)

- Vice-Chairmen (Gov.):
- Vice-Présidents (Gouv.):
- Vicepresidentes (Gob.):

Mme l'Ambassadeur Yolande BIKÉ (Gabon)

M. l'Ambassadeur Philippe KIRSCH (Canada)

- Co-Chairman of the Plenary Commission, Theme I (Gov.):
- Co-Président de la Commission plénière, Thème I (Gouv.):
- Copresidente de la Comisión Plenaria, Tema I (Gob.):

H.E. Mr Boris SHIKHMURADOV (Turkmenistan)

- Co-Chairman of the Plenary Commission for Theme II (Gov.):
- Co-Président de la Commission plénière, Thème II (Gouv.):
- Copresidente de la Comisión Plenaria, Tema II (Gob.):

Ambassador Christopher LAMB (Australia)

- Co-Chairman of the Plenary Commission for Theme III (NS):
- Co-Président de la Commission plénière, Thème III (SN):
- Copresidente de la Comisión Plenaria, Tema III (SN):

Sr Teofilo SIMAN (CR Salvadoreña)

- Rapporteur of the Plenary Commission for Theme I (NS):
- Rapporteur de la Commission plénière pour le Thème I (SN):
- Relator de la Comisión Plenaria para el Tema I (SN):

Mr Tom BURUKU (Ugandan RC)

- Rapporteur of the Plenary Commission for Theme II (NS):
- Rapporteur de la Commission plénière pour le Thème II (SN):
- Relator de la Comisión Plenaria para el Tema II (SN):

Dr Tahar CHENITI (CR tunisien)

- Rapporteur of the Plenary Commission for Theme III (Gov.):
- Rapporteur de la Commission plénière pour le Thème III (Gouv.):
- Relator de la Comisión Plenaria para el Tema III (Gob.):

Ambassador Anne ANDERSON (Ireland)

- Chairman of the Drafting Committee (Gov.):
- Président du Comité de rédaction (Gouv.):
- Presidente del Comité de redacción (Gob.):

M. l'Ambassadeur Philippe KIRSCH (Canada)

- Vice-Chairwoman (Gov.):
- Vice-Chairmen (NS):
- Vice-Présidents (SN):
- Vicepresidentes (SN):

Ambassador Marika FAHLÉN (Sweden)

Sir Alan MUNRO (British RC)

M. Jean-Pierre CABOUAT (CR Française)

- Secretary General of the Conference:
- Secrétaire général de la Conférence:
- Secretario general de la Conferencia:

M. l'Ambassadeur Jean-François KAMMER
(Suisse)

- Assistant Secretaries General:
- Secrétaires généraux adjoints:
- Secretarios generales adjuntos:

Mme Yolande CAMPORINI (Fédération)

M. Jean-Luc BLONDEL (CICR)

5

Implementation of the Seville Agreement

The Council of Delegates,

recalling that in its Resolution 6, the 1997 Council of Delegates adopted by consensus the Agreement on the Organisation of the International Activities of the Components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement,

noting with appreciation the report on the implementation of the Seville Agreement for the years 1998-1999 submitted to

the Standing Commission by the ICRC and the International Federation,

further noting that this Report includes also the report of the ICRC/Federation task force on functional cooperation established in accordance with Resolution 7 of the 1997 Council of Delegates,

taking into account the comments and observations made by the National Societies, ICRC and the International Federation during the session of the Council of Delegates,

thanking the National Societies of Afghanistan, Canada, Mozambique, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Zimbabwe for their involvement in the functional cooperation task force,

stressing the importance that all components of the Movement pursue the implementation of the Seville Agreement and enhance their efforts in training volunteers and staff on the Agreement.

noting nonetheless that, within the framework of the Seville Agreement, more needs to be done both to improve the preparedness of the Movement to respond to emergencies and to enhance the long-term operational capacities of National Societies.

1. *requests* the Standing Commission to establish a Working Group composed of ICRC, International Federation Secretariat as well as of National Societies' personalities with relevant knowledge and experience to develop proposals for an overall strategy for the Movement, designed to achieve the goals identified in the Preamble of the Seville Agreement, drawing on previous reports on co-operation within the Movement, on the ICRC Avenir Study, on the Federation's Strategy 2010 and other current work evaluating operations in the field;
2. *further requests* the Standing Commission, as a first priority within the context of the Working Group, to establish an Ad Hoc Group on the conduct of international relief operations. This Group, to be composed of suitably qualified persons drawn from the ICRC, International Federation and National Societies with direct experience of relief operations, assisted by independent experts, and drawing on recent operational experience should, as a matter of urgency, develop operational models designed to facilitate immediate field action, coordination of appeals for resources, effective management of all the resources of the Movement by the relevant Lead Agency, and the development of the capacity of National Societies affected by disasters, thus enabling rapid and effective relief to be brought to the victims of armed conflicts and natural disasters;
3. *further requests* the Standing Commission to consult with the interested parties for the implementation of the proposals emerging from the Ad Hoc Group at the earliest possible moment, ensuring that they are integrated with the longer term work on the development of an overall Movement Strategy.

6

The Movement's Policy on Advocacy

The Council of Delegates,

welcoming the follow-up given to its debate at the 1997 Council of Delegates on the subject of advocacy,

taking note of the paper presented to the Council of Delegates and entitled "The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's Involvement in Advocacy",

recalling that advocacy, i.e. “pleading in support of, supporting or speaking in favour of someone (a cause or a policy)”, is a part of the Red Cross and Red Crescent mission, in addition to or in support of services rendered to the community,

recalling further the Principle of humanity stating that the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement endeavours to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found,

noting that whereas advocacy may normally be pursued through dialogue with governments and other concerned parties, private diplomacy, communications, and conference or public statements of policy, there may be issues at the national or international level where, owing to their significance and the small likelihood of achieving change through traditional means of advocacy, a public campaign is deemed necessary,

noting further the results achieved by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement on both the national and international level in favour of victims of conflict and disaster and vulnerable people,

1. *encourages* the components of the Movement to pursue advocacy initiatives aimed at creating awareness of the conditions of victims of conflicts and disasters and vulnerable people;
2. *confirms* that whereas advocacy initiatives may normally involve dialogue and private diplomacy, public campaigns and other means may be deemed necessary, taking into account the mandates as defined in the Statutes of the Movement, and capacities, and operational environments of the different components of the Movement;
3. *decides* with regard to public campaigns, as follows:
 - a) A National Society or group of National Societies considering the launch of a national campaign should bear in mind:
 - the likely consequences on maintaining positive relations with the government or other organizations affected by the campaign;
 - the need, while considering cooperation with other organizations with similar interests, to preserve its distinct identity;
 - the possible consequences for other components of the Movement.
 - b) Concerning internationally promoted campaigns for wider respect for international humanitarian law, better assistance for victims of conflicts and disasters, or a more effective response to the needs of the most vulnerable members of society:
 - any decision to launch such campaigns must be reached through a rigorous, structured and transparent process;
 - and should be launched within the framework and general guidelines to be issued by the ICRC, the International Federation or jointly by the two components.

Such internationally promoted public campaigns must respect the following criteria:

- the launching of the campaign is prepared by early consultation with all the components of the Movement, is based on their missions as defined

by the Statutes of the Movement, and is agreed by the appropriate governance body;

- the timetable of any internationally led advocacy campaign should be agreed by the ICRC and the International Federation;
- through their operations and programmes, the components of the Movement have sufficient knowledge and experience of the issue to be raised, so as to be credible and effective advocates;
- the desired outcome of the campaign is precisely defined and the long-term allocation of resources for running the campaign are clearly identified;
- the lines of communication and decision-making relating to the campaign are determined within the Movement and mechanisms for evaluating the impact of the campaign are identified;
- the action to be taken and the messages to be put across are not expected to have a negative impact on the work of any component of the Movement or to severely jeopardize its identity or working relations with the authorities or its operation capacity or efficiency.

7

Red Cross, Red Crescent and Peace

The Council of Delegates,

recalling the definition of Peace given in the Preamble of the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, which states 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 rather a dynamic process of co-operation among all States and Peoples; co-operation founded on freedom, independence, national sovereignty, equality, respect of human rights and a fair and equitable distribution of resources to meet the needs of peoples*”,

alarmed by the existing violence in most parts of the world and the ongoing violations of international humanitarian law and of the fundamental human rights which increases tensions and insecurity,

recognising that human rights law is complementary to international humanitarian law in certain action oriented work in the field,

bearing in mind the numerous resolutions on peace drawn up within the Movement since 1921,

noting ongoing reflections on the contribution of the Movement to conflict prevention and peace building,

recognising also the necessity for new initiatives and constructive measures based on the humanitarian work of the Movement in order to strengthen understanding between individuals and people and therefore to contribute to build a culture of peace through dissemination of its ideals and Principles,

1. *invites* all components of the Movement to ensure that their humanitarian work takes into account the basic human rights of the beneficiaries they serve;
2. *commends* the work by all components of the Movement involved in building local capacities for peace by paying attention to how aid can support Peace;
3. *invites* the components of the Movement to take part in the long term efforts to build a culture of peace and tolerance;

4. *encourages* National Societies or groups of National Societies to elaborate action oriented programmes on the prevention and mitigation of violence and peace building;
5. *requests* National Societies to keep the ICRC and the International Federation informed of progress of this work, so as to maximise learning on this subject within the Movement.

8

Children affected by armed conflict

The Council of Delegates,

recalling previous Resolutions adopted by International Conferences and Councils of Delegates, in particular Resolution 5 of the 1995 Council of Delegates, and Resolution 8.1 of the 1997 Council of Delegates relative to the protection of children in armed conflict and the role and action of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in their favour,

seriously alarmed by the increasing number of children involved in armed conflict and by the tremendous suffering endured by those children, and *deeply concerned* by the seriousness and magnitude of the long-term consequences and the need for physical and psychological rehabilitation of children affected by armed conflict,

gravely alarmed and concerned by the fact that children even under the age of 15 years are recruited in armed forces and armed groups in violation of international humanitarian law,

stressing the importance to raise to 18 years the minimum age for recruitment and participation in hostilities and to reinforce or develop the existing legal provisions,

reaffirming the relevance of the objectives set out in the Plan of Action and the need to pursue efforts to ensure its full implementation,

1. *takes note* of the report "Children Affected by Armed Conflict" and the other work of the International Co-ordinating Group, set up to facilitate and monitor the implementation of the Plan of Action of the Movement, and *thinks* it for its work and contribution to actions taken in favour of children affected by armed conflict;
2. *requests* the ICRC, the International Federation and the National Societies to pursue and strengthen the implementation of the Programme concerning children affected by armed conflict;
3. *invites* all components of the Movement to better report on their activities in favour of children and to include this topic regularly on the agenda of all meetings of the Movement and *urges* the ICRC and the International Federation to re-examine the co-ordination mechanisms to make them as effective as possible and to develop with National Societies a consultation process aimed at reinforcing the commitment to children affected by armed conflict;
4. *encourages* all National Societies to support, particularly through contacts with their government, the adoption of international instruments implementing the principle of non-participation and non-recruitment of children below the age of 18 in armed conflicts with a view to such instruments being applicable to all situations of armed conflict and to all armed groups;
5. *urges* the ICRC and the International Federation in conjunction with interested National Societies and in

consultation with specialised organisations to draw up guidelines for prevention, rehabilitation and reintegration of children in their communities in order to give direction to National Societies in their work in these fields;

6. *asks* the ICRC and the International Federation to report on progress of the work and initiatives undertaken within the Movement at the next meeting of the Council of Delegates.

9

Street children

The Council of Delegates,

deeply alarmed by the phenomenon of street children, their increasing numbers, the deprivation of their rights, and the abuse, exploitation and neglect experienced by them,

recognising their needs as one of the most vulnerable groups in society,

reaffirming the long standing concern of the Movement expressed most notably through Resolution 2 of the 1995 Council of Delegates and Resolution 8.2 of the 1997 Council of Delegates on the plight of street children,

recalling the efforts made by the international community to foster respect for human rights and in particular the rights of the child through the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and Resolution 51/77, Chapter VI of the General Assembly of the United Nations of 12 December 1996 which focuses on the plight of street children,

aware of the capacities and potential of National Societies to advocate the plight of street children, to contribute towards the improvement of their situation and to meet their particular needs,

1. *takes note* of progress made and the work carried out by the International Federation and National Societies in compliance with the Council of Delegates Resolution 8.2 in 1997, and *thinks* them for the work undertaken;
2. *welcomes* the establishment of an International Federation Task Force on Street Children and the preliminary work which has been carried out concerning the formulation of a Plan of Action, and *recognises* the need to reinforce these activities;
3. *urges* National Societies, as part of their action to improve the situation of the most vulnerable, to initiate, or to become more involved in street children's programmes, and to focus their work on long-term strategies, including advocacy and prevention, leading to concrete and sustainable improvement in the health and social situation of street children;
4. *urges* National Societies to carry out such activities emphasizing the principle of child participation and the need for effective collaboration within and outside the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement;
5. *requests* National Societies to actively support the Task Force on Street Children through the provision of the funding necessary for the continuation of its work and by providing substantive input and ideas for the development of a plan of action;
6. *requests* the International Federation to continue to co-ordinate the work of the Task Force in developing and implementing the plan of action.

10 Movement strategy on landmines

The Council of Delegates.

recalling that Resolution 8, point 3, of the 1997 Council of Delegates requested the ICRC and the International Federation, in consultation with National Societies, to elaborate a long-term strategy to address the anti-personnel mines problem,

aware that the National Societies have the capacity and the potential to help improve the situation of mine victims and meet their specific needs,

recalling also the Movement's concern in the face of the proliferation of these weapons and deeply alarmed by the horrendous suffering caused by the presence of millions of anti-personnel landmines throughout the world,

welcoming the entry into force on 1 March 1999 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction, signed in Ottawa in December 1997,

1. *adopts* the Movement Strategy on Landmines and *urges* all the Movement's components to implement it;
2. *asks* the ICRC to assume the lead role in this field and to offer advice and support to National Societies wishing to launch programmes within the framework of the Strategy;
3. *asks* the ICRC, in consultation with the International Federation, to follow developments in the situation, to support the National Society programmes and activities in the framework of the Movement Strategy on Landmines, and to report on the progress made to the 2001 session of the Council of Delegates.

Summary

The purpose of the Movement Strategy on Landmines is to provide stimulus, guidance and support for coherent action by the Red Cross/Red Crescent in this area for the next five years.

The Strategy contains background information on past Red Cross/Red Crescent activities, an overview of assumptions and constraints, overall objectives for the promotion of international norms, mine awareness, the protection of the civilian population, care and assistance to mine victims, and ways of taking concerted action in the future.

The Strategy emphasizes the importance of unity and cooperation among the Movement's components, and emphasizes that their institutional knowledge and capacity must be strengthened. It calls for an effective exchange of information and communication, with a lead role assumed by the ICRC.

National Societies are the most powerful Red Cross/Red Crescent advocates at country level, and the Strategy aims to help them, with the support of the ICRC and the International Federation, to gain the skills and mobilize the resources they need to become effective campaigners and players in long-term mine-related activities.

Core elements of the strategy

- To achieve universal adherence to and effective implementation of the norms established by the Ottawa Treaty and amended Protocol II to the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

- To reduce civilian casualties in mine-contaminated areas through community-based education programmes about mine risks.
- To remind parties to armed conflicts of their responsibility to comply with humanitarian law as regards landmines, and of the humanitarian consequences of the use of mines.
- To ensure that mine victims have equal and impartial access to proper care and assistance.
- To assist the National Societies of the most affected countries in incorporating mine-related activities and services into their regular programmes, and to support National Society endeavours on mine-related issues.
- To cooperate with mine-clearance organizations according to humanitarian priorities, by developing mine-awareness activities and providing medical assistance to clearance teams, in accordance with the *Guidelines on Red Cross/Red Crescent involvement in mine-clearance activities*, adopted at the 1997 session of the Council of Delegates.

A. Activities

1. Promoting international norms

Background

The Ottawa treaty banning the production, development, transfer, stockpiling and use of anti-personnel landmines was ratified by the required number of States in 1998 and entered into force on 1 March 1999. As at 30 April 1999, 133 States had signed the treaty and 74 had ratified it. Those States which have not yet signed or ratified the treaty must do so if future crises are to be prevented. The treaty must be universally accepted as the fundamental norm governing anti-personnel mines. All States must be encouraged rapidly to implement the treaty's provisions on the destruction of stockpiles, mine clearance, mine awareness, and victim care and assistance.

Amended Protocol II to the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) limits the use of anti-personnel mines and also governs the use of landmines not covered by the Ottawa treaty (namely anti-vehicle mines). It entered into force in 1998. It will be reviewed and hopefully strengthened in 2001.

The ICRC played a significant role in the promotion and negotiation of both treaties. It worked closely with National Society legal advisers in developing the Movement's position on the matter and in commenting on draft texts and proposals. National Society representatives also served on the ICRC and Federation delegations to the relevant diplomatic conferences. Many National Society legal advisers played a major role in national efforts to obtain a ban on anti-personnel landmines and ratification of the treaties.

Securing universal accession to and implementation of both treaties requires further efforts on the part of the entire Movement. National Society initiatives are particularly important in enhancing government awareness and understanding of both treaties and their relevance in addressing the problem.

Constraints

The constraints are:

- security concerns and the need to protect long borders;
- a military preference for a step-by-step approach until alternatives are found;

- lack of understanding about the scope of the treaties, the extent of their prohibitions and obligations, and the types of mines and weapons they ban;
- a shortage of funds to implement the treaty obligations.

Strategies

The strategies are to:

- encourage governments which have not yet done so to adopt a pro-ban position, by signing and ratifying the Ottawa treaty;
- maintain awareness about the mines issue among the general public in order to create the political will in support of ratification and rapid implementation;
- engage the military in discussion of the landmines problem, humanitarian law and alternatives to anti-personnel mines.

Objectives

The objectives are to obtain:

- universal ratification of the Ottawa treaty, particularly from major mine producers;
- universal ratification of amended Protocol II (and the CCW's other three Protocols, including the Protocol on blinding laser weapons);
- the adoption of national legislation for implementation of the above treaties;
- a ban on the transfer of all anti-personnel mines;
- ratification of the Ottawa treaty by two or more additional regional powers;
- stronger CCW provisions on anti-vehicle mines, to be negotiated at the Review Conference in 2001;
- the destruction of stockpiles;
- universal stigmatization of the use of anti-personnel mines, wherever it may occur.

Implementation

- All components of the Movement** are asked to pursue their efforts to promote awareness of and accession to the Ottawa treaty and amended Protocol II through, among other things, international meetings, regional seminars and the placement of advertisements in the international media.
- The ICRC** should monitor interpretations of the treaties, new technological developments which may have an impact on them or their objectives, and developments in other international fora which may undermine or weaken the norms established. It will assist National Societies in their efforts to obtain ratification of the treaties.

I.

In States which have ratified the treaties:

- National Societies** will work with their governments to ensure that the treaties are implemented, by means inter alia of national implementing legislation, regulations, administrative orders and other measures.
- The ICRC** Legal Division will provide the National Societies with technical expertise, material and advice in their endeavours to obtain government implementation of the treaties.

II.

In States which have not ratified the treaties:

- National Societies** are asked to encourage their governments to accede to the Ottawa treaty and amended Protocol II by organizing public events and/or entering into dialogue with government officials.
- The ICRC** will promote discussion within military circles of the landmine problem and accession to the treaties at the earliest possible date.

2. Mine-awareness activities

Background

Mine awareness is an essential means of preventing mine-related deaths and injuries among the civilian population in mine-affected countries.

The Movement's global network, experience in the field and relations with the community give it a comparative advantage in helping the civilian population protect itself from a life-threatening risk.

Constraints

The constraints are:

- the need for a solid and extensive community-based and participatory approach if mine-awareness programmes are to be effective;
- the lack of commitment to make mine awareness one of the Movement's priorities;
- the absence of an overall approach including the various areas of mine action;
- insufficient incorporation of mine-awareness activities in the overall programmes of National Societies;
- a shortage of human resources within the Movement with expertise and experience in mine-awareness activities.

Strategies

The strategy is:

- to adopt a community-based approach for any new programme, and to implement it in cooperation with National Societies;
- to ensure that mine-awareness programmes are incorporated in the regular activities of the National Societies;
- to establish professional development training on landmines-related issues for selected Red Cross and Red Crescent employees in order to have a core group of "experts";
- to promote improved cooperation between emergency/relief/development organizations involved in mine action;
- to influence the conduct of arms bearers by promoting humanitarian law on issues such as indiscriminate mine usage and non-compliance with proper mine-laying procedures. The question of the military usefulness of anti-personnel mines should be systematically included in dissemination sessions for the armed forces.

Objectives

The objectives are:

- to reduce the risk of civilian casualties in mine-contaminated areas;
- to reinforce existing mine-awareness programmes in an effective manner;
- to encourage and promote mine awareness as a National Society activity in mine-affected countries;

- to carry out assessments and surveys so as to determine the feasibility of and need for additional projects and, if appropriate, to support them.

Implementation

The National Societies in mine-affected countries will:

- assess the need for and feasibility of mine-awareness programmes and establish a plan of action for the implementation of such activities, seeking the support of other partners whenever necessary;
- carry out activities to promote mine-related issues with a view to ensuring greater respect for existing humanitarian law instruments and preventing the indiscriminate use of mines.

The ICRC will:

- establish a list of countries in which mine-awareness activities should be a priority, said list to include the countries most affected by landmines and those countries in which mine-awareness programmes have already been started by a component of the Movement and should be pursued;
- support mine-awareness activities carried out by National Societies, promote the development of such activities, and complement them whenever necessary;
- consider implementing mine-awareness programmes as part of its operations and activities for the civilian population in countries or territories where a National Society does not exist or where it may not be in a position to implement such activities;
- make every effort to influence the conduct of soldiers in battle and of other arms bearers by promoting humanitarian law on issues such as the indiscriminate use of mines and non-compliance with proper mine-laying procedures. The question of the military usefulness of anti-personnel mines should be systematically included in dissemination sessions for arms bearers.

The Federation will:

- assist National Societies in mine-affected countries to integrate a mine-sensitive approach into the overall activities of the Society;
- enhance their capacity to implement mine-awareness programmes, particularly through the Societies' youth programmes and community health programmes.

3. Protection

Background

One of the fundamental principles of customary and treaty-based international humanitarian law is the distinction between combatants and the civilian population. In the ICRC's field of activity, the notion of protection encompasses any activity whose purpose is to protect the victims of armed conflicts and internal disturbances. That is the framework within which the ICRC carries out its work for mine victims.

Since 1945, the rise in the number of non-international armed conflicts has led to a sharp increase in the number of mines. As a result:

- entire regions have been emptied of their population;
- people have been terrorized and their movements restricted;
- communities have been isolated and the possibilities to provide humanitarian assistance greatly reduced;

- people have been cut off from local resources such as wells;
- refugees and displaced people have been deprived of the possibility of return.

The use of landmines against civilian populations is a violation of the customary rules of international humanitarian law, for the use of mines is governed by legal norms.

Constraints

The constraints are:

- the need for trustworthy information on security incidents to obtain an accurate overall picture;
- the limited access of humanitarian practitioners to the areas concerned, for security reasons or because they have been denied access to the front line;
- the difficulty of convincing the military authorities in countries that have not ratified the Ottawa treaty, who are often of the opinion that mines can be used exclusively against military targets, that landmines are indiscriminate weapons and should not be used;
- the difficulty of identifying who (individuals or authorities) is responsible for incidents involving mines, and therefore of taking action when the civilian population is victimized.

Strategies

The ICRC's protection work with regard to mines is a specific but integrated part of its protection approach to conflict victims. In the narrow sense, the "protection" aspect of a mines-related operation comprises:

- identifying groups of vulnerable persons (residents, displaced persons, etc.);
- collecting specific information, if possible from eyewitnesses, on all incidents if the context permits, or on indicative incidents;
- making representations to and talking with local, regional and national military and political officials;
- when representations and dialogue have no effect, heightening awareness of and mobilizing those on the international scene in a position to influence the parties to the conflict.

Objectives

The objectives are:

- systematically to incorporate the mines issue and its consequences in the institution's overall representations with regard to protection so as to further ICRC field activities;
- to establish for each context how serious the mines problem is, its connections, if any, with other violations, for example forced displacement or planned starvation, and to draw up a protection strategy;
- to give those involved or the parties to the conflict a greater sense of responsibility and to make them aware of protection issues and the humanitarian consequences of the use of mines;
- to recommend that the necessary measures be taken.

Implementation

In countries in which the ICRC is present, it will:

- remind the authorities of the rules of customary law and of humanitarian law on the use of mines, and in countries that

have ratified the Ottawa treaty it will recall the obligations arising therefrom;

- make overall representations to the parties to the conflict with regard to the mines ban and the consequences of the use of mines on the civilian population;
- collect and process reliable information — from the population, local NGO networks and others — on each mine incident affecting the civilian population;
- submit documented confidential files to the parties to the conflict on individual mine incidents affecting the civilian population;
- Write confidential summary reports for the authorities on identified phenomena (use of mines against the population, relationship with other violations, etc.).

4. Care and Assistance

Background

The various components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in accordance with their respective mandates, provide care and assistance to the victims of armed conflict during or after the hostilities. The latter is the case with anti-personnel landmines, which continue to take a toll long after the fighting has stopped. The Ottawa treaty also calls on States to provide assistance to landmine victims inter alia through the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

In conformity with their principles, the Movement's components do not distinguish between the victims on the basis of the cause of injury. They recognize the needs of all the wounded and the special situation of those suffering from a disability because of their wounds. First aid, surgical and rehabilitative programmes are launched to respond to those needs, and landmine victims are among the many beneficiaries. There are no programmes exclusively for mine victims, but it must be acknowledged that treatment of their injuries places an enormous burden on health facilities and that their care requires inordinate human and physical resources.

To turn an injured person into a hospital patient entails evacuation from the minefield, first aid and transport. To turn the patient into a survivor requires adequate surgical facilities and expertise, and sufficient quantities of safe blood for transfusion.

Access to treatment and health services for those wounded by mines is irregular and unequal throughout the world. Medical and rehabilitative care reflect the availability, or lack thereof, of basic services, which must be reinforced in mine-infested countries, especially in those with high numbers of mine victims.

The challenge of caring for and assisting mine victims is how to transform an injured person into a fully integrated and productive member of society. For those survivors whose injuries result in the amputation of a limb, loss of eyesight or paralysis, the fitting of an artificial limb, physiotherapy and rehabilitation, vocational and technical training, and psychological support will all be necessary if that challenge is to be met.

These services are part of a functioning health and social-welfare system and are all essential for the treatment of trauma victims in general and of mine victims in particular. They often fail to function when hostilities break out, and are rarely among the first priorities of the authorities once the hostilities are over.

Mine victims are among the beneficiaries of well-funded post-conflict reconstruction and the concomitant rehabilitation of

the health care system, through existing World Bank, UNDP and bilateral programmes to improve the situation overall of the sick and wounded in what is very often a "disabled society".

Constraints

The constraints are:

- health services that function poorly, if at all, in war;
- limited access to care (for reasons of distance, scarce means of transportation, instability, military threats, poverty);
- unsafe working conditions that often oblige humanitarian workers to abandon the victims;
- health care personnel who are killed or flee the area; if they remain at work, they are rarely paid and the Ministry of Public Health often cannot maintain an adequate distribution of supplies to health facilities;
- political and administrative limitations, a shortage of trained staff, and inadequate information on the location and needs of victims.

Strategies

The strategy is:

- **To ensure equal and impartial access to health care**
Various Movement components are involved in different aspects of caring for the war wounded and mine injured: first aid, ambulance transport, surgical care, blood transfusion, prosthetic workshops, and care for the disabled.
- **To support existing health and social service structures**
Health and social service structures should be properly prepared to deal with the inordinate demands on resources that caring for the mine injured can entail. But those structures must first exist and function correctly.
- **To support National Societies engaged in mine-related activities**
It taxes the resources of a National Society to work in a conflict environment, and the situation usually remains unchanged in the post-conflict period. Coordinated support to Operating Societies, in accordance with the provisions of the Seville Agreement and the Societies' plans of action, is necessary to meet the needs of conflict and post-conflict victims.

Implementation

The ICRC will:

- provide hospital assistance and support in surgery in conflict situations, when necessary;
- assess, in conflict situations and in conjunction with the National Society concerned, the need for blood transfusion services and support them when necessary;
- assess, in conflict situations, the need for prosthetic workshops and patient rehabilitation and provide such services, when necessary;
- in post-conflict situations, draw on the Red Cross Special Fund for the Disabled to support the work of various organizations, both within and outside the Movement, that meet the Fund's requirements;
- back National Society efforts to provide psychological support to mine victims, to help them achieve social reintegration and to take other small-scale assistance initiatives.

The National Societies in mine-affected countries will:

- strengthen their services to provide first aid to, evacuate and transport the war wounded;
- provide services to beneficiaries of prosthetics and rehabilitation services, such as transport and accommodation for treatment and rehabilitation sessions, or any other small-scale assistance required;
- assess needs for psychological support services and social reintegration of mine victims and incorporate such activities into their overall social programme.

The International Federation will:

- help the National Societies concerned incorporate mine-related programmes into their overall development plans;
- support their capacity-building efforts;
- help them develop human resources.

5. Mine Clearance

Background

Mine clearance represents one of the key tools in the world-wide efforts to rid the earth of mines, yet the number of priority areas demined each year continues to be low, mainly for lack of sufficient political determination and funding. The information coming from agencies involved in mine-clearance operations tends to underline the unsatisfactory reality that, in spite of the Ottawa treaty, there has so far been no increase in the amount of funds set aside for demining. Much of the money allocated by governments to demining activities is given to national research programmes which will produce results only in a few years' time.

Strategies

In June 1997, the Movement produced the *Guidelines on Red Cross/Red Crescent involvement in mine-clearance activities*. At the Council of Delegates in November 1997, Resolution 8 was adopted, *encouraging "all components of the Movement, when considering support for mine-clearance activities, to follow the guidelines for the Movement on this subject"*.

Implementation

The Guidelines clearly recommend that the Red Cross/Red Crescent should **not** become involved in mine-clearance work or finance such activities.

However, the Red Cross/Red Crescent may cooperate in the medical sphere with mine-clearance organizations and in mine-awareness programmes. National Societies can encourage their governments to contribute to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Mine Clearance or to agencies which conduct demining operations according to humanitarian criteria.

B. Cooperation

Initially, the Movement's approach to the landmines issue was highly focused: it sought to achieve a specific goal (the banning of landmines) within a certain time. Now that approach will become broader. While there will still be a specific focus on persuading States to ratify the Ottawa treaty, mine-related activities will start to be incorporated in other, ongoing programmes such as emergency preparedness, community health and protection.

In a handful of seriously-affected countries, landmine victims may be sufficiently numerous as compared with other

beneficiaries and the problem of landmines may be sufficiently pervasive in terms of other threats such as drought, flooding, galloping inflation and communicable diseases for the National Societies to legitimately focus programming on landmine victims.

National Societies are involved in three main ways:

- lobbying governments to sign and/or ratify the treaties;
- promoting mine awareness in order to reduce the risk of civilian casualties;
- providing care and services to landmine victims as part of their services to traumatically injured and disabled people in their communities.

Where landmine victims and potential victims are being targeted as part of a much larger group (e.g. disabled people), then it is clear that a National Society's landmine strategy must be part of its larger development strategy. The Federation plays a key role in helping National Societies put landmines issues on their long-term agendas, at the appropriate level.

A lead role within the Movement for mine-related issues

The Geneva Conventions and the Movement's Statutes confer specific areas of competence to each component, which therefore plays a lead role in those areas. The concept of Lead Role, according to the provisions of the Seville Agreement, implies the existence of other partners in the Movement with rights and responsibilities in these matters. This is clearly the case of work relating to victims of landmines.

The institution entrusted with the lead-role in mine-related activities will actively encourage and promote the involvement of its partners in the Movement in such activities.

Because of the nature of its specific mandate, the ICRC has extensive expertise in most areas related to mine action. It is therefore in a position to be the "reference institution" within the Movement for activities related to mine action and to assist other components engaged in this type of activity.

Given its role in supporting National Society development, the Federation has built up specific expertise in community-based rehabilitation programmes and will therefore be in a position to assist National Societies in these areas.

As a matter of policy, expertise and technical support should be made available to National Societies choosing to pursue activities related to the landmines issue in affected countries on the priority list. This should be done at their request.

Since the response to the landmines crisis focuses on long-term programmes on the ground in mine-affected areas, the ICRC and Participating National Societies should consider the Operating National Societies as privileged partners in the programmes they conduct or plan.

Nonetheless, effective action in any given national or local context will require integrated and concerted efforts with national and local NGOs and with international organizations and agencies. The Movement's components are encouraged to cooperate, to the maximum extent possible in a given context, with other organizations working in the field of mine action. Such interaction is an essential element of success on the ground.

Funding

In assuming the lead role within the Movement for all mine-related issues, the ICRC will also be responsible for the mobilization of financial resources and for the launching of

appeals, when necessary integrating mines-related programmes carried out by National Societies. This may also include coverage of costs incurred by the International Federation for technical consultancy.

As a result, the ICRC will thus not only seek funding for cost coverage of its own programmes but will also include mine-related activities, carried out by other components of the Movement outside the scope of ICRC's objectives and budgets. The allocation of funds for such programmes will be carried out in close consultation with the International Federation.

11

International Criminal Court

The Council of Delegates,

deeply alarmed by the large-scale and continuing violations of international humanitarian law, both in international and in non-international armed conflicts,

recalling the obligation of States to suppress and repress violations of international humanitarian law,

noting with great satisfaction the adoption of the Rome Statute for the creation of the International Criminal Court as a complementary tool for a more effective repression of war crimes,

considering the efforts already undertaken by the Preparatory Commission for the International Criminal Court with a view to draft the Elements of Crime and the Rules of Procedure and Evidence,

taking note with appreciation of the previous contributions of the ICRC and the International Federation to the negotiating process and the on-going efforts of the ICRC, especially to assist States in the drafting of the Elements of War Crimes,

1. *invites* National Societies to support all these efforts and to promote the ratification of the Rome Statute without making the declaration under Art. 124 of the Rome Statute, while at the same time encouraging States to comply with their existing obligation under international humanitarian law to suppress and repress violations of this law;
2. *requests* the ICRC to continue to participate actively in the ongoing negotiations in the Preparatory Commission, especially to work that the "acquis" with regard to international humanitarian law are properly reflected in the document on the Elements of Crimes;
3. *further requests* the ICRC, in consultation with the International Federation, to follow developments closely, to actively keep National Societies informed, and to report to the 2001 session of the Council of Delegates on progress made in establishing an International Criminal Court.

12

Arms availability and the situation of civilians in armed conflict and post-conflict situations

The Council of Delegates,

reiterating the preoccupation of the Council of Delegates with the easy access of combatants untrained in international humanitarian law, civilian populations and even children to a

wide variety of weapons, particularly small arms, and their frequent use against civilian populations and in violation of basic humanitarian principles,

recalling the mandate of the 26th International Conference to the ICRC to study the relationship between arms availability and violations of international humanitarian law, as well as the Resolutions 2.8 of the 1995 Council of Delegates and 8.4 of the 1997 Council of Delegates requesting that the role and attitude of the Movement on arms availability be clarified by the 1999 Council of Delegates,

welcoming the ICRC's new study on "Arms Availability and the Situation of Civilians in Armed Conflict" and its consultations since 1997 with all components of the Movement on this subject.

convinced that the proliferation of arms and ammunition can increase tensions, heighten civilian casualties, prolong the duration of conflicts and hinder the provision of humanitarian assistance to populations in need,

further convinced of the relationship between unregulated availability of arms and violations of international humanitarian law and a deterioration of the situation of civilians,

1. *endorses* the overall analysis and conclusions of the ICRC's study on "Arms Availability and the Situation of Civilians in Armed Conflict";
2. *calls on States* to review their policies concerning the production, availability and transfer of arms and ammunition, as well as explosives and other related materials, in light of their responsibility to ensure respect for international humanitarian law and to assist and protect civilian populations;
3. *calls on States*, which have not already done so, to elaborate rules, based on respect for international humanitarian law and other appropriate norms, governing the transfer and availability of arms and ammunition. The Council of Delegates *calls on States*, as a first step, to halt arms transfers to parties committing or tolerating serious violations of human rights or of international humanitarian law;
4. *calls on all components of the Movement* to help ensure, during the 27th International Conference, that clear proposals for action on these concerns are maintained in the Plan of Action;
5. *encourages National Societies*, to the extent possible in their own contexts, to actively raise public awareness of the human costs of the widespread availability of arms and ammunition and of its implications for the fabric of international humanitarian law. The ICRC is requested to support such efforts by providing technical advice and information materials in order to promote a culture of non-violence;
6. *discourages components of the Movement* from engaging in public debate on specific transfers of weapons to specific recipients in ways which could compromise the Movement's neutrality or operational capacity;
7. *requests the ICRC, in consultation with the International Federation*, to submit to the next Council of Delegates a report on Movement activities and international progress in this field with a view to consideration by the Council of any further steps which may be appropriate.

2.5 LIST OF DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED TO THE 1999 COUNCIL OF DELEGATES

- Provisional agenda of the Council of Delegates
- Report of the Standing Commission to the 1999 Council of Delegates (99/CD/4/1) [*prepared by the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent*]
- Provisional agenda and programme of the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (27 IC/1 rev.)
- Proposal of persons to fill posts at the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (27 IC/2 rev.)
- Implementation of the Agreement on the Organization of the International Activities of the Components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (CD 99/6/1) [*joint report by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross*]
- The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's involvement in advocacy (99/CD/7/1) [*prepared by the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent*]
- Children affected by armed conflicts, 1995-1999 (99/CD/8/1) [*prepared by the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in consultation with the International Coordinating Group in charge of monitoring the programme Children Affected By Armed Conflict (CABAC)*]
- Complementary report on children affected by armed conflicts (99/CD/8/1 Addendum) [*prepared by the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in consultation with the International Coordinating Group in charge of monitoring the programme Children Affected By Armed Conflict (CABAC)*]
- Street children (99/CD/8/2) [*prepared by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in consultation with the International Committee of the Red Cross*]
- Movement strategy on landmines (99/CD/8/3) [*prepared by the International Committee of the Red Cross in consultation with the International Federation of Red and Red Crescent Societies*]
- International Criminal Court (99/CD/8/4) [*prepared by the International Committee of the Red Cross in consultation with the International Federation of Red and Red Crescent Societies*]
- Arms availability and the situation of civilians in armed conflict and post-conflict situations (99/CD/8/5) [*prepared by the International Committee of the Red Cross in consultation with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*]
- Communication policy of the Movement [*prepared by the Communication Forum of the Movement*]
- International Red Cross and Red Crescent millenium year: Celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions [*prepared by the International Committee of the Red Cross*]
- Report of the Commission for the Financing of the ICRC [*prepared by the Commission for the Financing of the ICRC and the International Committee of the Red Cross*]

III
27th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
OF THE RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT

31 October - 6 November 1999

3.1 AGENDA AND PROGRAMME

OPENING CEREMONY

Sunday 31 October 1999

4.30 p.m. Opening ceremony — award of the Henry Dunant Medal

8.00 p.m. Opening event at the Geneva Arena

PLENARY MEETINGS

Monday 1 November 1999

9.00 a.m. FIRST PLENARY MEETING

1. Opening of the plenary meeting by the Chairman of the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent
2. Election of the Chairman, Vice-Chairmen, Secretary-General, Assistant Secretaries-General and other officers of the Conference
3. Establishment of the Conference's subsidiary bodies
 - 3.1 Plenary Commission
 - 3.2 Drafting Committee
4. Adoption of the agenda of the Plenary Commission
5. Information on the procedures for electing the members of the Standing Commission, adopting the Conference Declaration and Plan of Action and recording pledges
6. Introduction of the Conference Declaration and Plan of Action
7. The humanitarian commitment:
 - 7.1 Keynote address by the President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Dr Astrid Heiberg
 - 7.2 Keynote address by the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mr Cornelio Sommaruga
 - 7.3 Keynote address by the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ms Louise Fréchette
- 7.4 Guest speakers:
 - World Health Organization: Dr Gro Harlem Brundtland, Director-General
 - UNICEF: Ms Carol Bellamy, Executive Director
 - World Food Programme: Ms Catherine Bertini, Executive Director
8. Presentation of the People on War survey
9. Pledge presented by the President of the Council of the European Union and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland, H.E. T. Halonen
10. Pledge presented by the Vice-President of the Thai Red Cross Society, H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn

5.00 p.m. WORKSHOPS

Tuesday 2 November 1999

9.00 a.m. FIRST MEETING OF THE PLENARY COMMISSION

1. Report on the First Periodical Meeting on International Humanitarian Law
2. Report on the centennial of the First International Peace Conference
3. Debate on the draft Plan of Action, theme I: **"The protection of victims of armed conflicts through respect for international humanitarian law"**

DRAFTING COMMITTEE

5.00 p.m. WORKSHOPS

Wednesday 3 November 1999

9.00 a.m. SECOND MEETING OF THE PLENARY COMMISSION

4. Debate on the draft Plan of Action, theme II: **"Humanitarian action in times of armed conflict and other disasters"**

DRAFTING COMMITTEE

Revision of the draft Plan of Action, with an emphasis on theme I

5.00 p.m. WORKSHOPS

Thursday 4 November 1999

9.00 a.m. THIRD MEETING OF THE PLENARY COMMISSION

5. Debate on the draft Plan of Action, theme III: **"Strategic partnership to improve the lives of vulnerable people"**

DRAFTING COMMITTEE

Revision of the draft Plan of Action, with an emphasis on theme II

5.00 p.m. WORKSHOPS

Friday 5 November 1999

9.00 a.m. SECOND PLENARY MEETING

9. Election of the members of the Standing Commission
10. Reports of the Plenary Commission

9.00 a.m. — 12.30 p.m.

and

2.30 p.m. — 6.30 p.m. **DRAFTING COMMITTEE**

- Revision of the draft Plan of Action, with an emphasis on theme III

- Finalization of the Conference Declaration and Plan of Action

2.30 p.m. WORKSHOPS

Saturday 6 November 1999

9.00 a.m. FINAL PLENARY MEETING

11. Report on the workshops

12. Report of the Drafting Committee
13. Adoption of the Conference Declaration and Plan of Action
14. Adoption of other resolutions
15. Closing ceremony:
Reading of the Conference Declaration
Presentation of recorded pledges

3.2 CONFERENCE OFFICIALS

3.2.1 CONFERENCE CHAIRMANSHIP

Chairman:

Professor Mamdouh Gabr
Secretary-General of the Egyptian Red Crescent Society

Vice-Chairmen:

Ambassador Yolande Biké
Permanent Representative of Gabon in Geneva

Ms Zoy Katevas de Sclabos
President of the Chilean Red Cross

Ambassador Philippe Kirsch
Ambassador of Canada to Sweden

Ambassador Franz E. Muheim
President of the Swiss Red Cross

Secretary-General:

Ambassador Jean-François Kammer

Assistant Secretaries-General:

Mr Jean-Luc Blondel
Head, Division for Policy and Cooperation within the
Movement
International Committee of the Red Cross

Ms Yolande Camporini
Head, Governance Support Unit
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent
Societies

3.2.2 CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE CONFERENCE'S SUBSIDIARY BODIES

A. PLENARY COMMISSION

Co-Chairman for theme I:

H.E. Mr Boris Shikmuradov
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan

Co-Chairman for theme II:

Ambassador Christopher Lamb
Ambassador of Australia to the Federal Republic of
Yugoslavia

Co-Chairman for theme III:

Mr Teófilo Siman
President of the Salvadorean Red Cross Society

Rapporteur for theme I:

Mr Tom Buruku
Chairman of the Uganda Red Cross Society

Rapporteur for theme II:

Dr Tahar Cheniti
Secretary-General of the Tunisian Red Crescent

Rapporteur for theme III:

Ambassador Anne Anderson
Permanent Representative of Ireland in Geneva

B. DRAFTING COMMITTEE

Chairman:

Ambassador Philippe Kirsch
Ambassador of Canada to Sweden

Vice-Chairmen:

Ambassador Jean-Pierre Cabouat
Adviser on International Affairs of the French Red Cross

Ambassador Marika Fahlén
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden

Sir Alan Munro
Vice-Chairman of the British Red Cross

3.2.3 BUREAU OF THE CONFERENCE

Professor Mamdouh Gabr
Chairman of the 27th International Conference

Ambassador Yolande Biké
Vice-Chairman of the 27th International Conference

Ms Zoy Katevas de Sclabos
Vice-Chairman of the 27th International Conference

Ambassador Franz E. Muheim
Vice-Chairman of the 27th International Conference

Ambassador Jean-François Kammer
Secretary-General of the 27th International Conference

Ambassador Philippe Kirsch
Chairman of the Drafting Committee

H.E. Mr Boris Shikmuradov
Co-Chairman for theme I

Ambassador Christopher Lamb
Co-Chairman for theme II

Mr Teófilo Siman
Co-Chairman for theme III

H.R.H. Princess Margriet of the Netherlands
Chairman of the Standing Commission

Mr Cornelio Sommaruga
President of the International Committee of the Red Cross

Dr Astrid N. Heiberg
*President of the International Federation of Red Cross and
Red Crescent Societies*

Mr George Weber
*Secretary-General of the International Federation of Red
Cross and Red Crescent Societies*

Mr Yves Sandoz
*Director for International Law and Communication,
International Committee of the Red Cross*

Mr Stephen Davey
*Under Secretary-General for Communication and Policy
Coordination,
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent
Societies*

Mr Jean-Luc Blondel
*Assistant Secretary-General of the 27th International
Conference*

Ms Yolande Camporini
*Assistant Secretary-General of the 27th International
Conference*

3.3 OPENING CEREMONY

31 October 1999

4.30 p.m.

SUMMARY: Programme – Welcoming address by H.R.H. Princess Margriet of the Netherlands, Chairman of the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent – Screening of the video: *The Power of Humanity* – Reading of the Fundamental Principles by Dr Bertrand Piccard, psychiatrist and aeronaut – Address by Mr Pierre Muller, Mayor of Geneva – Address by Ms Martine Brunschwig Graf, President of the Council of State of the Republic and Canton of Geneva – Address by Ms Ruth Dreifuss, President of the Swiss Confederation – Musical interlude: *Up with People* – Address by Mr Cornelio Sommaruga, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross – Address by Dr Astrid N. Heiberg, President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies – Screening of the video: *Voices of War, Voices of Hope* – Address by H.R.H. Princess Margriet of the Netherlands, Chairman of the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent – Reception.

Programme

4.30 p.m. **Welcoming address by H.R.H. Princess Margriet of the Netherlands**

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

Screening of the video: *The Power of Humanity*

Reading of the Fundamental Principles by Dr Bertrand Piccard

Psychiatrist and aeronaut

Address by Mr Pierre Muller

Mayor of Geneva

Address by Ms Martine Brunschwig Graf

President of the Council of State of the Republic and Canton of Geneva

Address by Ms Ruth Dreifuss

President of the Swiss Confederation

Musical interlude: *Up with People*

Address by Mr Cornelio Sommaruga

President of the International Committee of the Red Cross

Address by Dr Astrid N. Heiberg

President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Screening of the video: *Voices of War, Voices of Hope*

Address by H.R.H. Princess Margriet of the Netherlands

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

6.30 p.m. **Reception at the Geneva Arena hosted by the Swiss Federal Council, the Council of State of the Republic and Canton of Geneva and the Administrative Council of the City of Geneva.**

WELCOMING ADDRESS BY H.R.H. PRINCESS MARGRIET OF THE NETHERLANDS, CHAIRMAN OF THE STANDING COMMISSION OF THE RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT

(Original English):

Madam President of the Swiss Confederation, Madam President of the Council of State of the Republic and Canton of Geneva, Mr Mayor of Geneva, Mr Bertrand Piccard, Mr President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Madam President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Your Royal Highnesses, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have great pleasure in welcoming you to the opening ceremony of the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in Geneva. It is heartening to see how many participants are gathered here today as this clearly reflects the importance of our meeting. The 27th International Conference is the last one of the century, but also the one that will enable us to build a strategy and objectives for the next century.

We have a full evening ahead of us. After this ceremony, the Swiss authorities will host a reception at the Geneva Arena. It will be followed by a mixed-media show, the first such event to be attempted in the long history of Movement conferences. We chose to put on this show not simply to entertain you but rather to put our work in an artistic perspective. I am sure that this new approach will also do much to make our humanitarian work and the concerns of the Conference better known to the general public in the Geneva area and beyond. After all, it is in honour of the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, and as a tribute to the city of Geneva, which has done so much to foster humanitarian ideals, that we are holding the 27th International Conference here. I should like to thank the Swiss authorities most sincerely for their constant support in making this Conference a reality.

Now it is time for the opening ceremony and for the video which illustrates the slogan of the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, "the power of humanity".

(Applause)

(Screening of the video: The Power of Humanity)

READING OF THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES BY DR BERTRAND PICCARD, PSYCHIATRIST AND AERONAUT

(Original English and French):

Ladies and Gentlemen,

When one is fortunate enough to travel around the world in the sky, using no engine, propelled only by the force of the wind, one is struck above all by the beauty of our planet.

But when Brian Jones and I were inside our pressurized capsule gazing at all that beauty, we could not help thinking about the many atrocities taking place on the ground. And we realized that perhaps the worst problem is not that people don't all love each other — it is impossible to love everybody — but that they don't understand the magic of life on this planet, the miracle of being alive, the fact that every living being embodies that miracle.

With such an understanding comes the notion of respect, respect for every spark of energy, every single creature here on this planet, and that is why I am truly proud and honoured to have been invited here today to read out the Fundamental

Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, which does so much to promote respect for all human beings.

Humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality, these are the guiding principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. Set up to assist the wounded on the battlefield without discrimination, the Movement strives through its national and international activities to prevent and alleviate human suffering in all circumstances. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the individual. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace among all peoples.

The Movement makes no distinction as to nationality, race, religion, social status or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement does not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries to their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so as to be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

Not prompted in any manner by desire for gain, the Movement provides voluntary relief. There can only be one Red Cross or one Red Crescent Society in each country, it must be open to everyone and it must extend its activities to the entire territory. Within the Movement, all National Societies have equal rights and the duty to assist one another.

When I was travelling through the skies in a hot-air balloon, I felt that I was holding the world in my arms. My hope for the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is that it can help others to feel the same way and inspire them to do everything in their power to reduce the immense suffering on this planet.

(Applause)

**ADDRESS BY MR PIERRE MULLER,
MAYOR OF GENEVA**

(Original French):

Madam President of the Confederation, Madam President of the Council of State of the Republic and Canton of Geneva, Madam Chairman of the Standing Commission, Madam President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Mr President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The last two years have provided Geneva with many causes for celebration:

- 135 years ago, the International Committee of the Red Cross was founded in our city;
- 80 years ago, the International Labour Office, the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the former League of Nations set up their offices in Geneva;
- in 1998 we celebrated the 50th anniversaries of the World Health Organization and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

- that same year, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights was set up at the Palais Wilson and the World Trade Organization held a session of its Ministerial Conference in Geneva for the first time.

We are very happy that so many international organizations are present in Geneva, for they all provide hope for humanity and play vital roles in promoting:

- a more effective codification of international relations;
- action in the event of natural and man-made disasters;
- the rehabilitation and development of the world's poorest countries;
- the transformation of world trade to take account of certain ethical principles;
- the implementation of commitments made by States when they ratify international treaties and vote on resolutions at international conferences.

The 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent is highly symbolic, for it is the last major event to take place in Geneva before the turn of the century. Indeed, your presence here marks the high point of a year in which we have celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions on a number of occasions.

The founding of the Red Cross and the establishment in our city of its two main bodies, the International Committee and the Federation, provided the cornerstone for an international Geneva. On behalf of the municipal authorities of Geneva, I should like to thank you for having chosen our city as the place in which to develop your activities and as the headquarters for your operations around the world.

I hope this Conference will enable you to provide international humanitarian law with a new dimension, so that it becomes an instrument which commands greater respect in what are known as today's "new conflicts". For it is the current practice of parties to a conflict to wage war without witnesses — a practice that has been applied in some parts of the Great Lakes region of Africa and, more recently, in Kosovo, East Timor and Chechnya. In such conflicts, humanitarian endeavours are hindered by military action that no longer respects the limits imposed by international law and only allows access to victims once the disaster is over or after military stabilization forces have arrived.

A decline of this nature is bound to disturb us, because we know that all armed forces, no matter whose they are, will disregard the principles that are intended to limit their action unless another type of combatant, a "third combatant", is present. Allow me to quote Dr Marcel Junod to illustrate my point.

At the conclusion of his book describing his role as a Red Cross "warrior without weapons" from 1933 to 1945, Dr Junod says:

"Again and again on the missions which took me to many theatres of war, I had the lively impression that I too was a combatant engaged in battle.

A battle must be waged against all those who violate, or neglect, or know nothing of, the provisions of the Geneva Conventions. A battle must be waged for their proper application and for their extension. And if the texts should prove imperfect, then a battle must be waged to secure recognition for their spirit."

The decisions you take in Geneva today, Ladies and Gentlemen, will provide these "warriors without weapons"

or "third combatants" with the means to carry out their humanitarian work tomorrow!

I hope that your Conference will result in the strengthening of humanitarian activities around the world and that the commitments you make will be implemented, particularly those concerning the universal acceptance of international humanitarian law.

I should like to extend a warm welcome to all those taking part in the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent and I wish you a very pleasant stay in Geneva. Thank you.

(Applause)

**ADDRESS BY MS MARTINE BRUNSCHWIG GRAF,
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE OF
THE REPUBLIC AND CANTON OF GENEVA**

(Original French):

Madam President of the Confederation, Madam Chairman of the Standing Commission, Madam President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Mr President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mr Mayor of Geneva, Ladies and Gentlemen,

A great number of people involved in humanitarian work throughout the world are gathered here today for the opening ceremony of the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. On behalf of the authorities of Geneva and of the citizens of the Republic and Canton of Geneva, I wish to extend a warm welcome to all of you.

Ever since this summer, buildings throughout our city have been draped with banners displaying the slogan "the power of humanity". These banners speak of human beings, of their rights, their hopes and their tragedies, and above all of the basic principles that should govern relations among them. Anyone who walks through Geneva today will thus have much food for thought and be prompted to consider his own ability to help make the world a better place. Perhaps it would be wise of us simply to adopt the thinking of a first-aid instructor from Côte d'Ivoire who was quoted in a brochure published for the International Conference: "My wish", he said, "is that every community, no matter how small, be able to help people and save lives in the event of a disaster". This statement underscores the joint responsibility we bear to show solidarity with all those who are suffering. The Federation and the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have paved the way for this by relying heavily on volunteers in the field to develop the autonomy of local communities. Today's ceremony, held to launch the International Conference, should serve to remind us of the need to promote a greater sense of civic duty and to encourage volunteer work, two pillars of humanitarian action as the twentieth century comes to a close. Very recently, the Red Cross has had to mourn the loss of several more of its members. Let us pay tribute to them by stressing how important it is not to break the chain of solidarity.

Mr President of the ICRC, as you will soon step down from your post, the authorities of Geneva would like to take this opportunity to express their gratitude for the passion you have shown for your work and for the relentless efforts you have made to combat all that is intolerable.

Geneva has long been the home of humanitarian action. Now, more than ever, it wishes to prove itself worthy of this responsibility by facilitating humanitarian work in every way it can. On behalf of the authorities of Geneva, I wish this Conference every success in the tasks it has set itself. Allow

me to conclude by quoting a citizen of South Africa: "Teach your children that differences of opinion can never justify the use of violence". Thank you.

(Applause)

**ADDRESS BY MS RUTH DREIFUSS, PRESIDENT
OF THE SWISS CONFEDERATION**

(Original French):

Madam Chairman of the Standing Commission, Madam President of the International Federation, Mr President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Madam President of the State Council, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

"The power of humanity", the inspiring slogan under which the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent has been placed, is one of hope. Hope for a better future, one that we yearn for and that we must bring about, and hope for action that is guided by respect for human dignity, compassion for all those who are suffering, and solidarity. Your presence here today testifies to your common will to contribute to the power of humanity through your support for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

Switzerland is especially pleased to host this Conference in the year of the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, four treaties which constitute the very cornerstone of international humanitarian law. Our country's humanitarian commitment is closely linked to the city of Geneva, where the co-organizers of this Conference have their headquarters and which is home to numerous international and non-governmental organizations that are at the forefront of humanitarian action.

Let the work of this Conference be imbued with the spirit of Geneva, a city that provides a window on the world and a prime venue for meetings, consultation and reflection. You are about to finalize and adopt a Plan of Action for the years 2000 to 2003. For States as well as for the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, this document will set priorities regarding future steps to be taken. I truly hope that the objectives laid down in this Plan of Action will receive your support and that you will make it your personal duty to cooperate in its implementation.

The three themes on which the Plan of Action centres have been at the very heart of humanitarian action ever since the days of Henry Dunant. The protection of victims of armed conflict, humanitarian assistance in times of war and other disasters and the improvement of the lives of vulnerable people are, at the end of the twentieth century, unfortunately still major concerns for us all. This does not mean, however, that international humanitarian law and humanitarian action are ineffective. On the contrary, they can contribute to a large extent towards preventing the most intolerable suffering and bringing relief to the victims. Humanitarian law and action are closely linked: indeed, it is essential to have a legal basis for action and for the identification and punishment of odious acts that are repugnant to the human conscience.

I welcome the fact that the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement seeks constantly to enhance the effectiveness of its action. This underscores the determination of all of us who are gathered here today not to give up or to despair in the face of human pain and suffering.

Together, on the basis of the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, which we share and accept as

universal human values, we can affirm and consolidate the power of humanity. I thank you and commend you for the energy and commitment you have shown and for your unfailing courage and determination.

(Applause)

(Musical interlude: Up with People)

**ADDRESS BY MR CORNELIO SOMMARUGA,
PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL
COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS**

(Original French):

As we approach the end of a century marked by great cataclysms, at a time when uncertainty is rife, there is a strong need to reassert the pre-eminence of human life and human dignity. Those of us who work in the humanitarian field already do this in our daily efforts to assist victims and other vulnerable people, but in this task we need to have the full backing of the community of States.

Many conferences are attended by representatives of States and others bring together representatives of humanitarian organizations. However, there are few opportunities for States and aid agencies to meet and discuss the major humanitarian issues of our times. Tomorrow, in Geneva, such an opportunity will arise. Representatives of most of the 188 States party to the Geneva Conventions, whose 50th anniversary we have just commemorated, will be able to exchange views with representatives of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in the presence of numerous observers, including our friends from the non-governmental organizations and international organizations active in the humanitarian field.

This conference is a unique forum, where international civil society and governments can come together and talk. And we have much to say to governments, in particular the fact that one third of the six billion people who inhabit our planet today are living below the poverty line, subsisting on less than one dollar a day. This is both unacceptable and avoidable. Then, there is the fact that severe environmental damage is bound sooner or later to trigger disasters of untold proportions: the fact that far greater efforts must be made to contain certain endemic diseases which affect the poorest countries; the fact that so-called natural disasters are very often man-made and the fact that war, which seems to thrive in some parts of the world, cannot excuse the atrocities we are witnessing day after day.

Yes, even wars have limits.

No, such things are not inevitable.

One could object, quite rightly, that States are no longer the sole players on the international scene. This is why, without any desire to engage in polemics, I would also like to address the representatives of financial and economic interests, simply to tell them that economic globalization has as its inevitable corollary the globalization of responsibility. I trust that I am not being overly optimistic when I say that the profit motive need not necessarily conflict with the general interests of humanity. If it does, then we must choose humanity over profit.

During the next few days, we shall undertake a number of serious commitments. We shall also debate important issues during the workshops that are to be held. We may at times disagree. But above all we shall strive as one to promote the interests of the destitute, the excluded and the victims of armed conflicts and other disasters.

No, their fate is not sealed.

We can. I am deeply convinced, counter the pessimism of the mind with the optimism that comes from resolute action.

For it is not enough to dream of a better world, we must do everything in our power to make it better.

(Applause)

**ADDRESS BY DR ASTRID N. HEIBERG,
PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL
FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND
RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES**

(Original English):

Madam President of the Swiss Confederation, Madam President of the Council of State of the Republic and Canton of Geneva, Mr Mayor of Geneva, Your Royal Highnesses, Madam Chairman of the Standing Commission, Mr President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mr Bertrand Piccard, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear Red Cross and Red Crescent friends — and friends of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

Welcome to this important event for the extended Red Cross and Red Crescent family. Welcome to a week of hard work for humanity. We are well prepared, and I wish to express our gratitude for the active participation of so many governments in the planning stages of this Conference — their contribution has been crucial. Our very special thanks go to the Swiss Government for its commitment and support.

This week marks a transition period between two years of planning and many years of humanitarian commitment still to come — a commitment that we hope will be the outcome of this Conference.

We have ambitions for this week, ambitions for humanity. But one may well ask: is it reasonable to have such ambitions?

At the end of this most brutal of centuries, and indeed of decade, do we dare talk about wars having limits? Faced with a future of ever more frequent and devastating disasters, do we dare talk about preparing and responding to them more effectively?

Some would say we are naive, mere dreamers.

I would say that we are not dealing with dreams, but with the harshest of all realities: death and suffering caused by bitter conflicts, huge refugee movements, natural disasters of enormous proportions.

And we are building on the most powerful of realities: the spirit of humanity in each and every one of us.

Yes, all of us can bring about change. Our Movement is evidence of that. One hundred and forty years ago, it began with a single man who saw the need for action, and acted. A man who saw the need for change, and brought about change. A man with a vision that is still valid, still needed — desperately needed. Not for the sake of our dreams, but because of the realities of the world we live in.

At the end of this brutal, devastating century, one question must be answered: should we forsake this vision as nothing more than a dream? Or should we commit ourselves to reinforcing our vision of humanity, reinforcing our actions for humanity, bringing about change for humanity?

The realities of our world provide the answer. The realities of our world call for commitment — our common humanitarian commitment. Thank you.

(Applause)

(Screening of the video: Voices of War, Voices of Hope)

(Applause)

**ADDRESS BY H.R.H. PRINCESS MARGRIET OF
THE NETHERLANDS, CHAIRMAN OF THE
STANDING COMMISSION OF THE RED CROSS
AND RED CRESCENT**

(Original English):

Let the voices of the victims, and the voices of hope echo in our minds.

“To be hopeful in bad times is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of cruelty, but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness.

What we choose to emphasize in this complex history will determine our lives. If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something. And if we do act, in however small a way, we don't have to wait for some utopian future.

The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now, as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvellous victory.”

I quote the social historian Howard Zinn, who encapsulated in a poetic manner the reason why I believe this Conference is so important.

From our very beginnings, we, in the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, have believed that the humanitarian problems that we and other organizations face in our day-to-day work can only be solved with the cooperation of governments and a responsible attitude on their part in caring for their citizens.

The International Conferences are a time-tested means of renewing our global will to act, to build our collective future and to create the tools we need to ease the burdens of men, women and children in our communities who have been struck by life's adversities. The Conferences have laid the groundwork for the basic humanitarian concepts that are today enshrined in the 1949 Geneva Conventions, whose 50th anniversary we commemorated earlier this year.

These Conventions touch many a raw nerve in the international community because they address the most basic issue of survival — not the survival of the fittest, but survival with dignity. To survive with dignity the life-shattering events that wars and disasters bring requires sacrifice and concession from those who have the power to help.

If we are to keep alive the humanitarian concepts that guide us, generation after generation and conference after conference, we must be committed to the belief that it is not your or my immediate survival which is at stake, but the survival of our children, in dignity, with shared values and a shared culture of humanity.

Every day, thousands of Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers and staff contribute their time and their hearts, and sometimes even their lives, to help others survive. Without this effort and this dedication to our Fundamental Principles, our work would be impossible. Each small act makes a world of difference for those in need.

Feeding widows and children, reuniting families that have been torn apart, visiting a prisoner and easing the anguish of a refugee — these are the acts of mercy which are the essence of our work in the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

In the week ahead, we will share and debate many views on today's humanitarian problems, so that we can search together for solutions to prevent the needless escalation of suffering. Our collective will to address these problems must make a difference in people's lives. Our commitment to humanitarian work must amount to far more than lip service.

Let us give volunteers working in communities around the world our recognition that their individual action makes all the difference. Indeed, this Conference is about people, not about paper. Thank you.

(Applause)

(Reception at the Geneva Arena hosted by the Swiss Federal Council, the Council of State of the Republic and Canton of Geneva and the Administrative Council of the City of Geneva)

3.4 FIRST PLENARY MEETING

1 November 1999
9.00 a.m.

SUMMARY: Opening of the plenary meeting by the Chairman of the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent — Election of the Chairman, Vice-Chairmen, Secretary-General, Assistant Secretaries-General and other officers of the Conference — Official announcements by the Chairman of the Conference — Establishment of the Conference's subsidiary bodies; adoption of their agendas and election of their presiding officers — Information on the procedures for electing the members of the Standing Commission, adopting the Conference Declaration and Plan of Action and recording pledges — Introduction of the Conference Declaration and Plan of Action — Keynote address by the President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies — Keynote address by the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross — Keynote address by the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations — Guest speakers: World Health Organization, UNICEF and World Food Programme — Presentation of the "People on War" survey — Workshops.

OPENING OF THE PLENARY MEETING BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE STANDING COMMISSION OF THE RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT

H.R.H. PRINCESS MARGRIET OF THE NETHERLANDS (Chairman of the Standing Commission)
(*Original English*):

I hereby declare the first plenary meeting of the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent open.

May I ask you to rise for a moment of silence in honour of those who recently lost their lives in the service of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

(*Moment of silence*)

I propose that we now proceed with the agenda for this meeting, which was adopted by the Council of Delegates.

It is my pleasure to introduce item 2 of the agenda, the election of the Chairman, Vice-Chairmen, Secretary-General, Assistant Secretaries-General and other officers of the Conference. In accordance with Rule 15, paragraph 3 of the Rules of Procedure, I call on the Chairman of the Council of Delegates to give us the Council's proposals.

ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN, VICE-CHAIRMEN, SECRETARY-GENERAL, ASSISTANT SECRETARIES-GENERAL AND OTHER OFFICERS OF THE CONFERENCE

Mr C. SOMMARUGA (ICRC)
(*Original English*):

Thank you very much, Madam Chairman.

Distinguished Delegates, pursuant to its resolution of 29 October 1999, the Council of Delegates of the Red Cross and Red Crescent recommends that Professor Mamdouh Gabr, Secretary-General of the Egyptian Red Crescent Society, be elected Chairman of the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

(*Applause*)

Prof. M. GABR (Chairman of the Conference)
(*Original English*):

Madam Chairman of the Standing Commission, Your Royal Highnesses, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, dear friends of the Red Cross and Red Crescent,

As an African and an Arab, I am very touched by the honour you have done me in electing me to chair this Conference. I express my thanks to all of you and I promise to serve the goals of the Conference to the best of my ability. Above all, however, I will need your cooperation and your help. I give

the floor back to the Chairman of the Council of Delegates, President Sommaruga, to continue with the second item of our agenda.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CONFERENCE'S SUBSIDIARY BODIES, ADOPTION OF THEIR AGENDAS AND ELECTION OF THEIR PRESIDING OFFICERS

Mr C. SOMMARUGA (ICRC)
(*Original English*):

Mr Chairman. Distinguished Delegates.

Pursuant to the same resolution, the Council of Delegates has a number of proposals that I will now slowly read out to you.

As Vice-Chairman of the Conference and Chairman of the Drafting Committee, the Council recommends Mr Philippe Kirsch, Ambassador of Canada to Sweden. As Vice-Chairmen of the Conference, Ambassador Franz Muheim, President of the Swiss Red Cross, Ms Zoy Katevas de Sclabos, President of the Chilean Red Cross, and Ambassador Yolande Biké, Permanent Representative of Gabon in Geneva. As Secretary-General of the Conference, Ambassador Jean-François Kammer. As Assistant Secretaries-General, Ms Yolande Camporini of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and Mr Jean-Luc Blondel of the International Committee of the Red Cross. As Co-Chairman of the Plenary Commission for theme I, H.E. Mr Boris Shikmuradov, Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan. As Co-Chairman for theme II, Mr Christopher Lamb, Ambassador of Australia to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. As Co-Chairman for theme III, Mr Teófilo Siman, President of the Salvadorean Red Cross Society. As Rapporteur of the Plenary Commission for theme I, Mr Tom Buruku, Chairman of the Uganda Red Cross Society. As Rapporteur for theme II, Dr Tahar Cheniti, Secretary-General of the Tunisian Red Crescent. As Rapporteur for theme III, Ambassador Anne Anderson, Permanent Representative of Ireland in Geneva. As Vice-Chairmen of the Drafting Committee, Ambassador Marika Fahlén, from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Sir Alan Munro, Vice-Chairman of the British Red Cross, and Ambassador Jean-Pierre Cabouat, Advisor on International Affairs of the French Red Cross.

(*Applause*)

Prof. M. GABR (Chairman of the Conference)
(*Original English*):

I consider that we have now set up the Bureau according to Rule 16 of our Rules of Procedure. I look forward to working with such eminent people in the course of the Conference.

(*Applause*)

OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CONFERENCE

Prof. M. GABR (Chairman of the Conference)
(Original English):

Ladies and Gentlemen, the whole world is represented here today. Let us appreciate at its true value this cultural and political diversity and this unique opportunity to address together the major humanitarian issues of our time, so as to better come to the aid of the victims of war and disaster, the most vulnerable of all people.

As far as participation is concerned, it should be understood that the designation "Palestine" will be used in place of the designation "Palestine Liberation Organization", without prejudice to the observer status and functioning of that organization. Palestine will participate as an observer and will be seated immediately after the observer States and before the other observers. It should also be understood that the participation of the Yugoslav Red Cross, as a member of this Conference, is considered to have no bearing on the legal succession of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Our Conference today is unique and innovative, not only because of the fabulous opening ceremony we attended yesterday and the fact that this is the last Conference to be held before the third millennium, but also because the Standing Commission took great pains to improve the format and content of this event. The Conference Declaration and Plan of Action will be substituted for a number of specific resolutions, so please bear with me for the next few minutes as I go over some technical details that will facilitate our work and ensure the smooth running of our meetings.

National Societies and governments will hold a large number of workshops on the margins of the Conference. They will also voluntarily pledge to undertake specific humanitarian commitments in the period 2000 to 2003. Moreover, today you will notice in this plenary session a new element, the presence among us of several eminent representatives of relevant United Nations agencies. We are particularly honoured to welcome them. The Conference is meeting today in plenary and will reconvene in that form on Friday and Saturday. In addition, the Conference will set up two distinct bodies working in parallel, the Plenary Commission and the Drafting Committee.

On Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, the Plenary Commission will debate the three themes contained in the Plan of Action. A speakers list is being drawn up for that purpose and requests for the floor will be taken at a desk set up in the main hall. It is important that your delegation contact the desk as soon as possible to specify when and on which themes you wish to speak. In view of the time constraints, the Chairmen of the various bodies will maintain the past practice of limiting speeches to five minutes (a green light will appear on the screen as a reminder). This is necessary to ensure that all delegations are able to speak at the Plenary Commission meetings. A report on each of the three themes will be prepared by separate Rapporteurs, the three reports will be presented to the plenary meeting on Friday morning and they will be included in the official proceedings of the Conference. The reports are intended to reflect developments in the dialogue between the Movement and the States and should provide food for thought over the coming years.

As already mentioned, in addition to the Plenary Commission there will be an open-ended Drafting Committee, thus enabling all the delegations to take part in finalizing the Conference Declaration, its Plan of Action and various

technical resolutions. The documents produced by the Drafting Committee will be submitted to the plenary meeting for adoption on Saturday morning.

May I remind you that, contrary to the procedure followed at previous Conferences, we shall be considering the adoption by resolution of a Plan of Action containing all the conclusions of the Conference regarding the substantive agenda that is in front of you. I would like to emphasize that the Plan of Action will have the same character as the resolutions traditionally adopted by our conferences in the past.

The Drafting Committee will start its work at 5.00 p.m. today and will continue to meet from Tuesday to Friday. Whether or not it holds night sessions will depend, as usual, on the progress made in achieving a consensus. The Committee will in principle focus its attention at each session on a specific item of the agenda. In practice, however, considerable flexibility will be required as the use of time and the choice of topics must be adapted to the actual discussions. It will be up to the Chairman of the Drafting Committee to decide how the various parts of the Declaration, the Plan of Action and the technical resolutions are to be considered. He may also decide to hold informal consultations or set up working groups to deal with specific issues. He may, moreover, appoint alternative presiding officers for the Drafting Committee on a temporary basis. May I request that all delegates bear in mind the magnitude of the task at hand and extend their full cooperation to the Chairman, the Vice-Chairmen and the other officers of the Drafting Committee throughout the Conference. As the discussions of the Drafting Committee will be informal, no name plates will be used at its meetings.

I would like to draw your attention to Rule 2 of the Rules of Procedure of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, which stipulates that those rules shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to the Plenary Commission and other subsidiary bodies. This means that the Chairmen of those bodies will have the same rights and duties as the Chairmen of the Conference, including the responsibility to ensure strict compliance with Article 11, paragraph 4, of the Statutes, which I am now going to read to you.

"All participants in the International Conference shall respect the Fundamental Principles and all documents presented shall conform with these Principles. In order that the debates of the International Conference shall command the confidence of all, the Chairman and any elected officer responsible for the conduct of business shall ensure that none of the speakers at any time engages in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature."

Finally, I would like to point out that the media have been invited to attend the plenary meetings and the discussions of the Plenary Commission. The secretariat will work out the practical arrangements concerning their presence. The workshops will also be open to the media. Unless I hear any objections, I will take it that you all agree with this way of proceeding.

I now consider that the Plenary Commission and the Drafting Committee have been set up in accordance with item 3 of the agenda and I suggest that we move on to item 4.

It has been proposed that on Tuesday, after the presentation of the reports on, respectively, the First Periodical Meeting on International Humanitarian Law and the centennial of the first International Peace Conference, the Plenary Commission examine theme I of the Draft Plan of Action, namely, "the protection of victims of armed conflicts through respect for international humanitarian law". The debate on theme II,

“humanitarian action in times of armed conflicts and other disasters”, will take place on Wednesday and the debate on theme III, “strategic partnership to improve the lives of vulnerable people”, on Thursday.

Before moving on to item 5 of the agenda, I would like to thank you for your patience in listening to these technical explanations. Allow me also to say a few words in Arabic.

Prof. M. GABR (Chairman of the Conference)
(*Original Arabic*):

I would like once again to stress the importance of the 27th International Conference — the last one to be held this century. In the face of mounting crises and countless disasters, our hearts go out to the victims every day. At the same time we mourn the ICRC delegates who lost their lives in Chechnya. We are also in thought with the families of those who died in the recent Egyptian Air crash in the Atlantic ocean.

Prof. M. GABR (Chairman of the Conference)
(*Original English*):

After this short statement, which I could only express in my native language, I would like to ask Ambassador Jean-François Kammer, Secretary-General of the Conference, to present item 5 of the agenda, which concerns the procedures for electing the members of the Standing Commission, adopting the Conference Declaration and Plan of Action and recording pledges. Ambassador Kammer, you have the floor. Thank you.

(*Applause*)

INFORMATION ON THE PROCEDURES FOR ELECTING THE MEMBERS OF THE STANDING COMMISSION, ADOPTING THE CONFERENCE DECLARATION AND PLAN OF ACTION AND RECORDING PLEDGES.

Amb. J.-F. KAMMER (Secretary-General of the Conference)
(*Original French*):

Thank you, Mr Chairman. Each delegation to the Conference has received a file containing a brief explanatory note on the procedure for the election of the members of the Standing Commission.

Articles 20 and 21 of the Rules of Procedure of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement set out the voting procedure and the terms and conditions for the election of the members of the Standing Commission. Article 21, paragraph 1, stipulates in particular that nominations for the Standing Commission should be delivered in closed envelopes, with the curriculum vitae of each candidate, to the Chairman of the Bureau, 48 hours before the opening of the meeting in which the election is to take place. The Bureau must circulate the curriculum vitae of each candidate at least 24 hours before that meeting. When nominating candidates, personal qualities and the principle of fair geographical distribution should be taken into account.

Each delegation to the Conference is entitled to one vote. The election of the members of the Standing Commission will take place during the second plenary session of the Conference on Friday, 5 November, at 9.00 a.m. Nominations should therefore be submitted to the Chairman of the Conference by 3 November at 9.00 a.m.

The names and curricula vitae of the candidates, provided in the three official working languages of the Conference, will be placed in your pigeonholes 24 hours before the election, that is by 4 November at 9.00 a.m.

All the registered delegations must be present on Friday 5 November in the morning for the compulsory roll call held to determine the absolute majority required for election during the first ballot. Each delegation may submit a maximum of five names for the first ballot. Additional ballots will be held as necessary, until five candidates have been elected.

During the voting procedure, which will take place in room 15, the Conference will listen to the Rapporteurs of the three meetings of the Plenary Commission.

As regards the Declaration and Plan of Action, allow me to remind you that, in conformity with Article 10 of the Statutes, the International Conference adopts its decisions or declarations in the form of resolutions. These documents will therefore be submitted to you for adoption as a draft resolution.

In addition to adopting the Declaration and Plan of Action, the members of the 27th International Conference may make pledges to carry out specific humanitarian activities during the years 2000 to 2003.

A pledge stand will be open from today through Thursday 4 November during the working hours of the Conference. Pledge forms are available at the stand. All completed forms will be placed in the Honour Book. They should be made in English, French or Spanish and should contain the following:

- the name of the National Society or State;
- the pledge itself (maximum 10 lines);
- the date on which the pledge was made;
- the name and title of the person signing the pledge.

An overview of the pledges by subject will be presented during the closing ceremony.

I should like to mention that two pledges — one by a State delegation and the other by a National Society delegation — will be presented to you briefly at the end of our plenary session today.

Prof. M. GABR (Chairman of the Conference)
(*Original English*):

Thank you very much, Ambassador Kammer. Before moving on to item 6 of the agenda, I would like to ask the following elected officers to join us on the podium: Ambassador Muheim, Ambassador Biké, Ms Katevas de Sclabos and Ambassador Kirsch. It is a great honour for me now to give the floor to the Chairman of the Standing Commission, Princess Margriet of the Netherlands, who will introduce our next agenda item.

INTRODUCTION OF THE CONFERENCE DECLARATION AND PLAN OF ACTION

H.R.H. PRINCESS MARGRIET OF THE NETHERLANDS (Chairman of the Standing Commission)
(*Original English*):

Thank you, Mr Chairman. I have great pleasure in introducing the Declaration and Plan of Action that were drafted for the 27th International Conference. Extensive consultations were carried out on both of these documents, which underwent several revisions. The Standing Commission approved them for submission to the Conference, in the firm belief that this body must make a powerful statement of concern and solidarity, and adopt practical and measurable action points to improve the implementation of international humanitarian law and to make humanitarian work in general, and that of the Movement in particular, more effective.

The Declaration is meant to convey a message to the world, in the spirit of "the power of humanity", as a challenge to all of us. We should not be overwhelmed by the immensity of the problems we face, rather, we must work together for a better future. It is a united appeal to halt excesses and to bring the world to act with greater humanity. We, in the Movement, hope that this Conference can adopt the Declaration as it stands.

Some people wonder why we need to have a Plan of Action which covers so many topics. This is a good question, but for me, the answer is clear. The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is involved in a wide range of activities on a day-to-day basis. We form an integral part of civil society.

Our involvement in community health and social services is important in itself, but it is also what gives the Red Cross and Red Crescent its knowledge, experience and legitimacy in dealing with situations of conflict and disaster. The Movement's peacetime work and its high profile response to conflict and disaster are intimately related. So when we meet at the Conference, as we do relatively rarely — only once every four years — we inevitably have many issues on which we need to develop an agenda for cooperation with governments.

The Plan of Action stresses health and social services in the community because these activities in fact constitute the major contribution of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies around the world. Over 100 million volunteers and staff are involved in this work and we spend far more on it than on emergency response.

Some would argue that the International Conference's main purpose is to develop cooperation with regard to international humanitarian law and humanitarian action in response to conflict and disaster. I would agree that this is vital; however, we must focus on the full agenda of our cooperation in peace, disaster and conflict.

The capacity to make a real difference is developed through day-to-day action outside disasters and conflicts. It is here that we work with the community to build relationships and promote the ideas and principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, it is here that we contribute to a culture of non-violence and the willingness to solve problems through discussion and negotiation. This in turn helps bring about greater understanding of international humanitarian law and the importance of applying it.

The Plan of Action before us today is indeed a broad-ranging document, one that reflects the Movement's scope of action and our extensive cooperation with governments.

This International Conference provides us with an opportunity to recognize that strength and to establish the interrelation between the different dimensions of our action as the basis for future work. Thank you, Mr Chairman.

(Applause)

Prof. M. GABR (Chairman of the Conference)
(Original English):

Thank you very much, Princess Margriet. We have now come to item 7 of our agenda. I shall first give the floor to the President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Dr Astrid Heiberg.

(Applause)

THE HUMANITARIAN COMMITMENT

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES

Dr A. HEIBERG (International Federation)
(Original English):

Mr Chairman, Your Royal Highnesses, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

At the heart of the Red Cross and Crescent lies humanity. Humanity as the principle of preventing and alleviating human suffering, but also humanity as the power of the human spirit — that of our more than 100 million volunteers who keep hope alive throughout the world.

"Keep hope alive!" was the motto of the 26th International Conference in 1995, which I had the honour to chair. Hope has been kept alive all through this brutal and devastating century. Through world wars, cold war, ethnic wars. Hope was kept alive in the muddy fields of Central America last year, in the flooded plains of China and Bangladesh, in the rubble caused by the destruction in Turkey and Taiwan, in the refugee camps set up in the Balkans, in the mine-riddled countryside of Angola.

And if hope has survived this century, this age of extremes, then I believe we will keep hope alive for the next century as well. But to do so calls for commitment — a common humanitarian commitment.

Although war is brutal, nature can be even worse. Over the last decade, natural disasters have on average killed around 128,000 people and affected another 136 million every year.

We may speak of exceptional combinations of drought and flood, we may speak of exceptional hurricane patterns. But what we used to consider exceptional has become a regular occurrence. Our 1999 *World Disasters Report* made some disturbing points:

- First, climate change is no longer a doomsday prophecy, but a reality. It does take place.
- Secondly, the changing climate means changing disaster patterns. We will see far more extreme weather conditions in the future, weather patterns that will cause disasters. As I speak, India has been hit again by the fury of a major cyclone.

Today's natural disasters are more complex and more comprehensive than in the past. In Honduras last December, 60 per cent of the country's economy was destroyed in just two days. We see major disasters that overload the world's emergency response capacity and drain the reserves of the global insurance industry. In parts of the Caribbean, the insurance industry has stopped functioning — the situation is too risky even for an industry that thrives on risk.

Natural disasters hit the most vulnerable people hardest. Over 90 per cent of all deaths caused by disaster occur in developing countries; and the economic losses are — relative to the size of the economy — 20 times greater than in industrial countries. Moreover, the outlook is not good: with almost a billion people now living in unplanned urban shantytowns, with deforestation wrecking natural defences and with global warming making the forces of wind, rain and sun ever harder to predict and counter, the poor people of the world are more at risk than ever before.

This is an alarming picture. But we must have the courage to move beyond gloomy predictions and depressing statistics. We must look at what solutions we can provide.

The first challenge is to prepare ourselves. Are we prepared?

An evaluation carried out last spring of preparedness and response to hurricanes George and Mitch found that international resources often arrived too late to be of assistance during the immediate post-event phase. And foreign medical teams actually placed an additional burden on health facilities at the most critical time during the response. Aid given was sometimes misdirected, because local communities were not sufficiently involved in needs assessment or response, and coordination between affected countries, international agencies and donors was inadequate. These were general findings. But are we sure they are not also relevant to us? I cannot exclude that.

New solutions are needed. Greater investment before disaster strikes — to strengthen the disaster preparedness and response capacities of hazard-prone countries — would mean fewer lives lost and fewer donor funds wasted in the aftermath.

What does all this tell us?

Disasters can no longer be separated from development. We must stop seeing disasters as disturbances in the steady progress towards greater development and instead see them as *part of development*. When governments are unable to cope with the burden of disaster, then disaster becomes a development challenge. Therefore governments, financial institutions and international organizations must integrate our knowledge of disaster patterns in their development strategies.

We do have the knowledge needed to act. We know that:

- We can *mitigate* disasters by taking measures ahead of time to reduce their impact, such as setting up better forecasting and warning systems. Many natural disasters are becoming annual events that can be predicted. What is needed is to act on these predictions.
- We can *prepare* for disasters by integrating disaster preparedness at all levels and ensuring that the international relief system matches the local system. One important lesson from Hurricane Mitch is that local preparedness must also imply being ready to receive international assistance.
- We can *respond* to disasters by improving systems to release funds more promptly.
- We can carry out *rehabilitation* work in a way that contributes to long-term improvements for vulnerable groups.

We can do this if governments and international organizations all pull in the same direction. But we cannot deliver if governments continue the present trend of cutting back on development assistance and emergency aid. Official development assistance is now at its lowest level ever and emergency aid has fallen by 40 per cent since 1994.

Negative as it may be, this trend is a reality. So rather than merely complaining — everybody does that — we prefer to take the liberty of offering some advice on how to spend the limited funds available.

Investing in disaster preparedness pays off:

- The World Bank and US Geological Survey has calculated that economic losses worldwide from natural disasters could be reduced by as much as 280 billion US dollars by investing around one-seventh of that sum in preparedness, mitigation and prevention strategies.
- Or, to speak of gains rather than losses — in China, a recent analysis indicated that 3.5 billion dollars invested

in flood control had saved the economy 12 billion dollars of potential losses.

Preparedness makes all the difference. But what do we mean by preparedness? That depends on the local reality. Let me give you two examples:

- In Bangladesh, satellites track typhoon movements in the Bay of Bengal, warning messages are relayed into threatened areas through dozens of dedicated radio stations and up to 30,000 trained Red Crescent volunteers with loudhailers encourage people to use concrete typhoon shelters. This typhoon and flood early-warning system provides a successful model of how technology and community-based action can combine to save lives.
- Less sophisticated, but no less important, are the simple signposts put up in the South Pacific, indicating east, west, north and south. When people hear weather forecasts on the radio, they will know where the cyclone is coming from and can take precautions accordingly.

So, effective preparedness can be high-tech or low-tech, but it must be local. And the backbone of local preparedness is volunteers. This is why the International Federation pledges to this Conference to strengthen the role and status of volunteers in our organization.

The importance of local and national preparedness is also evident in armed conflict. In recent years we have seen how military and militia campaigns can displace vast populations in a few hours or days. We have seen how social unrest has the potential of developing rapidly into violence. In these circumstances, humanitarian action cannot wait, and this is why we need to secure local and national preparedness.

We have seen how many armed conflicts are no longer international in the traditional sense, but are rooted in complex, national or regional realities, with history, culture and ethnic origins playing an important role. In such situations there are limits to what outsiders can do, because the conflicts are so all-encompassing, so intertwined with conditions on the spot. This is why we can prevent violence more effectively with local Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers promoting humanitarian values, and doing so in a way that is adapted to local and national realities. As an acknowledgement of this, our National Societies will take on a more active role in promoting humanitarian values and international humanitarian law, to make the next 50 years of the Geneva Conventions even more successful than the past 50 years.

Any society is an intricate network of history, culture, economy, politics, all the factors that shape local and national identity. When this network is threatened with deterioration, because of conflict or disaster, then those living in the society, those who are part of its fabric, are the ones best placed to prevent, limit and repair. International assistance in times of emergency will always be needed, but no international organization, no donor government or donor National Society can replace preparedness on the spot.

Our Movement as well must acknowledge this in its international activities. Our efforts worldwide must be coordinated and they must enhance local capacities. In the Seville Agreement between the ICRC, the National Societies and their International Federation, developing the capacities of those Societies is an important goal. As we are now embarking upon shaping a strategy for the Movement, we must join forces to achieve it.

Last week, the International Federation adopted Strategy 2010, a common strategy for all the National Red Cross and

Red Crescent Societies and their Federation. In it, we commit ourselves to being more focused in the way we work. A key aim is to improve the disaster preparedness and response capacities of our National Societies.

We cannot do this alone. I would therefore like to use the unique opportunity of this Conference, a purely humanitarian platform, to invite governments to unite with us in a partnership for preparedness. We have the local expertise, because we have people in virtually all the countries of the world. You have the resources, however scarce, and they should be invested with a better return. Together we can build local preparedness, together we can improve national preparedness plans, together we can incorporate disaster-preparedness into development plans. Together we can prevent a lot of misery.

We always say that we want to make a difference in the lives of vulnerable people. Our challenge is to show that we actually can take on this humanitarian commitment. Let us do so. Thank you.

(Applause)

Prof. M. GABR (Chairman of the Conference)
(Original English):

Thank you very much, President Heiberg, for expressing your views on the tasks ahead of us in the next century. I now give the floor to the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mr Cornelio Sommaruga.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

Mr C. SOMMARUGA (ICRC)
(Original French):

The 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent opens halfway between two symbolic dates.

A few weeks ago, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions. In a few weeks' time, we shall enter a new century and a new millennium.

These two events must prompt us to look back at the past, in order to learn the lessons it offers; even more, they must prompt us to turn towards the future, in order to gain a better understanding of the promises it holds and the dangers that lie ahead.

Let us first take a look at the past.

The adoption of the new Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 was a remarkable step forward in humanitarian terms, especially in view of the approval of a new Convention protecting civilians in time of war. It was also a political achievement of the highest order for, with the blockade of Berlin and civil war in China, the world seemed more divided than ever. And yet, despite these divisions, the States succeeded in rallying around the red cross and red crescent emblems, and adopted new regulations for the protection of war victims.

While the new Geneva Conventions saved millions of lives, the division of the world into two antagonistic blocs all too often hindered respect for humanitarian law during the tragic conflicts spawned by the Cold War.

We need to remember this and rid ourselves of the mistaken idea that things used to be easier. The obstacles were different, but they were no less real than those that are facing us today.

The Cold War ended 10 years ago with the pulling-down of the Berlin Wall. There is no reason to regret that period, in

which humankind lived under the constant threat of its own annihilation.

But we do have to acknowledge that the ending of the Cold War did not bring the universal peace that the world's peoples had been hoping for. While political settlements were found for several major conflicts in Central America, South-East Asia and southern Africa, other conflicts have persisted as endogenous factors took over from the former ideological confrontation. But above all, the ending of the Cold War unleashed tension and hatred which have culminated in exceptionally violent conflicts, especially in the Balkans, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

The world has admittedly overcome its former divisions and is bound tightly together in an increasingly dense network of exchanges, thanks to the extraordinary development of transport and communications media. In spite of this, we are seeing a rise in demands based on the assertion of identity, leading all too often to intolerance, to exclusion, to war — and sometimes to the extreme form of intolerance we thought had been banished for good: genocide.

The international community and humanitarian agencies are more and more often confronted with situations marked by a proliferation of actors of violence, the complete collapse of State structures and the ever-closer intertwining of political and criminal activity.

And although the needs of the victims are perhaps greater than they have ever been before, the work of humanitarian organizations is frequently paralysed by lack of security. In recent years the International Committee of the Red Cross, like other institutions, has paid a very high price for its determination to come to the aid of victims of conflict in spite of today's increasingly chaotic environment. Here I wish to pay tribute to our delegates, our locally recruited staff and the first-aid workers from National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies who have lost their lives in the course of their humanitarian duties. I would also like to express my solidarity with all the other humanitarian agencies that have been the victims of aggression.

Kidnappings, assaults, murders — sadly, such tragic events reflect a growing disdain for international humanitarian law, for the protective emblem and for the dignity of the human being.

Indeed, day after day the ICRC is faced with serious and repeated violations of humanitarian law.

There is not enough time here to review the different conflict areas in which the ICRC is at work. Suffice it to say that our delegates are currently present in over 50 countries racked by war, civil war or other forms of violence, in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Latin America and Europe. This figure alone gives an idea of the number of conflicts raging in the world today and of the scale of the needs of the wounded, of prisoners and of civilian victims of hostilities.

In defining the features common to all these conflicts I see five issues of particular concern, which I would like to bring to your attention.

The first is the plight of the civilian population. Civilians are all too often deliberately picked out as targets. The aim of war is no longer merely to achieve military victory, but rather to change the ethnic make-up of the territory being fought over by directing hostilities against the civilian population. Civilians are deliberately attacked — either to force them to flee, or to eliminate them. The recent events in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Rwanda, Kosovo and East Timor are fresh in all our memories. Such a trend undermines the foundations of humanitarian law.

But the threat extends further still: it is the very foundations of human coexistence that are jeopardized by ethnic cleansing and genocide. In the face of such policies the international community was duty-bound to react. And it did so. With varying degrees of success, it is true, and often confusing political considerations with humanitarian concerns.

The second issue has to do with anti-personnel mines — a topic that was already discussed thoroughly at previous conferences. Nonetheless, the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross must speak out against weapons that strike without discrimination, that maim their victims for life, and that continue to cause casualties long after hostilities have ended.

The adoption of the Ottawa Convention was a victory in the struggle against these treacherous weapons. But the Convention still has to be universally ratified — so far only 89 States are bound by the treaty. And its provisions still have to be respected. We need to mobilize once again if we are to achieve these goals.

The third issue has to do with the trade in light weapons, which cause unspeakable suffering and destabilize countries into which weapons flow without any control. Exporting States and firms need to remember that they share responsibility with the combatants for the use made of such arms.

Finally, I would like to draw special attention to the plight of innocent victims, particularly children caught up in the turmoil of war. I am thinking of child soldiers, of all those children who are sometimes forcibly enrolled and often sent on the most perilous missions as they cannot measure the danger involved. Many are killed or mutilated. All are deprived of their childhood, which is annihilated in the horror of combat. But we must also denounce the assaults made on children — the murders, the rapes and the violence that no argument can possibly justify.

Like that of children, the suffering of women concerns us, and here I wish to highlight the ICRC's commitment to devoting particular attention to the plight of the women who are victims of armed conflicts, in all its activities — in its dissemination programmes, its protection work and its relief programmes. This is a solemn undertaking which the ICRC has asked me to express before this Conference.

And now, if we turn towards the future, we are forced to admit that we do not yet see the emergence of a new international order. Ten years ago the world entered a period of transition and instability, which has given rise to new conflicts.

There is every reason to believe that, in the years to come, these conflicts will cause even more victims than in the past, if only because of demographic growth, the increased vulnerability of population groups as a result of urban development, the deterioration of the natural environment and above all the proliferation of weapons of all kinds.

All the analyses conducted so far indicate that internal conflicts will be far more numerous than conflicts between States. As a consequence of the disappearance of bipolar rivalry, future conflicts — whether international or internal — will no doubt involve a much greater number of perpetrators of violence, leading in some cases to the complete collapse of State structures.

Whatever the outlook, we cannot — indeed, we must not — allow ourselves to give way to pessimism or to resignation in the face of the difficulties which appear to lie ahead. On the contrary, we need to act.

That is why the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is putting forward a Plan of Action designed in particular to strengthen respect for humanitarian law and, thereby, to enhance the protection of war victims. This plan is based on the conviction — born of experience — that if we want to achieve effective results, we must seek to contain violence, rather than react when confronted with a mounting tide of wanton brutality.

You are all familiar with this Plan of Action. The measures proposed require universal recognition of the humanitarian law treaties, the incorporation of these treaties in the domestic legislation of States, the adoption of various mechanisms to ensure that those who must respect humanitarian law are well informed of its provisions, and finally, efforts to prevent and repress violations of the law.

The international community recently gave itself the means of ensuring repression at the international level, by establishing the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda and by adopting the Statute of the International Criminal Court, which marks a decisive step forward in this field. All those who might be tempted to violate the rules of humanitarian law will know from now on that perpetrators of crimes may have to answer for their acts.

Finally, we must bear in mind that, by adhering to the Geneva Conventions, States have committed themselves not only to respecting these Conventions but also to ensuring compliance with their provisions under all circumstances. Hence all members of the international community have undertaken to see to it that these treaties are universally respected, and to this end to employ all the means at their disposal — diplomatic pressure, pressure within the framework of international organizations, and economic pressure, insofar as exceptions are made in favour of the most vulnerable population groups.

Does this obligation go so far as to authorize the use of force? International humanitarian law does not provide for this, but nor does it rule it out. This is an issue that needs to be resolved in the light of the provisions of the United Nations Charter.

As the consultation of over 20,000 victims of war carried out by the ICRC over recent months has shown, everyone — and I mean everyone — is aware of the need for rules that limit violence in war, even if ideas differ as to the content of these rules.

What war victims and humanitarian organizations expect from governments is not that they should substitute for humanitarian agencies by setting up their own relief operations, but that they should see to it that the rules to which they have subscribed are respected. It is up to the States to ensure that there is universal compliance with the treaties to which they are party, and it is by doing this that they can make a decisive contribution to the protection of the victims of war.

These victims have placed their trust in us. The 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent must send a clear message to the world that there is a need to restore respect for humanitarian law.

Human beings and respect for human dignity must be placed back at the heart of political thinking and decision-making, for human beings are still the main concern of both States and the international community.

We need to open our hearts and heed the appeals of the victims. We need to listen to what they have to say and give them the assistance they need. We need to afford them the protection which their situation demands — basing our action wherever we can on the Geneva Conventions, and going beyond them when necessary. We need to promote greater tolerance and true solidarity.

"No matter what their intrinsic value and significance, texts rely for their application on the action of men", wrote Dr Marcel Junod, an ICRC delegate, who worked on all continents. And he added:

"Again and again on the missions which took me to many theatres of war, I had the lively impression that I too was a combatant engaged in battle.

A battle must be waged against all those who violate, or neglect, or know nothing of, the provisions of the Geneva Conventions. A battle must be waged for their proper application and for their extension. And if the texts should prove imperfect, then a battle must be waged to secure recognition for their spirit.

Whoever accepts such a mission is in no way exempt from the risks of battle, but he must become blind and deaf to the reasons why it is being waged.

There are never more than two adversaries engaged in battle. But these adversaries are apt to find that suddenly in their midst is a third combatant — a warrior without weapons."

These warriors without weapons are the ICRC delegates who venture out between the lines to organize an exchange of prisoners or to deliver relief supplies. They are the Red Cross or Red Crescent first-aid workers who are prepared to risk their lives in order to help those who suffer. But the term also applies to each one of us, meeting at this Conference under the red cross and red crescent emblems.

The victims of war have placed their hopes in us. We must live up to their expectations.

(Applause)

Prof. M. GABR (Chairman of the Conference)
(Original English):

Thank you very much, President Sommaruga, for your overview of the ICRC's activities, commitments and stands on certain issues, and for your vision of the future. I am confident that you will always be with us, supporting us with your wisdom and energy even after your term of office as ICRC President has expired. Thank you once again.

It is a great pleasure for me to introduce the next speaker, the Honourable Ms Louise Fréchette, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations. Madam, you have the floor.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Ms L. FRÉCHETTE (UN)
(Original English):

Mr Chairman of the Conference, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to address you today.

Throughout its history, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has been the world's standard-setter in humanitarian action. You have been an inspiration to the community of nations, and an indispensable partner to the United Nations.

The partnership between our organizations continues to grow, even as we face an ever more complex humanitarian agenda. It is an agenda replete with new challenges, which I hope this Conference will help us explore together:

- how to ensure the neutrality and impartiality of humanitarian assistance;

- how to promote cooperation among voluntary, governmental and intergovernmental actors;
- how to coordinate effectively the provision of increasingly complex and diversified humanitarian aid.

These issues require all our resourcefulness. I hope we will be bold in our thinking over the next few days.

Earlier this year, we marked a milestone together when we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions.

Those Conventions were inspired by the guiding values of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and the International Red Cross: impartiality and humanity. They reflect humankind's determination to ensure, even in the midst of war, a minimum of respect for humanitarian principles. And they are the Conventions which the Red Cross strives, every day, to translate into practice.

Yet, in this anniversary year — this final year of the final decade of a century of war, genocide and immense suffering — we cannot say that the Conventions are universally respected. Nor can we say that, in the conflicts of the past decade, civilian populations have been spared. Civilians are still forced from their homes, driven to borders which are open one minute and closed the next, forced into hiding, separated from their families, made to act as human shields, stripped of their identities and callously killed.

Worse, in the 1990s civilians have become the very targets of warfare, in campaigns of genocide and so-called "ethnic cleansing". During the wars of the past decade, many millions have been killed. Over 30 million have been displaced. Countless men, women and children have been denied access to life-saving food and medicine.

These flagrant violations of international humanitarian law have become not just the effect of war, but almost the essence of it. We have observed that belligerents increasingly take care to avoid direct confrontation with each other. Instead, their favoured strategy to gain ground is the exercise of terror against defenceless civilians. And humanitarian assistance itself has become an instrument, cynically exploited by warring parties, as they seek to achieve military and political objectives by taking humanitarian workers hostage, or by denying them access to a starving population.

Among our own United Nations staff, civilian casualties now outnumber military ones. Just three weeks ago we had two colleagues murdered in Burundi, and one in Kosovo, within a few hours of each other. The same week, seven United Nations staff members were held hostage in Georgia. But the United Nations has no monopoly of such tragedies. The same sad reality affects all humanitarian agencies including — as I do not need to tell you — your own Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, always at the forefront of humanitarian action in the most dangerous battle zones.

In short, at the end of a century that has seen the creation and refinement of so much admirable international law, civilians have rarely been so vulnerable.

The conventions of international humanitarian and human rights law are wilfully disregarded by combatants, and enforced only sporadically by the international community.

That is deeply disturbing. Indeed, it disturbs the Security Council, which earlier this year asked the Secretary-General to prepare a report on "The Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict". He submitted that report in September, and it is available to all of you at this Conference. The report makes a total of 40 concrete recommendations, to improve the legal and physical protection of civilians in armed conflict. It also

lays particular stress on the need to bring those responsible for war crimes to account.

In this respect, the Security Council's establishment of ad hoc tribunals to prosecute and punish war criminals in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda was a major step forward. Such tribunals can be a powerful deterrent to those contemplating war crimes in the future — provided the international community makes good use of them and does not flinch from prosecuting the highest-placed offenders, who often bear the gravest responsibility.

An even more important step, of course, will be the creation of a global enforcement mechanism, the International Criminal Court. The adoption of this Court's Statute last year was a great achievement, in which the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement played a notable part. The United Nations thanks you for that, and urges you to keep up the pressure on Member States to ratify the Statute, so that the Court can start work as soon, and with as wide a jurisdiction, as possible.

On the practical side, the report recommends some very concrete measures which the Security Council could take to protect civilians. Among these are:

- preventive deployment of peace-keeping forces;
- measures to control or close down "hate media";
- greater use of targeted sanctions against those who commit egregious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, and against parties which flout the Council's authority by continually defying its resolutions;
- measures to separate armed elements from civilians, in camps for refugees and internally displaced persons;
- and, as a measure of last resort, the establishment of demilitarized humanitarian zones in the midst of conflict, with a sufficient and credible force to guarantee their safety.

All these recommendations, and others in the report, are eminently achievable if we show sufficient determination to put them into practice. They could greatly expand the range of tools and strategies available to the Security Council in responding to particular situations as they arise.

Finally, the report recommends that in extreme cases — where the parties to a conflict commit systematic and widespread breaches of international humanitarian and human rights law, causing threats of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes — the Council should be prepared to intervene with superior force, using its powers under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

There must of course be objective criteria to determine the threshold for any such intervention, but the possibility of it should be kept open, if only as a deterrent. Undoubtedly it is a difficult step to take, since it often goes against the narrowly defined national interests of some or all of the States called upon to take the decision. But there are universal principles and values which should supersede such interests. The protection of civilians in armed conflict is one of them. Ultimately, it is a matter of political will — the will to confront the cruel but complex realities of conflict today.

These realities require us all to learn and to adapt. Over the past decade alone, the role of the United Nations in matters of peace and security has evolved significantly. Most of our recent peace-keeping missions have involved us in situations of internal conflict. But there is as yet no clear consensus within the international community about its rights and responsibilities in such situations. The recent crisis in Kosovo illustrated that all too well.

In his speech to this year's General Assembly, the Secretary-General invited Member States to reflect upon these vital questions. He argued forcefully that States should not be allowed to hide behind the rampart of sovereignty to abuse the rights of their own citizens, and suggested that the international community should be prepared to act, including by using force in extreme cases, in order to stop such aggression. But he also underlined the danger inherent in allowing such decisions to be taken outside the framework of the United Nations Charter and the authority of the Security Council.

Our concerns for the safety, security and survival of innocent civilians make it imperative for the international community to forge a new consensus on these matters. Otherwise we shall be left with two equally undesirable options: action without authorization of the Security Council on the one hand, and on the other, disagreement within the Security Council resulting in inaction, while ethnic cleansing, mass deportations and murder continue before our eyes.

Yet it goes without saying, I hope, that forceful intervention is an extreme measure, justified only in extreme circumstances. It is always preferable — and should always be possible — to intervene at an earlier stage and in less drastic ways, so as to prevent matters from ever reaching such an extreme pitch.

Indeed, the Secretary-General made it clear, in his address to the General Assembly, that intervention need not take the form of using force. The best interventions are those that avert the need for that, by helping States to avoid getting into the kind of conflicts that give rise to atrocities.

Preventing wars is obviously desirable in itself, given the enormous suffering they impose. In addition, recent years have taught us an important secondary reason for wishing to develop better prevention policies. Repeatedly, the failure of prevention has involved the international community in costly and very difficult efforts to deal with the aftermath of conflict.

To take a few obvious and topical examples, look at the tasks we are now faced with in Kosovo, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in Rwanda, in East Timor, in Sierra Leone, or in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Not only is there relief to be provided, and enormous physical damage to be repaired. Not only are there basic services to be re-established. Not only are there combatants to be demobilized, mines to be cleared, elections to be organized, police forces to be trained. Hardest of all is the restoration of trust — the basis of all normal relationships between civilized human beings, but also the first casualty in every war. So it is far, far better if we can prevent conflicts from arising in the first place. And we can only hope to do that if we have a clear understanding of the forces that create them.

The Secretary-General explored this theme in a recent address to the staff of the World Bank, in which he stressed the links between conflict and poverty; between peace and healthy economic development. These links are not simple or straightforward. If poverty by itself were a sufficient cause of conflict, all poor countries would be at war. Thank God, most of them are not.

But it is surely more than coincidence that the vast majority of today's conflicts occur in the developing world, while prosperous nations can manage quite sharp differences between communities, concerning both material resources and feelings of national identity, without resorting to violence.

So that is an additional reason why we must not resign ourselves to living in a world where nearly half the human

race, some 2.8 billion people, is struggling to survive on less than two dollars a day. If we can change that — and we must — we shall surely in the process prevent many future conflicts.

But we also need to address inequalities within societies, particularly those which some researchers call “horizontal inequalities” — where power and resources are unequally distributed between groups that are also differentiated in other ways, for instance by race, religion or language. So-called “ethnic” conflicts occur between groups that are distinct in one or more of these ways, when one of them feels it is being discriminated against, or another enjoys privileges which it fears to lose. So we should be careful that our development policies help to reduce this kind of inequality, or at least do not exacerbate it — as has sometimes been the case in the past.

And we should give much higher priority to ensuring that young people have job opportunities offering them a real alternative to enlistment in armed bands which prey on their fellow citizens. Too many conflicts start, and even more become almost impossible to stop, because war is the most profitable economic activity, or even the only viable one, for significant parts of the population.

None of these prevention policies is easy. All require significant resources, which have to be spent before a crisis develops, at a time when other needs may seem much more pressing to political leaders and their constituents. But I believe the bitter experience of the last decade is making more and more of us realize that money spent on prevention is indeed well spent. And I look to your Movement, along with others that have direct experience of the appalling consequences of conflict, to help us get that vital message across. The more it is publicly understood, the better the chance that political leaders will feel able to act on it, and that something called “the international community” will at last come together to uphold the basic dignity of humankind.

That is the hope which has been kept alive, ever since your Movement began, by the men and women of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent. Your commitment to the protection of non-combatants has been clear and consistent ever since your founder, Henry Dunant, summed up his philosophy as “compassion in the midst of battle”.

And so, on behalf of the United Nations, allow me today to thank all the members of the Red Cross and Red Crescent for more than half a century of partnership. For leading the way by example, by principle and by practice. For giving hope to all the victims of conflict. May this last International Conference of your Movement in the twentieth century be a source of inspiration to all of us in the twenty-first!

(Applause)

Prof. M. GABR (Chairman of the Conference)
(Original English):

Thank you very much, Ms Fréchette, for your presentation clarifying the position of the United Nations on many of the issues we are going to discuss. Listening to you, I felt that I was listening to one of the leaders of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Thank you once again.

Since our eminent and talented speakers have been swift in putting across their points, we shall have a rather lengthy lunch break. I hope that all those who wish to do so will take this opportunity to put their names on the speakers list, to review the workshops that interest them and, even more importantly, to make pledges. The meeting is adjourned until 2.30 p.m.

(Applause)

GUEST SPEAKERS

ADDRESS BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

Dr G. HARLEM BRUNDTLAND (WHO)
(Original English):

Your Royal Highnesses, Madam President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to be here with you today, building — as we all are — on the far-sighted work of Henry Dunant. WHO is proud to pay tribute to the pioneering work of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, our partners in the quest for health, human rights and human development.

In an increasingly difficult situation, can we offer hope to victims of complex emergencies? Yes, as international organizations committed to health, we must do so.

During the 1990s, the international community has built up an unrivalled capacity to assist people in times of emergencies. Relief agencies have shown an ingenuity, a courage and a persistence which have allowed them to save thousands of lives in the most hopeless and difficult situations. This is an excellent legacy to build on for the future.

But we all know that it is no easy task. It is exceedingly difficult, as our traditional ways of organizing and managing our humanitarian assistance must be re-thought. Assistance must be not only geared towards the most urgent needs, but conceived in ways that lead to reconstruction and development. With the exception of the Second World War, the world has never seen so many people displaced as the numbers it has witnessed over the past 15 years.

At the end of a century of magnificent scientific and human progress we are seeing the mindless stunting of social development by conflicts that disorganize and demoralize civil society and erode its institutions, including health-care systems.

Tragically, many of these conflicts are occurring in the world's poorest countries, where they are not only inflicting tremendous damage today but also denying the opportunities of tomorrow. For, irrespective of who eventually wins these conflicts, the health of countries and people is being destroyed. And where there is no health, there can be no sustainable development.

The casualties of Solferino were on the battlefield; the victims were soldiers. The victims of modern war are mostly unarmed, defenceless. They are mothers, children, families. The battle pursues them into their own homes.

Yes, it is exceedingly difficult. And yet I remain optimistic. For rarely have we seen such willingness to work with and for people in complex emergencies. Donors and people on the street are heeding public appeals in ways they have rarely done before. The number of humanitarian groups has grown, and people are increasingly willing to help, give their time, and — as we so tragically know — sometimes their lives in an effort to alleviate suffering and safeguard peace.

I applaud the decision of the Norwegian Nobel Committee to award this year's Peace Prize to *Médecins sans frontières*. What better recognition could there be that humanitarian work in conflict situations is work for peace.

If we are to really offer hope, we must go further than relief and learn to talk about relief and social reconstruction in the same breath.

We must be on the site of an emergency early, but our job is also to stay on when CNN leaves. Rehabilitation must guide our immediate actions from the very first day. When the Kosovo refugees flooded into Albania and Macedonia, we urged that health care should as far as possible take place through existing channels. Investing millions in temporary health facilities while Albanian and Macedonian health centres remain under-equipped would be an ineffective use of resources. By strengthening existing facilities, we can make a lasting contribution.

Critically needed health campaigns such as those that focus on immunization go beyond the reactive dispatch of relief. Impressive results have been achieved in Thailand to protect refugee populations against malaria. Effective action against malaria during emergencies can make the difference between sending home a strengthened population free from — and informed about — malaria, or one weakened by repeated bouts of disease.

By recognizing that refugee populations are not just passive receivers of handouts, but resourceful participants in their own emergencies within the limitations forced upon them, we can tap an important resource. Too often, the victims' attempts at improving their lives are seen by relief agencies as unwanted meddling into their well-oiled relief operations. Our job is to put the victims at the centre of our activities, and reduce the limitations they face — not increase them by rigid logistics and bureaucracy. Refugees should not only be the beneficiaries of assistance, they should also be in charge of their own choices and welfare.

In working strategically for long-term gains even during acute emergencies, I believe we can use health as a bridge for peace. Cooperation in the area of health can be key for communities divided by conflict. Diseases respect neither borders nor front lines. Many health workers have reported that health concerns can bring about cooperation and even reconciliation. We saw that so clearly a few years ago during the polio immunization campaign in Central America, where warring factions united to get their children vaccinated. They had a common future to safeguard, so the first bridges of common understanding were built.

In Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo we are now forging a polio eradication campaign with UNICEF and other partners, seen by all parties as a common key to everyone's future health and development.

But we do not want those children safely vaccinated and only a few years later to carry guns. Your goals concerning respect for and advancement of international humanitarian law are so vital in this and other fields. We need your advocacy and moral force; we need to build on the success of campaigns like the one against landmines.

Complex emergencies are by definition chaotic and confusing. But if we are to succeed in our mission we must find a way through that confusion. We must take sides. Our side must be for health and social development.

I have no illusions that this will be easy. In Kosovo and East Timor, the UN administration is trying to rebuild a health sector where there is no functioning local government and where the human infrastructure is severely damaged. In Afghanistan and Myanmar, we have to steer a cautious course between responsibility towards the population and unacceptable infringements of their human rights. In several areas, we have to deal with regimes or warlords that, even if they wanted to make an effort for long-term rehabilitation of health services, don't have the budgets or the ability to go to donors and ask for funds to do so.

If we are going to make a positive impact against such tough odds, the humanitarian agencies that work with health issues must operate together as part of one, technically sound international effort. Unless we do, we will duplicate where we should be complementing. We will divide where we should unite. We will be wasteful when what the victims need is consolidated action.

We must avoid situations such as those in Bosnia and Kosovo, where hundreds of tons of unwanted drugs were sent and could not be used. I have spoken out on this already, but we will need your active participation if we are to prevent it from happening again.

Similarly, a report by WHO and the International Centre for Migration and Health highlighted how little time has become available to NGOs and international agencies for training and briefing staff going into humanitarian work. Obviously, the level of training varies enormously, but overall it is dangerously low. We must train and support our staff in the field more actively. They are faced with new ethical as well as technical dilemmas on a daily basis.

Fortunately, today we have a body of knowledge that can help us predict, prevent and mitigate the health impact of complex emergencies. Let us build on that knowledge and ensure that our responses to emergencies are science-based and sound. Not to do so would be a grave injustice towards the victims.

In our world, partnership is key to success in so many areas. We need to focus on how we can complement each other and how we can add to our achievements by pulling together. WHO and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement are already working closely on issues such as tuberculosis, tobacco and first aid. We have now decided to expand our joint efforts on the issue of blood safety — so critical for health, and so crucial to our capacity for dealing with the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

We will join forces in the celebration of World Health Day 2000, on 7 April of next year — a day dedicated to the theme of safe blood. It is more than an event. It is the building of a lasting partnership which also has implications for our ability to assist in complex emergencies.

We *can* offer assistance to the victims. Some will say this is yet another utopian dream. They said the same of the Red Cross when it was conceived. You made the dream reality for so many. Together I believe we can expand that noble ambition. Thank you.

(Applause)

Prof. M. GABR (Chairman of the Conference)

(Original English):

Thank you very much, Dr Brundtland, for this frank and practical approach to situations of conflict. I now give the floor to Ms Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of UNICEF.

ADDRESS BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND

Ms C. BELLAMY (UNICEF)

(Original English):

Mr Chairman, Your Majesty, President Sommaruga, President Heiberg, Deputy Secretary-General Fréchette, Dr Brundtland, Ms Bertini, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to join you for this 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, the world's foremost guardians of humanitarian law as well as

UNICEF's oldest and most stalwart partners in protecting the rights of children and women in natural as well as human-made disasters.

This gathering comes at an especially timely moment, in this 50th anniversary year of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, the principal instruments of international humanitarian law. Alongside their two Additional Protocols, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, whose 10th anniversary we celebrate this month, they are at the heart of the mandate of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

With the ICRC's long history in developing and strengthening humanitarian principles, and the vital role played by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and all the National Societies in natural-disaster response and preparedness, there is no mystery about why this Movement, through the ICRC, has been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize not once, but four times.

The context within which humanitarian actors work has changed considerably in the 136 years since Henry Dunant's account of a horrific battle in Solferino, Italy, inspired the process that gave the world the ICRC. Indeed, the most profound transformation in the nature of armed conflict has occurred in the relatively brief period since the end of the Cold War.

Only four years ago, UNICEF was working with its partners in some 15 countries gripped by violent conflict. Today that number has more than tripled. All these cases involve situations that profoundly threaten the lives and welfare of women and children, and the future of the very societies in which they live.

The proliferation of armed conflicts within States, the routine targeting of civilian populations, the "privatization" of warfare facilitated by private economic interests, including the universal trafficking in small arms, all of these have helped create what Graça Machel has called a moral vacuum, a vast, pitiless place in which millions of human beings, most of them women and children, are brutalized and slaughtered with impunity.

As an agency that is operational before, during and after armed conflict and other disasters, UNICEF has seen how the same children whom we have helped nurture, immunize and educate are now being systematically targeted, many of them recruited as killers, or pressed into service as porters and sexual slaves. Others end up maimed or psychologically traumatized.

It is a tragic tableau that the ICRC has been examining from the ground up in its "People on War" project, a remarkable year-long survey of some 20,000 people in 17 countries, combatants and non-combatants alike, whose opinions about why such horrors occur are being studied as part of an effort to find ways to protect civilians.

Given the complexity of today's conflicts and humanitarian crises, it is clear that a collaborative, multi-actor approach is the only way to provide effective protection for the civilian population at large and displaced women and children.

I have seen for myself the fruits of the close working relationships that exist between UNICEF, the International Federation and the National Societies, whether in the aftermath of the recent earthquake disaster in Turkey or in hurricane-ravaged Central America at this time last year. And UNICEF and the ICRC continue to collaborate on a wide variety of projects, whether it is in health and nutrition programmes in Sudan; immunization in Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo; family tracing, immuni-

zation and water and sanitation in East Timor; or child protection in West Timor.

Indeed, the collective efforts of the ICRC and UNICEF and numerous other agencies and groups, including non-governmental organizations, have helped spark a growing awareness within the international community of the primacy of the rights of women and children in situations of armed conflict and social instability.

The Security Council's recent condemnation of the targeting of women and children in armed conflict is only one of the latest signs that the issue of child rights is moving, step by step, to the very heart of the international peace and security agenda.

The ratification of a global ban on anti-personnel landmines, the adoption of the Rome Statute authorizing the creation of the International Criminal Court, the appointment of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, and the continuing campaign for a ban on the recruitment and participation of children under 18 in armed conflict, all of these are evidence of a growing international resolve to combat the culture of impunity, and in all of these, the ICRC has worked tirelessly to help mobilize public opinion on a global scale.

There are also signs that the international community is beginning to recognize the extent to which armed conflict is fuelled by private economic interests, which are as ruthless as they are powerful. And indeed, among private entities themselves, there have been some successes, such as limitations in the trade in diamonds or oil where those activities have had a negative impact in humanitarian terms. But it is clear that more initiatives are needed in connection with such issues as drug trafficking, small-arms transfers and the private use of mercenaries.

UNICEF, with its mandate as the world's leading advocate for the protection of child rights, welcomes these developments, and with partners like the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, we will continue our efforts to ensure that child protection becomes an integral component of *all* humanitarian and development activities, as well as UN peace-keeping missions.

The Security Council's resolution is in line with the recommendations of the Graça Machel Report on Children in Armed Conflict, as well as UNICEF's Anti-War Agenda and UNICEF's Peace and Security Agenda for Children that we first described to the Security Council in February.

This agenda includes an end to the use of children as soldiers and the establishment of 18 as the internationally recognized age of recruitment; protection of humanitarian assistance and humanitarian personnel; an end to impunity for war crimes and crimes against humanity, especially those committed against children; support for humanitarian mine action; and the inclusion of children in peace-building, particularly in demobilization efforts.

As the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies know from their own experiences with youth volunteers, young people bring a unique perspective to the immense task of healing and rebuilding and they have asserted their fundamental right to participate in such activities in countries ranging from Colombia and Sri Lanka to Liberia and Turkey.

Collaborative efforts are vital. Yet they must not relieve States of their primary responsibility in humanitarian crises, particularly in regard to their duty to protect the civilian population, as well as to take humanitarian action themselves or, failing that, to permit others to do so when States are either unwilling or unable.

The consequences of inaction are legion. The unwillingness of the international community to respond to repeated pleas by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to disarm the *genocidaires* in Rwanda wreaked havoc on the countries of the Great Lakes region and that terrible legacy is still being felt to this day.

The responsibility of States, in fact of all parties to conflict, also looms large in a related area that requires urgent action: the protection of humanitarian staff.

As we are all painfully aware, aid workers are coming under increasing attack — they are being kidnapped, detained, harassed, assaulted, killed and wounded in cross-fire and even deliberately murdered, as happened just last month in Burundi, where UNICEF's country representative, Luis Zuñiga, and a colleague from the World Food Programme, Saskia Louise von Meijenfeldt, became the 12th and 13th UN staff members to die in the line of duty in 1999.

In recent years, members of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement have been killed in air raids, by landmines, by stray bullets, and by attacks on their offices and vehicles. UN aircraft have been downed, with extensive loss of life. UN property has been looted with impunity, with losses exceeding many tens of millions of dollars.

Humanitarian workers have always put themselves in harm's way. It comes with the territory. But we can no longer view these tragedies as isolated incidents. They are part of a growing pattern of attacks in which humanitarian workers are being singled out. It is a pattern the world can no longer tolerate.

For his part, the Secretary-General has called on the Security Council to enhance the protection of humanitarian workers and ensure the implementation of the 1994 Convention on the Safety of UN and Associated Personnel.

I suggest that it is time to adopt an optional protocol to this instrument, one that will cover staff who are deployed by mandates other than those issued by the General Assembly and the Security Council.

However, ensuring that States will ratify the Convention, much less an optional protocol, remains a major challenge. And as we are all too well aware, treaties are effective only in direct proportion to their implementation and enforcement at the national level.

In this connection, Mr Chairman, I cannot emphasize enough the importance of ensuring early ratification of the Rome Statute on the International Criminal Court. As you are aware, the Statute addresses individual responsibility for "intentionally directing attacks against personnel, installations, material, units or vehicles involved in a humanitarian assistance or peace-keeping mission".

We are already seeing an impact on the behaviour of individual actors in the field, as a direct consequence of the fact that a very comprehensive Statute has been adopted. In particular, we have found support in recent Security Council resolutions and actions; this is also because the Statute largely reflects customary international law.

But we believe that the actual entry into force of this treaty will have a major deterrent effect with regard to attacks on humanitarian staff.

At UNICEF, we have worked hard to improve staff security by instituting systematic and predictable systems in the past few years. But recent incidents have obliged us to begin looking carefully at the ways in which we can best balance staff security and our presence on the ground aimed at protecting civilians.

At the moment, UNICEF is exploring ways to strengthen our capacity to prepare for insecurity and is supplying staff with additional training and equipment so that they can cope with the lawlessness and violence that awaits them. UNICEF, together with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the World Food Programme, has invested heavily in this area. We are also exploring joint ventures, such as the shared operation of communications equipment in West Africa.

In the last year, UNICEF helped to establish a UN-wide procedure allowing for post-exposure treatment for HIV infection of staff who have been assaulted. This service, which is now available in strategic locations worldwide, is just one example of the wide range of innovations that we must bring to the fore.

In all its efforts, UNICEF is committed to finding joint strategies to deal not only with the humanitarian consequences of emergencies, but with their root causes and solutions. This is why UNICEF stresses a holistic approach that combines humanitarian relief with long-term development objectives, whether in Angola, Kosovo, Timor, Afghanistan or the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The protection of children in armed conflict and other humanitarian crises must conform to the standards and norms embodied in international human rights instruments and humanitarian law. And we have the framework for this in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Convention is not only history's most universally embraced human rights treaty, but the only one that explicitly refers to humanitarian law. Indeed, Article 38 of the Convention specifically obligates States Parties to respect the rules of international humanitarian law relevant to children in armed conflict.

It is because of this linkage, Mr Chairman, that UNICEF has become increasingly focused on protection issues, which are key elements of today's conflicts and instability.

Unlike the ICRC and UNHCR, UNICEF is not in a position to deal with individual protection cases except in rare instances. Instead, we are concentrating our efforts on strengthening the protection environment, using a bottom-up approach to rights-based programming.

In southern Sudan, for example, and soon in East Timor, we are exploring ways to promote child rights and women's rights by linking them to local traditions and values. And in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and Tanzania in 1996 and 1997, UNICEF collaborated with UNHCR and the ICRC to set up simple systems to prevent family separations.

But in all our work, Mr Chairman, we need the help of the Movement in taking into consideration the particular needs of children.

UNICEF also looks forward to working with the Movement in preparing for a watershed event for children in 2001, an event that will mobilize international leadership to achieve the remaining goals of the World Summit for Children; tackle the huge obstacles of poverty, HIV/AIDS and armed conflict; and establish a new agenda for children for the first years of the twenty-first century.

In linking it to the special session of the General Assembly in 2001 on follow-up to the World Summit, we envision this event as the most representative gathering for children the world has ever seen. It will include not only governments, but broad elements of civil society, including children themselves, NGOs, the media and the private sector, and our colleague UN agencies.

The virtually universal embrace of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the growing concern with the protection of refugees and the internally displaced, the increasing resolve to deal with those who commit atrocities during conflicts, and the recognition that lasting peace and sustainable development require the fulfilment of the rights of children and adults, all of these are hopeful trends that can contribute to the mitigation of the effects of the many humanitarian emergencies we now face.

For UNICEF, the truest measure of our success is the protection and well-being of the world's children and the strength of our determination to act always in their best interests.

In all of this, our close and ever stronger collaboration with the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement will always be a cornerstone of our efforts. Thank you.

(Applause)

Prof. M. GABR (Chairman of the Conference)
(Original English):

Thank you very much, Ms Bellamy, for briefing us on the huge amount of work UNICEF is doing for the protection of children in conflicts and for human rights. I now give the floor to Ms Catherine Bertini, Executive Director of the World Food Programme.

ADDRESS BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

Ms C. BERTINI (WFP)
(Original English):

Men wage war — women and children suffer the consequences. This has been the case for centuries. What is new today is that violence targeted at civilians is rising again as a deliberate tactic of war. In the last decade, more women and children have lost their lives in conflicts than soldiers. In the last two years, more humanitarian workers than peace-keepers have lost their lives.

Much of the progress that has been made in honouring the Geneva Conventions seems to be unravelling. That is why this Conference's emphasis on issues like full compliance by all parties to an armed conflict with their obligations under international humanitarian law to better protect and assist the civilian population and other victims is so very important.

Your work here this week, the pledges each National Society and government makes, and ultimately, the implementation of those pledges — all of this is critical to the strengthening of basic humanitarian principles of protection.

I am afraid that we are, tragically, developing a new category of victims — humanitarian workers. Just two weeks ago, I attended the funeral of a young Dutch logistics officer, Saskia van Meijenfildt, an idealistic and compassionate young woman who was executed in a camp for internally displaced people in Burundi.

Just last Saturday, I understand that two Red Cross staff members and 25 civilians lost their lives in Chechnya. I pay tribute to all of them, and to every humanitarian worker who has been killed while helping others. On behalf of WFP, I send our condolences to the ICRC, to the Federation and to the families. I hope that the outrage in the international community over these deaths will result in action — finally — to uphold the basic principles of the Geneva Conventions for the protection of humanitarian workers.

Women suffer most in humanitarian crises. Mothers and their young children are the first to experience the pain and

humiliation of hunger and homelessness in the midst of civil war and the emotional and physical pain that accompanies brutality. Eight out of 10 victims of political violence are women and children. We have all seen this too many times.

It is hard — even for seasoned humanitarian aid workers — to imagine the depth of pain and hopelessness so many women feel in the midst of such violence. What we *can* do is bring an end to their sense of hopelessness by making them our highest priority in offering aid and by giving them control of as much of that aid as possible.

Reaching women with emergency assistance, including food aid, is crucial not just to empower them and combat their sense of hopelessness, but to carry out successful strategies to help communities cope with crises. One consequence of humanitarian emergencies is a dramatic increase in the number of female-headed households. In many cases, women and teenage girls are the sole providers of food for their families. At the same time, the greater burden on women for finding food, shelter and so on, is worsened by their decreased access, when compared with men, to resources such as relief commodities, credit, seed, tools and productive land.

Nearly three out of four emergency victims are women and young children. Yet how many of us here who work in emergencies can say that we plan all our operations, the types of rations we use, or the camp and cooking supplies we buy with that basic fact in mind?

UN humanitarian agencies, the NGOs, the ICRC and the Federation need to reassess what they do in every detail. At every step along the way, we all need to ask, "How will this affect the victims who are women? How will this lessen rather than add to their burden? Is there some way we can design our emergency action to help women recover both socially and economically? Is there some way we can give these women a sense of control and hope for their families?"

But will a focus on women work as an aid strategy? Women may be the leading victims of humanitarian emergencies, but is targeting aid on them really effective? They may be at the heart of the problem, but are they part of the solution?

At WFP, we are encouraging our field staff and our partners to follow guidelines on involving women in assessing food-aid needs, distributing food to households and monitoring distribution. We are pleased to have such an agreement with the ICRC.

Particularly in emergencies like those in Rwanda-Burundi or in Kosovo, the easy way out in delivering food aid is to use the existing community governance — the male power structure, for want of a better term. In such cases, much of the food often does not get to the victims — at least, not for free. But we want to see more food distributed by and to women and we want to see women engaged at the outset in the designs and plans for local emergency operations and food aid used in development. And we have seen time and time again that if food is distributed to heads of households, in majority women, most of that food is consumed by those for whom it is intended.

This has been controversial at times. I recall seeing southern Sudanese men complaining on CNN about how women were being given WFP food that would normally go through tribal leaders. Frankly, I was pleased to see the complaints — they showed the system was working, at least in Sudan.

There are tremendous advantages to this approach of targeting women with humanitarian aid. For example, female-headed households may be the only remnant of social structure left in an emergency. A household with a mother, involved in her community both socially and economically, is

far more likely to withstand the strain of physical uprooting or a sudden loss in normal food supply channels.

At the same time, women are, for better or for worse, far less likely to be part of local political problems or agents that perpetuate them and, therefore, are less suspect conduits for aid. They are likely to put their immediate families first, and less likely to be drawn into the game of using food as just another weapon in ethnic or tribal conflict.

Women are a logical channel for humanitarian aid in emergencies because of their widespread role as food producers. Most people are unaware of the large role women play in agriculture, especially in a number of areas where there are ongoing major humanitarian crises. Eight out of 10 farmers in Africa are women and 6 out of 10 in Asia. Women are, in fact, the sole breadwinners in one household in three worldwide. We need to strengthen their economic role in recovery measures and not design operations in the field that treat them as passive welfare recipients, rather than as active participants in the economic system.

Finally, and most importantly, women are the people in the household most committed to ensuring that every member has access to food for consumption. Unless we get food to women, we will never effectively end hunger.

To be frank, in making women a priority we have to work very hard to get cooperation from local authorities or national governments, and even from some NGOs and other international agencies. A concerted effort to focus on women means change and many of us resist change.

It is so gratifying to see the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement involved in important initiatives on behalf of women; including women in peace mediation, in decision-making, and in humanitarian assistance; and devoting its special attention to women as victims. A strong emphasis at this Conference and beyond on implementing effective, practical policies that reflect the fact that most adult victims are women and that women can make all the difference in keeping families and communities together, can only be welcomed.

I congratulate Cornelio Sommaruga and Astrid Heiberg for all their efforts in addressing the gender dimension of humanitarian assistance. And let me take a moment also to thank you, Cornelio, for having been such a powerful moral voice and effective leader during your time as President of the ICRC and, even more, for having been such a wonderful colleague and friend. We are all fortunate that, in this decade of the nineties, the world has one consistent, strong, vocal, uncompromised advocate for all conflict victims throughout the world — Cornelio Sommaruga. We will miss you, but we are stronger because of you.

In conclusion, all of us working to reach out to the victims of humanitarian crises need to place a major emphasis on women. Women and their young children are the first to suffer when a nation is seized with violence. They must now be first in line when we provide humanitarian aid.

If there is anything to learn from the Rwandan mothers and their children conceived in violence, from the Angolan street children, from the young Kosovar rape victims — it is the strength of their human will to survive, search for hope and move on. Despite the rising violence against our own colleagues in the field, all of us in the aid community — the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the UN agencies, our NGO partners — must match that strength. We must search together for better solutions, so that when men wage war, women and children need not suffer so much anymore.

(Applause)

Prof. M. GABR (Chairman of the Conference)

(Original English):

Thank you very much, Ms Bertini, for that moving and inspiring speech. Thank you in particular for expressing your appreciation to Cornelio Sommaruga, a feeling we all share with you. Since our last three speakers have given us so much food for thought, I believe we deserve a short break. We shall reconvene in 15 minutes. Thank you.

PRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE ON WAR SURVEY

Mr Y. SANDOZ (ICRC)

(Original French):

Mr Chairman. Distinguished Delegates,

We have come together here to seek ways of improving, through our action, the lives of the most vulnerable people on our planet. Among these are the victims of armed conflicts, which are widespread and cruel — far too widespread and far too cruel.

For more than 130 years the ICRC has witnessed wars through its humanitarian work in the field, undertaken with the invaluable cooperation of the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Often, therefore, it has felt authorized to speak on behalf of the victims it was helping.

On the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, however, the ICRC decided it needed to go one step further by giving people in war-torn countries a chance to speak for themselves. It also wished to gather the opinions of people in some countries less directly concerned, whose perception of war was shaped mainly by the media.

As you will no doubt agree, it is high time to pay greater heed to the suffering of war victims and to listen more carefully to their expectations and suggestions. This is essential if we are to find ways of improving humanitarian action and humanitarian law.

To attempt to convey the views of people affected by war was an ambitious and risky project, which had to be undertaken with the utmost seriousness — or not at all.

In deciding to take up the challenge, the ICRC was fully aware of this. One of its first steps was to retain the services of Greenberg Research, Inc., a firm specialized in opinion polling. With the consent of the authorities, surveys were held in a dozen countries currently or recently involved in conflicts. They were carried out under the guidance of Greenberg Research by National Society staff and members of ICRC delegations. The countries were:

Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Colombia, El Salvador, Georgia (including Abkhazia), Israel and the occupied and the autonomous territories, Lebanon, Nigeria, the Philippines, Somalia and South Africa. Surveys were also conducted in five countries at peace: France, the Russian Federation, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

The surveys provided a wealth of information that has yet to be fully exploited. So far, country reports have been prepared, as well as an overall summary which will be distributed to you; a more thorough analysis will be undertaken later.

During the short time that lies ahead of us, some of the main results of the surveys will be shared with you, as well as some of the preliminary conclusions that can be drawn from them. First, however, we should like you to watch a short film

explaining the methodology used, so that you will be able to better appreciate and understand these results.

Allow me to conclude this introduction by adding that there will be no opportunity to hold a discussion on the surveys here and now, but that a workshop on the subject will follow at 5.00 p.m. this evening. At that time, those of you who are interested will be able to meet the ICRC staff members most deeply involved in the project and Mr Stanley Greenberg, the Chairman of the opinion-research firm responsible for carrying out the survey and analyzing the results. I would like to extend my warmest thanks to the people I have just mentioned, and to all those who took part in this project. As it was not only new for us, but also complex and delicate, it required serious commitment and constant attention.

(Screening of the video: Columbia — The First Consultation for the People on War Campaign)

I shall now present some of the most striking findings of this consultation. Even though the results are given in the form of statistics, I should like to emphasize that it is not the exact percentages of responses to any particular question that concern us but the real problems discernible behind the responses, on the local, regional and global levels. These are the problems that we must all try to solve together, in a constructive manner that avoids sterile polemics. In short, we are not so much interested in knowing who has done more or less well, but in finding out how any or all of us can do better.

The first and most obvious observation one can make in reviewing the results of the consultation is the terrible toll that war takes on the population as a whole. Not only are civilians the victims of torture, looting, rape and forced displacement, they also suffer the indirect effects of war, such as the tragedy of separation, contradictory demands imposed on them by combatants on both sides, disrupted communications, the danger of mines and difficulty in providing for their basic needs — a problem that is exacerbated by the fact that many women are left alone to fend for entire families. Even for the combatants themselves, as many of them have said, the greatest cruelty of war is not so much what happens to them on the battlefield, but the misfortunes that befall their families at home, in their own villages; this is the anguish that grips them constantly.

War is hateful in itself — let that never be forgotten, even when an attempt is made to mitigate its horrors.

The first finding that I would like to present to you is eloquent in this respect. Respondents were asked to choose two words that most accurately described war as they had experienced it; the four most frequently given answers were “horrible”, “hateful”, “devastating”, and “humiliating”.

The second finding is striking as well: more and more often, almost everybody is affected by war, directly or indirectly.

Over half the respondents saw war reach their communities. More than 40 per cent lost contact with a close relative. One third were forced to leave home. Nearly a third reported that somebody in their immediate families had died and 12 per cent said they had been tortured.

And this was only the beginning.

A quarter of the respondents saw their homes looted. Nearly as many were robbed of their food stocks. A great number knew victims of rape or other forms of sexual assault and a considerable number had been imprisoned or taken hostage.

The horror of war unfolds before us through these devastating figures.

The humiliation of those who had to leave their families, jobs and homes, who were driven from village to village and lost

all bearings, is also striking, as illustrated by this tragic testimony from a victim in Lebanon: “The fighting had reached my doorstep. I was barely alive and had to crawl away from my attackers. The suffering was horrible, indescribable. I felt as if my soul had left my body”.

Or, in the words of a Colombian woman: “It completely shattered our lives. We could no longer sleep or work”.

What I would like to stress here is that despite their immense suffering, despite the horrors they had been subjected to or witnessed, the great majority of the people surveyed in conflict-ridden countries remained deeply convinced that war must have limits. This principle had survived despite the atrocities committed, and it was not perceived merely as an abstract idea for conclaves of legal experts. On the contrary, the more severe the conflict, the more strongly the norms were reaffirmed and the more aware people became that civilians should not be harmed. In El Salvador, a woman who had been a soldier told us that the population should not have been mistreated as it was, “since its only crime was to be living near areas where the guerrillas had taken refuge”; in Georgia, a former hostage told us: “They have no right to kill innocent people — they should realize that someone could do the same to their own mothers”; and in Bosnia and Herzegovina a displaced person exclaimed: “They should not torture or terrorize civilians. Civilians are not guilty of anything.” The same thing was said wherever conflicts had taken place. The sense of right and wrong, of the limits that do exist, remained deeply rooted in every region of the world. This is certainly one of the most positive things to have come out of the survey.

We attempted to go one step further by asking the respondents on what grounds they would consider an act to be prohibited.

Each respondent was told to give two reasons that he thought were important. By far the most common answers were: incompatibility with human dignity, with one’s religion, with the law and with one’s own personal code of ethics (i.e. an act that, for reasons which may have nothing to do with the law, religion or any other external constraints, one would not, oneself, carry out).

We then sought to obtain a more precise description of the limits that should be respected with regard to civilians.

It is impressive to note that for the vast majority of respondents (approximately two thirds), the principle of not attacking civilians was considered absolute and that only a very small minority (3 per cent) thought that combatants were unrestricted in that respect. Nearly a third of the respondents mentioned the obligation, laid down by international humanitarian law, to avoid collateral damage insofar as possible; under the law, this obligation is inseparable from the principle of proportionality.

The clear affirmation that norms existed was nevertheless accompanied by keen awareness that the distinction between combatants and civilians had become blurred, especially when entire societies were plunged into war. It very often happens in such cases that civilians end up supporting one side; this type of involvement is one of the reasons for the growing confusion between those who are fighters and those who are not.

The survey shows that people who live in conflict areas often take sides. This is true in most, but not all cases — in the conflicts in El Salvador or Cambodia, for example, much of the population living in unsafe areas remained uncommitted. Other factors are involved, including perhaps the length of the conflict. It will be interesting to analyze this more thoroughly.

In some conflicts, such as the one between Israelis and Palestinians, commitment to one side or the other seems nearly total, and was indeed perceived as such, on both sides, by a majority of the respondents.

In other conflicts a sense of total war has developed, as in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where some people go so far as to view the destruction of their history, their collective memory and indeed their whole culture, as the real objective of the war.

The survey has thus shown the extent to which it can be difficult for civilians to stay out of conflicts, whether they wish to or not. This of course creates much bitterness.

"Why don't they fight each other and leave those who don't have anything to do with their wars alone?" asked a Colombian woman, like thousands of others.

Unfortunately, this plea is seldom heeded, and combatants very often use civilians as human shields, creating a constant feeling of insecurity. As another witness said, "Death was all around us. That was worse than anything else. Human life meant nothing. Every morning there were more corpses of men, women and children".

In general, then, the people questioned showed strong awareness of the existence of norms, but also of the difficulties involved in applying them and especially of ensuring respect for the essential distinction between civilians and combatants.

Continuing our survey, we asked the respondents to explain the reasons for the gap between norms and respect for norms.

The two main reasons given were very similar: war removes all constraints, the aim being to win at any cost, and laws are flouted. The impression is that humanitarian law is either unrecognized or despised. Another reason given nearly as often was hatred for others — this reflects the growing tendency towards demonizing the adversary, often on racial or ethnic grounds. Such an attitude leads to situations in which no one is spared, not even children.

Obedying orders was also frequently mentioned, which shows that acts of violence are very often perceived not as accidents but as deliberate policy. Abuses due to alcohol or drugs was another common answer, reminding us of another of the realities of wars. Finally, the youth and immaturity of combatants was also noted as an important factor in the gap between norms and their application.

This brings us to consider further the plight of children.

As many of the respondents clearly stated, the recruitment and participation of children in war is especially tragic. There are at least two reasons for this. First, because of the indelible and often irreparable mark that it leaves on them, and secondly because lack of maturity can cause them to commit rash acts. As a person interviewed in Somalia put it, "The only language they have learned is that of bloodshed". And a teacher from Afghanistan spoke of a "Kalashnikov culture" in recalling a school class in which 45 of the 55 pupils, asked to draw a picture of their choice, sketched a rifle, a tank, or another weapon. These children are victims, yet at the same time they are particularly dangerous since, as a Somali soldier noted, "they are without any awareness whatsoever of the pain they can inflict, and therefore tend to fire without restraint and for no reason".

In this respect it is striking, but not really surprising, to note that respondents usually set the age at which they felt a person was mature enough to become a combatant rather high, compared with existing laws and with the debate on this subject among States.

The question of imprisonment was of course also raised. In protracted conflicts, a relatively large part of the population is likely to have been in prison or to have lived in territories under the control of the adversary.

It is striking that a large majority of prisoners (four out of five) claimed to have been mistreated. This term may be rather vague, but it should be noted that nearly half of those people said that they had been physically injured. Only a little more than a quarter had had contact with a representative of an independent organization. But even here, there was strong awareness of the existence of norms for the treatment of prisoners.

With respect to captured combatants in particular, a large majority of respondents realized that there was an obligation to allow visits to prisoners from representatives of independent organizations and to authorize contacts with next of kin. A large minority — nearly a third of the respondents — nevertheless thought that a captured combatant could be lawfully tortured for the purpose of obtaining information. This figure is worrying. Moreover, it was higher in some countries than in others, and probably reflects practices so commonplace that much of the population concerned has become unaware that they are illicit.

On another topic, that of means and methods of warfare, there was clear awareness of the fact that certain means, especially certain weapons, were forbidden. There was also a very strong consensus concerning weapons of mass destruction and a clear majority (three out of four people) that considered the use of anti-personnel mines to be prohibited.

International agreements in this field and worldwide media campaigns have undoubtedly contributed to developing this awareness.

If we delve deeper into the surveys, differing attitudes were found to reflect the situation in different countries. Thus the sense that mines were unlawful was very strong in certain conflict areas, such as Afghanistan or Cambodia, that were infested with these weapons. It was less strong in others, such as Israel and the occupied territories, Georgia (including Abkhazia) or Bosnia and Herzegovina, where, although condemned by the majority, mines were viewed by a significant minority of respondents as, to quote one of them, "a means of preventing the enemy from entering our territory".

It should also be noted, in passing, that more than 80 per cent of the respondents were aware of the unlawfulness of attacking religious or cultural monuments or historic sites.

Let me turn now to another subject, that of repression and punishment.

We all know that a law without penalty cannot be very effective. In the past few years, the widespread revolt against impunity has led to a considerable development of this aspect of the implementation of international humanitarian law. A large majority of respondents believed that those who violated humanitarian norms in war should be punished.

The question asked was the following: are there rules of war that are so important that those who break them should be punished? Many people hesitated to reply, but a clear majority were aware that norms existed concerning repression. The percentage of positive replies varied from one area to another, rising to 82 per cent in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Furthermore, more than three quarters of those who believed that there were norms also thought that war criminals should be put on trial even after a conflict had ended.

This very strong feeling was expressed with a great deal of good sense, as in the following quotations from Colombia:

“Not to punish war criminals would lead future generations to expect impunity.”

“When those who commit atrocities are not tried and punished, they are free to go on committing atrocities.”

“If I were to do something like that, I would be put on trial. In the same way, everyone who commits such acts should be tried.”

Finally, those who believed in the existence of such a norm were asked what body of law it was part of. Here we see clear awareness of the existence of international norms, which is even stronger in some areas than in others. Indeed, such norms were mentioned by nearly three quarters of Israelis and Palestinians, while more than one quarter of respondents in Somalia and Afghanistan emphasized religious principles. Nearly a third of the respondents in Georgia (including Abkhazia) first mentioned a personal code of behaviour, while 40 per cent of those in the Philippines referred to national law.

The survey also showed that the efforts made these past years to develop international justice, and to have international norms included in national law, were beginning to bear fruit and must be actively pursued.

I would not wish to finish this presentation without bringing up a subject which I believe many of you know a thing or two about. Such an investigation would not have been complete without some questions on the red cross and red crescent emblems. Leaving details aside, I will simply point out that a very large majority of the respondents recognized these emblems and that only 7 per cent of them said that they did not know what they stood for. Concerning who is protected by the emblems, the answers varied, but all of them were on the right track. The highest number of respondents, nearly a quarter, said the emblems protected first and foremost the wounded and sick; next came the answer “all those who need help”; then were mentioned medical personnel, prisoners of war, “everyone”, civilians, refugees, and “persons affected by war”. In short, all of these replies contain part of the truth and demonstrate the very great responsibility we have to safeguard the positive and protective connotations of these symbols by ensuring that they are not misused.

This positive perception of the emblems extends to the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement as a whole. When asked to name to whom they would turn for help in the event of attacks in civilian areas, by far the greatest number of respondents mentioned the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement or one of its components. Today of course the Movement is no longer alone in the field when it comes to conflicts and other disasters — which is a good thing, too, given the scale of the problems. This brings me to congratulate *Médecins sans frontières* on having been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and to welcome it into the club of humanitarian organizations that, like our Movement, have received this honour. *Médecins sans frontières* truly deserves it.

The respondents’ expectations regarding the Movement should increase our feeling of responsibility and provide us with an even greater motivation to ensure that the “power of humanity” — so well symbolized by the artists who performed yesterday evening — prevails.

What I have just presented is but the bare outlines of the report that you will receive before the end of the Conference. The report itself is but a digest of the country reports, which in turn represent no more than brief summaries of the results of the surveys. The material is thus extremely rich, as I hope this

presentation will have convinced you. A much more thorough analysis will have to be undertaken to draw forth all that we need to know.

Naturally, there will always be skeptics wondering what good all this will do. This question must not be evaded: I would like to give three reasons — which seem very convincing to me — why I believe in the usefulness of these surveys and indeed of the whole project.

The first is actually not what we had in mind when we launched this study. It was revealed by the surveyed population’s interest in the project itself. Almost all those approached wanted to answer our questions. The opportunity to reflect on these topics, with us and among themselves, was very much appreciated. We gave a voice to the people living in war-torn countries and they responded with an eagerness that we had never imagined. In a world ever more concerned with cost effectiveness, there is a message here that should make us pause and reflect. Humanitarian aid cannot simply be measured in terms of kilos of flour — the time we devote to speaking and listening is also absolutely essential. If there was any doubt on this point, it has now been removed.

The second reason is the guidance these surveys can provide for members of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, as well as the whole community of humanitarian organizations. Aid work takes place in diverse settings and is ever more complex and risky. The only way we can hope to continue and develop our action is by coming to a deeper understanding of the situations we face, in order to do our jobs better and be more fully accepted. We must understand those involved in these situations, whether their involvement is willing or unwilling. We must understand their deeper motivations and their attitudes towards norms and humanitarian action, which can range from support to contempt, when they do not simply reflect indifference or ignorance. In this respect the surveys can teach us valuable lessons about how to undertake humanitarian action and ensure that humanitarian law and principles are understood.

The third and last reason concerns you, the States party to the Geneva Conventions, and indeed all of us, the international community—we who will together finalize and adopt a humanitarian Plan of Action at this Conference. The voices of people whose lives have been devastated by war must take us beyond our usual way of seeing things; they must be heard by us. I can assure you that they will be present in all the discussions we organize over the next few years on humanitarian norms and humanitarian action. It is encouraging to note that most of the States approached agreed to take part in these surveys, and that the surveys aroused so much interest despite the difficult issues they raised. Let us hope that the messages sent to us by the participants will help strengthen the constructive attitude prevailing during the preparation of our Conference and will carry over to the end of our meetings and well beyond, into the implementation of the Plan of Action.

I did not want to end this presentation without inviting you to listen to the voice of a war victim. It was difficult to choose from among so many heart-rending testimonies. What we have selected is a rather ordinary interview that nevertheless, with its mixture of bitterness and reserve, simplicity and great dignity, communicates the profoundly moving nature of what war victims have to say to us. Let us listen to it.

(Screening of an extract of the video: The Voices of War)

May these voices of war fill our hearts and minds all through the Conference. Thank you for your attention.

(Applause)

Prof. M. GABR (Chairman of the Conference)
(*Original English*):

Thank you very much, Mr Sandoz, for outlining this highly important research. After hearing your presentation, I am certain that many people will be interested in attending the workshop to be held on the subject at 5.00 p.m. this afternoon. I must apologize to the non-English speakers for the fact that, owing to technical reasons, the videos could not be translated into other languages.

In accordance with the announcement made this morning by Ambassador Kammer, I now have the honour to give the floor to Her Excellency, Ms Tarja Halonen, Foreign Minister of Finland, who is going to make a pledge to the Conference on behalf of the European Union. Madam, you have the floor.

(*Applause*)

**PLEDGE PRESENTED BY THE PRESIDENT OF
THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF FINLAND**

H.E. T. HALONEN (EU)
(*Original English*):

Mr Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

Allow me first to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. The European Union will lend you its full support and cooperation throughout this Conference.

The Conference takes place at a time when concerns over respect for international humanitarian law and the effectiveness of the international response to humanitarian disasters have risen to the highest level. The armed conflicts in Europe, the Balkans and the Caucasus, as well as in other parts of the world, such as the Great Lakes region, Angola, East Timor and Sierra Leone, have seen frequent and flagrant violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law.

These conflicts have shown that not even the basic rules of humanity are abided by. Increasing numbers of civilians, including women and children, have been specifically targeted or used as direct instruments of war. Non-compliance with the binding obligations of international law by the warring parties has become the norm in today's conflicts.

The European Union is alarmed about the seriousness of the situation and deplores the persistent violations of international humanitarian law. In this connection, the Union has welcomed the United Nations Secretary-General's recent report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. Many of the Secretary-General's pertinent recommendations need urgent consideration and offer a good basis for further active involvement by the Security Council. The international community must urgently seek ways and means to stop this practice and to restore respect for international humanitarian law.

In this context, the European Union welcomes the opportunity during this Conference to undertake humanitarian commitments. The Union wishes to make a pledge on small arms and light weapons as well as on anti-personnel landmines.

The excessive and uncontrolled accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons in areas of tension or conflict is a matter of grave concern. It aggravates conflicts, extends violence to the civilian population, hinders post-conflict

reconstruction efforts and reduces the prospects for sustainable development. The European Union is determined to combat this problem. We will seek effective responses through a comprehensive approach covering both preventive and reactive measures. We will work to establish a strong plan of action at the 2001 UN conference on small arms. We urge other States to join us in these efforts.

The European Union remains seriously concerned about the suffering that anti-personnel landmines cause. The entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on their Destruction was a big step forward in efforts to resolve the landmine problem. The European Union emphasizes the importance of full and speedy implementation of the Convention. As the world's major donor towards action against mines, we pledge to do our share in efforts to end the anti-personnel mine problem. We pledge to maintain the contribution by the Union to humanitarian mine action at the current high level. All of us, donors, affected countries and civil society at large, need to work together in efforts to end the scourge of anti-personnel mines. We call upon all States to join us in achieving the total elimination of anti-personnel mines worldwide.

I would like to mention briefly some other issues that are of great importance to our deliberations at this Conference.

The intra-State nature of conflicts and the use of irregular forces have contributed to the brutality of warfare and to the grave breaches and serious violations of international humanitarian law that we are seeing.

Human rights are universal. They do not depend on the nature or location of the forces of the warring parties. The basic principle — making a distinction between civilian and military personnel and objects — must be respected. The European Union calls upon States and non-State actors party to armed conflict to observe and respect international humanitarian law and human rights law.

The primary responsibility for the prevention and repression of violations of international humanitarian law rests with States. An effective deterrent is knowing that committing a war crime will not go unpunished. Cooperation and mutual assistance between States is fundamental in achieving the effective repression of such violations.

A culture of impunity cannot be tolerated. Where national systems are not efficient enough, the international community has the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that justice is served. The creation of criminal tribunals with jurisdiction over violations of international humanitarian law was a step forward, but not enough in itself. All States need to cooperate with the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda, so that they can carry out their work effectively.

The Statute of the International Criminal Court lays the foundation for a global fight against impunity for the most serious crimes of concern to the international community.

The European Union welcomes the steady growth in the number of signatures of the Rome Statute, as well as the first ratifications. We remain committed to the early entry into force of the Rome Statute, and to the establishment of an effective and credible International Criminal Court. We urge all States to sign and ratify the Statute as a matter of priority.

Ignorance is an obstacle to the implementation of international humanitarian law. Knowledge is a basic condition for compliance. Information on the basic principles of humanitarian law is often non-existent or very limited. All States party to the Geneva Conventions have an obligation to teach

humanitarian law to their military forces. The Union urges all parties to enhance teaching and dissemination of applicable humanitarian law, also amongst peace-keeping forces.

Secure access to humanitarian assistance for all victims of armed conflict is a prerequisite for any humanitarian action. Denial of access to civilians in need of humanitarian assistance is often used as a tool of warfare. The European Union condemns this practice and the increasing attacks against humanitarian workers, including those of the Red Cross and the United Nations. The EU is shocked by the attack against Red Cross workers that took place in Chechnya only days ago. In this respect, expanding the scope of the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel, inter alia to locally recruited staff, merits serious consideration.

Last Saturday, I myself visited refugee camps in Ingushetia, 15 km from the border with Chechnya, officially a "no-go zone". I am deeply concerned about the fact that humanitarian assistance cannot yet reach all who need it. I do hope that my visit and the visit of a UN team later this week will enable immediate delivery of international humanitarian assistance to the region.

The recent huge humanitarian disasters have once again shown that national response by itself is not enough. International assistance and cooperation are required. Advances in responding to catastrophes have been made since the establishment of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). But stronger political will and further cooperation are needed.

The European Union has for a long time been an active partner of humanitarian and other international organizations, which lead the work in crisis areas. However, our own performance and interaction with operative organizations need to be improved. The European Council confirmed in Cologne its intention of enhancing the Union's and Member States' non-military crisis-response tools. The Finnish presidency has carried on this work intensively and we hope to be able to bring up some concrete ideas in this respect at the Helsinki Summit.

Political leaders should have the foresight and assume their responsibility to pursue and maintain high standards and respect for international humanitarian law. The international community must be even more effective in the face of humanitarian catastrophes and massive violations of human rights. We must urgently find effective ways to meet the challenges of the new century.

That is what this Conference is all about.

(Applause)

Prof. M. GABR (Chairman of the Conference)

(Original English):

Thank you, Your Excellency, for your support and for the generous pledge, which other countries are invited to support. I now have the honour to give the floor to Crown Princess Sirindhorn of Thailand, Vice-President of the Thai Red Cross Society.

(Applause)

PLEDGE PRESENTED BY THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE THAI RED CROSS SOCIETY

H.R.H. PRINCESS MAHA CHAKRI SIRINDHORN
(Thai Red Cross Society)

(Original English):

Mr Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is a great honour for me to be invited to present the pledge of the Thai Red Cross Society to the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

With enduring faith in the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the Thai Red Cross Society, recognizing the rapid changes and new challenges of unprecedented magnitude facing peoples of the world at the start of the new millennium, reaffirming its faith in the power of humanity as a unique driving force behind the humanitarian response to the needs of the disadvantaged and the most vulnerable, determined to turn faith and goodwill into action and specific humanitarian commitments, hereby pledges:

- to further promote the activities of the Thai Red Cross Society in the area of international humanitarian law by coordinating with experts from universities and other agencies across Thailand in disseminating information on the subject within academic institutions, civilian as well as military;
- to encourage the government of Thailand to increase its efforts to adhere to 1977 Additional Protocol I;
- to set up a Thai Red Cross disaster operations centre, in coordination with related agencies, in order to establish standards of excellence in disaster preparedness and response, as well as to meet the humanitarian needs of displaced persons fleeing from armed conflicts;
- to open six new regional blood centres by the year 2003, thereby achieving nationwide high standards of quality and safety, and providing a sufficient supply of blood;
- to strengthen the Thai Red Cross community health stations so as to provide effective community-based primary health care and to improve the quality of life of vulnerable people, including disadvantaged children and the elderly;
- to strengthen the capacity of the Thai Red Cross and its research centre to cope with the pandemic of HIV/AIDS and to increase its pioneering contribution in this field, both nationally and abroad;
- to launch a programme at grassroots level involving Red Cross youth in order to face major concerns threatening today's young people, especially reproductive health issues and drug abuse.

These are pledges we make with the strength of our conviction that the power of humanity will prevail in the new millennium. Thank you.

Prof. M. GABR (Chairman of the Conference)

(Original English):

Thank you, Your Royal Highness, for these pledges, which should really apply to all National Societies in the Third World. Thank you, Princess Sirindhorn.

Before closing the first plenary meeting, I give the floor to Ambassador Kammer, our Secretary-General, for several announcements concerning procedural matters.

(Applause)

Amb. J.-F. KAMMER (Secretary-General of the Conference)
(Original English):

Thank you, Mr Chairman. I would like to announce that the Drafting Committee will hold its opening session in room 3 at 5.00 p.m. this afternoon. Tomorrow, the Drafting Committee will meet in room 3 at 9.00 a.m., and the Plenary Commission will meet in this very room at 9.00 a.m. as well. I also have the pleasure to inform the Conference that three workshops will

take place today, all starting at 5.00 p.m. The first one, "Volunteering 2000: A challenge for the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in strengthening civil society", has been organized by the Croatian Red Cross, the Finnish Red Cross, the International Federation, the Sudanese Red Crescent and the Swiss Red Cross. It will take place in the ITU building, room B1. The second, "People on War: Results of the worldwide consultation", organized by the ICRC, will be held in the ITU building, room B2. And the third, "Widowhood and armed conflict: Challenges faced and strategies forward", organized by the Australian Red Cross and the ICRC in cooperation with the Swedish Red Cross, will take place in the EFTA building, room 8.

Finally, at the request of our technicians, I would like to ask that you be kind enough to limit as much as possible the use of your mobile phones in this hall. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

Prof. M. GABR (Chairman of the Conference)

(Original English):

Thank you very much, Ambassador Kammer. We have now reached the end of the first plenary meeting, which I declare closed. Thank you very much.

(End of the first plenary meeting)

(Applause)

WORKSHOPS

5.00 p.m.

Volunteering 2000: a challenge for the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in strengthening civil society

Organizers:

Croatian Red Cross, Finnish Red Cross, International Federation, Sudanese Red Crescent and Swiss Red Cross

People on war: results of the worldwide consultation

Organizer:

ICRC

Widowhood and armed conflict: challenges faced and strategies forward

Organizers:

Australian Red Cross and ICRC, in cooperation with the Swedish Red Cross

DRAFTING COMMITTEE

5.00 p.m. Opening session

3.5 FIRST MEETING OF THE PLENARY COMMISSION

2 November 1999
9.00 a.m.

SUMMARY: Report on the First Periodical Meeting on International Humanitarian Law — Report on the Centennial of the First International Peace Conference — Debate on the draft Plan of Action, theme I: “The protection of victims of armed conflicts through respect for international humanitarian law” — Drafting Committee — Workshops.

The debate took place in conformity with Article 11, paragraph 4, of the Statutes of the Movement, which states the following: “All participants in the International Conference shall respect the Fundamental Principles and all documents presented shall conform with these Principles. In order that the debates of the International Conference shall command the confidence of all, the Chairman and any elected officer responsible for the conduct of business shall ensure that none of the speakers at any time engages in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature”.

DEBATE ON THEME I OF THE DRAFT PLAN OF ACTION

“The protection of victims of armed conflicts through respect for international humanitarian law”

Chairman:

H.E. Mr Boris Shikmuradov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan

Co-Chairmen:

Mr Christopher Lamb, Ambassador of Australia to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

Mr Teófilo Siman, President of the Salvadorean Red Cross Society

Rapporteur:

Mr Tom Buruku, Chairman of the Uganda Red Cross Society

LIST OF SPEAKERS

Prof. Lucius Caflisch (Chairman of the First Periodical Meeting on International Humanitarian Law)
Report on the First Periodical Meeting on International Humanitarian Law

H. E. Mr Vasily Sidorov
Report on the Centennial of the First International Peace Conference

Debate on the draft Plan of Action, theme I:

“The Protection of victims of armed conflicts through respect for international humanitarian law”

Members of the Conference

Governments

Algeria
Bangladesh
Belgium
Canada
Colombia
Cuba
Dominican Republic
Egypt
France
Georgia
Greece
Holy See
Iceland

Iraq
Italy
Kuwait
Norway
Spain
Syrian Arab Republic
Sweden
Switzerland
Uganda
Ukraine
United Kingdom
United States of America

National Societies

American Red Cross
Red Cross Society of Belarus
Belgian Red Cross
Canadian Red Cross Society
Finnish Red Cross
German Red Cross
Iranian Red Crescent Society
Jamaica Red Cross

Kenya Red Cross Society
Liberian National Red Cross Society
Libyan Red Crescent
Netherlands Red Cross
Norwegian Red Cross
Pakistan Red Crescent Society
Philippine National Red Cross
Polish Red Cross

Spanish Red Cross
Sudanese Red Crescent
Swedish Red Cross

Turkish Red Crescent Society
Red Cross of Viet Nam

- International Committee of the Red Cross
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Observers

International Fact-Finding Commission
Henry Dunant Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue

Palestine

DRAFTING COMMITTEE

9.00 a.m.

WORKSHOPS

5.00 p.m.

Working in partnership: government support for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

Organizers: British Government and British Red Cross

The humanitarian challenge of small arms proliferation

Organizers: Malian Government, Norwegian Government, Mali Red Cross and Norwegian Red Cross

3.6 SECOND MEETING OF THE PLENARY COMMISSION

3 November 1999

9.00 a.m.

SUMMARY: Debate on the draft Plan of Action, theme II: "Humanitarian action in times of armed conflict and other disasters — Drafting Committee: revision of the draft Plan of Action, with an emphasis on theme I — Workshops.

The debate took place in conformity with Article 11, paragraph 4, of the Statutes of the Movement, which states the following:

"All participants in the International Conference shall respect the Fundamental Principles and all documents presented shall conform with these Principles. In order that the debates of the International Conference shall command the confidence of all, the Chairman and any elected officer responsible for the conduct of business shall ensure that none of the speakers at any time engages in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature".

DEBATE ON THEME II OF THE DRAFT PLAN OF ACTION

"Humanitarian action in times of armed conflict and other disasters"

Chairman:

Mr Christopher Lamb, Ambassador of Australia to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

Co-Chairmen:

H.E. Mr Boris Shikmuradov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan
Mr Teófilo Siman, President of the Salvadoran Red Cross Society

Rapporteur:

Dr Tahar Cheniti, Secretary-General of the Tunisian Red Crescent

LIST OF SPEAKERS

Members of the Conference

Governments

Argentina
Australia
Belarus
Brazil
Congo (Democratic Republic of the)
Costa Rica
Croatia
Czech Republic
Denmark
Djibouti
Gabon
Germany
Honduras
Hungary

Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Japan
Korea (Republic of)
Malta
Mexico
Mongolia
Netherlands
New Zealand
Philippines
Poland
Russian Federation
Rwanda
Slovakia
Turkey

National Societies

Albanian Red Cross
Algerian Red Crescent
Belize Red Cross Society
Botswana Red Cross
Burkinabé Red Cross Society
British Red Cross
Cameroon Red Cross Society
Red Cross Society of China
Costa Rica Red Cross
Red Cross Society of Côte d'Ivoire
Egyptian Red Crescent Society
Equatorial Guinea Red Cross Society
Fiji Red Cross Society

Hellenic Red Cross
Italian Red Cross
Japanese Red Cross Society
Lesotho Red Cross Society
Malta Red Cross Society
Nepal Red Cross Society
Red Cross Society of Panama
Red Cross of Romania
Sri Lanka Red Cross Society
Togolese Red Cross
Tunisian Red Crescent
Ukrainian Red Cross Society
Red Crescent Society of Uzbekistan

- International Committee of the Red Cross
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Observers

Henry Dunant Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue
Inter-Parliamentary Union

Sovereign Military Order of Malta

DRAFTING COMMITTEE

9.30 a.m.

WORKSHOPS

5.00 p.m.

Fight against AIDS in developing countries

Organizer: French Red Cross

Ensuring respect for international humanitarian law: Towards appropriate mechanisms

Organizers: Swiss Government and German Red Cross

The SIrUS project and reviewing the legality of new weapons

Organizers: Australian Red Cross, Danish Red Cross and ICRC

3.7 THIRD MEETING OF THE PLENARY COMMISSION

4 November 1999

9.00 a.m.

SUMMARY: Debate on the draft Plan of Action, theme III: "Strategic partnership to improve the lives of vulnerable people"—Drafting Committee: revision of the draft Plan of Action, with an emphasis on theme II — Workshops.

The debate took place in conformity with Article 11, paragraph 4, of the Statutes of the Movement, which states the following:

"All participants in the International Conference shall respect the Fundamental Principles and all documents presented shall conform with these Principles. In order that the debates of the International Conference shall command the confidence of all, the Chairman and any elected officer responsible for the conduct of business shall ensure that none of the speakers at any time engages in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature".

DEBATE ON THEME III OF THE DRAFT PLAN OF ACTION

"Strategic partnership to improve the lives of vulnerable people"

Chairman:

Mr Teófilo Siman, President of the Salvadorean Red Cross Society

Co-Chairmen:

H.E. Mr Boris Shikmuradov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan

Mr Christopher Lamb, Ambassador of Australia to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

Rapporteur:

Ms Anne Anderson, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Ireland in Geneva

LIST OF SPEAKERS

Members of the Conference

Governments

Albania
Angola
Austria
Burkina Faso
Burundi
Cameroon
China
Ecuador
El Salvador
Ethiopia
Ghana
Guatemala
India
Indonesia
Israel
Jordan
Latvia

Madagascar
Morocco
Mozambique
Nepal
Nicaragua
Pakistan
Panama
Peru
Portugal
Romania
Saudi Arabia
Senegal
Slovenia
South Africa
Tunisia
Yemen
Greece and Turkey (joint statement)

National Societies

Australian Red Cross
Barbados Red Cross Society
Red Cross of Benin
Brazilian Red Cross
Bulgarian Red Cross
Cambodian Red Cross Society
Red Cross of Cape Verde
Chilean Red Cross
Cuban Red Cross
Danish Red Cross
Red Cross Society of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

French Red Cross
Ghana Red Cross Society
Haitian National Red Cross Society
Hungarian Red Cross
Icelandic Red Cross
Indonesian Red Cross Society
Iraqi Red Crescent Society
Lebanese Red Cross Society
Moroccan Red Crescent
Namibia Red Cross
Nicaraguan Red Cross
Nigerian Red Cross Society

Paraguayan Red Cross
Portuguese Red Cross
Russian Red Cross Society
Syrian Arab Red Crescent
Swiss Red Cross

Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan
Tanzania Red Cross Society
Thai Red Cross Society
Zambia Red Cross Society

- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Observers

Coalition for an International Criminal Court
Palestine Red Crescent Society
United Nations Development Programme
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner
for Refugees

United Nations Population Fund
World Meteorological Organization
World Veterans Federation

DRAFTING COMMITTEE

9.00 a.m.

WORKSHOPS

5.00 p.m.

“Use and development of SPHERE standards”

Organizers: Danish Red Cross and International Federation

“Strategies for assisting children affected by armed conflicts: Turning goodwill into action”

Organizers: Canadian Government, Canadian Red Cross Society, Colombian Red Cross and Sierra Leone Red Cross Society

3.8 SECOND PLENARY MEETING

5 November 1999

9.00 a.m.

SUMMARY: First round of the election of the members of the Standing Commission — **Reports of the Plenary Commission**, theme I, "The protection of victims of armed conflicts through respect for international humanitarian law"; theme II, "Humanitarian action in times of armed conflict and other disasters"; theme III, "Strategic partnership to improve the lives of vulnerable people"— Second round of the election — Drafting Committee — Workshops.

FIRST ROUND OF THE ELECTION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE STANDING COMMISSION

Prof. M. GABR (Chairman of the Conference)
(*Original English*):

Your Royal Highnesses, Excellencies, dear friends,

It is a pleasure for me to chair, if only briefly, the second plenary meeting of our Conference. This meeting will begin with the election of the members of the Standing Commission. In parallel, the three Rapporteurs of the Plenary Commission will present their respective reports. There will be no debate after the reports, but specific comments may be submitted, as usual, to the Drafting Committee.

May I remind you that each delegation has received an information sheet from the Standing Commission describing the voting procedure. Delegations will be called upon to cast their ballots in alphabetical order, according to the drawing of lots, in groups of 60 voters.

As we shall proceed with two agenda items simultaneously, the voting will have to take place in a separate room. When your turn comes, you will therefore be asked to proceed to room 15, floor D, that is one floor down from where we are now.

As stated at the plenary meeting Monday morning, candidacies were to be submitted 48 hours prior to this meeting. You have now received copies of the curricula vitae of each candidate. Let me remind you that the last sentence of Rule 21, paragraph 1, of the Rules of Procedure states: "When nominating candidates, personal qualities and the principle of fair geographical distribution should be taken into account".

The ballots you are about to receive contain 15 names. I am now going to read out the names of the candidates on the official ballot, in the order in which I received them in my office.

Professor Amoussouvi Samuel Ahouangbevi (Togolese Red Cross)

Dr Mohammed M. Al-Hadid (Jordan National Red Crescent Society)

Dr Abdul-Rahman Bin Abdul-Aziz Al-Swailem (Saudi Arabian Red Crescent Society)

Ms Monique Basque (Red Cross Society of Côte d'Ivoire)

Mr Laurence S. Eagleberger (American Red Cross)

Mr William Aurélien Eteki Mboumoua (Cameroon Red Cross Society)

General Georges Harrouk (Lebanese Red Cross Society)

Dr Nenad Javornik (Croatian Red Cross)

Dr Claude Jean-François (Haitian National Red Cross Society)

Mr Tadateru Konoe (Japanese Red Cross Society)

Ms Christina Magnuson (Swedish Red Cross)

Her Royal Highness, Princess Margriet of The Netherlands (Netherlands Red Cross)

Mr Richard Morgan (Australian Red Cross)

Dr Mohlalefi Moteane (Lesotho Red Cross Society)

Dr Hugo Palazzi Moscoso (Bolivian Red Cross)

Let us now begin the electoral process.

According to Rule 20, paragraph 6, of the Rules of Procedure, the Chairman must "appoint from among the delegates of the members of the Conference three tellers". I therefore call on Dr Fulvia Benavides Cotes from the delegation of the Colombian Permanent Mission in Geneva, Mr Olaf Jantzen from the delegation of the German Red Cross, and Mr Djemal Nebbache from the delegation of the Algerian Red Crescent to kindly accept this task. Thank you.

The tellers will be assisted by Mr Jean-Louis Cayla from the ICRC and by Mr Jean-Claude Crepy of the International Federation.

In addition, Rule 21, paragraph 3, establishes that for the purpose of determining the absolute majority required in the first ballot, a roll-call of the members of the Conference must be taken before the voting begins. And of course, Ms Camporini is specialized in this roll-call. In other words, the absolute majority is calculated according to the number of delegations that have replied to the roll-call.

Before I give the floor to Secretary-General Kammer, it is my pleasure to announce that the Vice-Chairman of the Conference, Ambassador Muheim from the Swiss Red Cross, has kindly agreed to chair this meeting. Ambassador Muheim, you have the floor.

Amb. M. MUHEIM (Vice-Chairman of the Conference)
(*Original French*):

Thank you very much, Professor Gabr. Let me just say that I am entirely aware of the great honour you do me in asking me to chair this session devoted to the election.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am told that many of you remember with some dismay that the voting process at the last Conference, four years ago, lasted over seven hours. Today, it should take much less time, thanks to the advances of technology, assuming of course that the technology can be relied upon. Much will also depend on your own swiftness and discipline in carrying out this process.

Let me add that there cannot be any coffee break this morning, given the voting system adopted, which involves calling delegates from 60 countries at a time to go to room 15 and cast their ballots.

I now wish to give the floor to our Secretary-General, Ambassador Kammer.

Amb. J.-F. KAMMER (Secretary-General of the Conference)
(*Original English*):

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

As far as the voting is concerned, may I remind you that we must elect five members of National Societies. You should therefore select no more than five names on each ballot. No name may receive more than one vote. Any ballots containing more than five names will be considered invalid. No delegation can vote more than once for the same candidate on a single ballot.

I should like to underscore the importance of Rule 20, paragraph 2, of the Rules of Procedure, which stipulates that the vote of each delegation must be cast by its head, or by a designated replacement.

In accordance with the information sent to each delegation in the notice of convocation of 30 April 1999, I should like to remind you that the heads of delegation must wear their badges when voting. Those who do not cast votes in person are requested to give their badges to their designated replacements, so as to facilitate the work of the tellers who must identify each delegate during the voting process.

Lastly, a technical detail: please put crosses on your ballots in the squares on the left side, as indicated on the screen.

We shall now proceed with the roll-call, in order to establish the quorum. We shall begin with the components of the Movement, namely, the National Societies, the ICRC and the International Federation. We shall then move on to the States party to the Geneva Conventions. With your permission, Mr Chairman, I shall first give the floor to the Assistant Secretary-General, Ms Camporini, for the first part of the roll-call, and then to the other Assistant Secretary-General, Mr Blondel, for the second part. Thank you.

Amb. M. MUHEIM (Vice-Chairman of the Conference)
(Original French):

Thank you, Mr Secretary-General. I shall now give the floor to Ms Camporini.

Ms Y. CAMPORINI (Assistant Secretary-General of the Conference) (Original French):

Thank you, Mr Chairman. We shall proceed with the roll-call of the National Societies of the following countries — and I would ask the delegates kindly to indicate their presence here by showing their cards. Thank you.

(Roll call of all the delegations of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, beginning with the National Societies, followed by the ICRC and then the International Federation.)

Mr J-L BLONDEL (Assistant Secretary-General of the Conference) (Original French):

We shall now proceed with the roll-call of the representatives of the States party to the Geneva Conventions, according to the list prepared by the depositary.

(Roll call of all States party to the Geneva Conventions.)

Amb. M. MUHEIM (Vice-Chairman of the Conference)
(Original French):

The roll-call may now be considered complete.

(Voting process begins)

We now have the results of the roll-call of the components of the Movement and of the States party to the Geneva Conventions. There are 161 components of the Movement (namely the National Societies, the ICRC and the Federation) and 134 governments represented here today, which comes to a total of 295 delegations. Consequently, the quorum of one third of the National Societies and of States has been reached, and, according to Article 14 of the Rules of

Procedure, the Conference can therefore validly deliberate. We can now proceed with the rest of the agenda

REPORTS OF THE PLENARY COMMISSION

We shall go on to examine the three reports of the Plenary Commission, which will be presented to us by the respective Rapporteurs. I would like to remind you that any specific comments on the reports must be submitted to the Drafting Committee, which will be in session all day today.

I now give the floor to the Rapporteur for theme I of the draft Plan of Action, Mr Tom Buruku, Chairman of the Uganda Red Cross Society.

THEME I: THE PROTECTION OF VICTIMS OF ARMED CONFLICTS THROUGH RESPECT FOR INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

Mr T. BURUKU (Rapporteur of the Plenary Commission for theme I) (Original English):

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, dear friends,

Allow me to thank you all for the honour you have bestowed on me and my National Society, the Uganda Red Cross Society, in appointing me Rapporteur. I am also very grateful to Ms Catherine Deman of the ICRC and Mr Reidar Schanning of the Federation, who assisted me in my task and whose hard work made it possible to produce this report.

During the first meeting of the Plenary Commission, we discussed the Report on the First Periodical Meeting on International Humanitarian Law, the conclusions of the centennial of the First International Peace Conference and theme I of the draft Plan of Action, namely **“the protection of victims of armed conflict through respect for international humanitarian law.”**

In all, 57 delegations took the floor on the first day. Several delegations also made comments relating to this theme in the following days and their points have been incorporated in the report.

H. E. Mr Boris Shikmuradov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan, opened the first meeting of the Plenary Commission by introducing the Co-Chairmen and the team of Rapporteurs. He also reminded the participants of the three topics to be discussed.

Professor Lucius Cafilish, Chairman of the First Periodical Meeting on International Humanitarian Law, then took the floor to present a summary of his conclusions. The meeting had been convened by Switzerland in Geneva in January 1998 to examine general problems relating to the application of humanitarian law. It was attended by 129 States and 29 observers. Professor Cafilish reported that the informal nature of the meeting, in which there had been no rules of procedure and no records but only final conclusions drawn up by the Chairman, had favoured an open debate and a constructive exchange of ideas.

The topics discussed had been “respect for and security of personnel of humanitarian organizations” and “armed conflict linked to the disintegration of State structures”. The meeting had highlighted various problems and the possible remedies to be considered by States and humanitarian organizations. It had also recommended, as a follow-up, the convening of periodical meetings of States and regular meetings of experts, especially in relation to regional conflicts.

Ambassador Vasily Sidorov, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation in Geneva, then presented the

conclusions of the group of experts on the three themes discussed at the celebrations held in the Hague and in St Petersburg in 1999 to mark the Centennial of the First International Peace Conference.

One of the key questions dealt with was how to step up implementation of international humanitarian law rather than focus on the codification of new laws. Another was the importance of emphasizing prevention and conflict resolution before situations deteriorated. Lastly, the importance of disarmament was stressed.

After these reports, the Chairman of the Plenary Commission introduced the first theme of the Draft Plan of Action, namely "the protection of victims of armed conflict through respect for international humanitarian law". He then opened the floor for debate after having reminded the delegates that they should not engage in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Several delegations deplored the widespread violations of international humanitarian law being committed today and provided many examples, such as ethnic cleansing, the deliberate targeting or massacre of civilians, rape, forced displacement, hostage-taking and the recruitment of children as combatants.

The universality of the Geneva Conventions and the importance of all international humanitarian law treaties were unanimously recognized. Some delegations stressed that there was no need for new rules or new commitments since most problems stemmed from lack of respect for and failure to implement existing rules. Violations of humanitarian law prolonged and worsened conflicts and should not be tolerated. One delegation pointed out that continuous violations and lack of enforcement challenged the credibility of the law.

Several delegations expressed satisfaction with the new structure of the Conference, which encouraged concrete action and ensured follow-up. Many stressed the urgent need to help conflict victims and actively promote and defend humanitarian values. Most delegations expressed general support for the draft Plan of Action and welcomed the fact that the Conference had led to increased dialogue and partnership between States and the components of the Movement.

PREVENTING CONFLICTS AND PROMOTING A CULTURE OF PEACE

"If we want peace, we must prepare for peace"

Many delegations pointed out that armed conflicts could be prevented and stressed that it was vital to address the causes of violence, which was often rooted in poverty, in order to contain or defuse it. In any case, every effort must be made to settle disputes peacefully. They also mentioned the need to strive for sustainable and more balanced development, to eradicate poverty and to assist the most vulnerable sectors of the population, especially in volatile areas.

One government delegation stressed that the United Nations Security Council was the main organ responsible for maintaining international peace and security and that it should be enabled to fully assume its responsibilities under the UN Charter. Another delegation cautioned that the problem of restoring peace had to be addressed as well: conflicts should not be "frozen" or forgotten.

Several speakers urged that the Movement become more actively involved in the prevention of ethnic, racial, religious and political conflicts and in peace advocacy.

Many delegations also highlighted the importance of fighting the culture of violence, which was a problem throughout the world, and of developing the human reflex to say "no" to it. They stressed the need to promote peace, understanding, tolerance, friendship and dialogue among all nations, cultures and civilizations, and to educate people in humanitarian values and behaviour. Some delegations raised the problem of the manipulation of information by the media and of incitement to hatred and violence. One National Society proposed that training in international humanitarian law be revised to take into consideration the psychology of those who bore weapons.

Two government delegations said that it was important to determine fundamental standards of humanity which reflected both human rights law and international humanitarian law and which applied to all parties in all situations of violence.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES IN PEACETIME

Many delegations reported that their governments had already ratified various international humanitarian law treaties or were considering doing so, among others Protocol I additional to the Geneva Conventions (one delegation), the Ottawa treaty, the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its Protocol II, the 1980 Weapons Convention and its Protocols II and IV and the Statute of the International Criminal Court. Some delegations also reported that their governments were considering withdrawing reservations.

A considerable number of delegations enumerated the laws and implementation measures that their governments had enacted or were in the process of enacting to bring national legislation in line with their international obligations (prosecution of war crimes, protection of the emblem, list of protected cultural property, etc.). The important role played by National Societies and the valuable contribution of the ICRC Advisory Service in this regard were commended. Many delegations added that national interministeriel commissions had been set up to deal with these matters in a coordinated way. Some delegations proposed that a system be set up for the voluntary sharing of information on the national implementation of international humanitarian law. One delegation reported that its government was having the Geneva Conventions translated into the national language.

DISSEMINATION

Many speakers stressed the paramount importance of disseminating the rules and principles of international humanitarian law. Some mentioned the need to integrate the law into the training provided for military and security forces and into command procedures, staff exercises and military manoeuvres. One delegation proposed that training in humanitarian law be given to religious personnel attached to the armed forces.

Many delegations stressed the importance of organizing dissemination programmes for civil servants and the public at large, in cooperation with relevant organizations and educational institutions. One government delegation committed itself to organizing special training in humanitarian law for its magistrates.

The crucial role played by National Societies in disseminating humanitarian law was largely recognized, and several National Society delegations briefly described the programmes they were implementing. Some expressed their gratitude to the ICRC for its contribution to their efforts in this area.

ENHANCED RESPECT FOR INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW IN WARTIME

Serious concerns about lack of respect for basic principles of humanitarian law were expressed by a considerable number of speakers, many of whom stressed the need to ensure special protection for women and vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly, people with disabilities and displaced persons. Some delegations pointed out that civilians should never be targeted and that it was prohibited to deliberately destroy a country's economy as a method of warfare. One delegation expressed the wish that greater emphasis be placed in the Plan of Action on respect for humanitarian law in non-international armed conflicts, which were currently the most widespread and inflicted great suffering.

A large number of delegations stressed that all belligerents, whatever their status and their reasons for being involved in an armed conflict, had to respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law. This concerned not only States, but also non-State parties, armed groups and supranational forces such as those under the command of the UN or regional organizations.

Emphasizing the right of conflict victims to protection, assistance and relief, many delegations pointed out that it was essential to ensure that impartial humanitarian organizations had rapid access to these victims and to facilitate their work in accordance with their respective mandates. A number of delegations expressed their gratitude to the ICRC for its valuable help in protecting and assisting the population of their war-torn countries.

Some delegations pointed out that States not involved in armed conflicts must ensure respect for international humanitarian law and try to influence the behaviour of the belligerents. It was stressed that force could not be used on humanitarian grounds except as a last resort and that this was to be contemplated only in extreme circumstances and only when it was in the best interest of the victims. Moreover, the use of force on humanitarian grounds must always be in conformity with the UN Charter.

In this regard, many government delegations warned that humanitarian concerns should not be selective or based on double standards and that they should never be used as a pretext to forward strategic, military or economic interests or to justify interference in the internal affairs of other States. These delegations stressed the need to respect State sovereignty and independence, in accordance with the UN Charter.

INTERNATIONAL FACT-FINDING COMMISSION (ART. 90 OF PROTOCOL I ADDITIONAL TO THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS)

Some delegations stated that their governments had recognized the competence of the International Fact-Finding Commission. The President of the Commission called on other governments to do likewise and on all States to make use of that body. He gave a brief report on the Commission's activities and on proposals to create a mechanism allowing it to receive individual complaints (along the lines of the Human Rights Committee established under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights).

PUTTING AN END TO IMPUNITY

Many speakers stressed the need to ensure accountability for violations of international humanitarian law. A considerable number welcomed the encouraging steps recently taken to put an end to impunity, in particular the adoption of the Statute of the International Criminal Court, the ongoing work of the two ad hoc International Tribunals and national

prosecution, all of which had an important deterrent effect. A number of government delegations announced plans to ratify the Statute of the International Criminal Court and called on other States to do so as well. One government delegation stressed that State sovereignty should not be used as a shield behind which gross violations of human rights and international humanitarian law could be carried out with impunity.

Several delegations mentioned efforts that had been made in their countries to set up, through national criminal law and proceedings, appropriate frameworks in which domestic courts could punish war crimes, whatever the nationality of the victim or offender and wherever the crime had been committed. They also mentioned steps which their governments were taking to facilitate cooperation with international tribunals, and, in some cases, the practical and financial support which their countries were giving to these courts (forensic experts for investigations, for example). One National Society emphasized the need to promote greater awareness of the security and access problems that could be faced by the Movement as a whole if a member of one of its components testified against presumed war criminals in an international court.

A few delegations stressed the importance of establishing the truth about past violations so as to prepare the ground for reconciliation and facilitate the healing process. Some delegations mentioned the need to address the question of compensation for the victims of violations.

SPECIFIC HUMANITARIAN PROBLEMS

A large number of government and National Society delegations expressed their deep concern about the suffering of children caught up in armed conflicts or other situations of violence. They stressed the importance of ensuring that their specific needs for protection and assistance were met.

Many speakers urged that measures be taken to stop the participation of children in armed hostilities and their recruitment into armed forces or armed groups, which was in violation of international law. They repeated that it was urgent to raise to 18 the age of recruitment and of participation in armed hostilities, as already called for by the 26th International Conference, and renewed their support for the promotion and adoption of the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Several delegations deplored the traumatic experiences that would affect children forever, adding that the need for psycho-social support and for rehabilitation programmes could not be overemphasized. One delegation mentioned that such programmes should not be limited to war-torn areas but that they were also needed in countries where children affected by war found asylum.

A number of delegations pointed out that special attention had to be given to the specific problems that women faced in armed conflicts. One delegation deplored that the issue had not been more fully developed in the draft Plan of Action but expressed its readiness to wait for the set of guidelines that the ICRC was to draw up with a view to better addressing the protection and assistance needs of women caught up in armed conflict.

Some government delegations called attention to the situation of prisoners of war, stressing that they must be protected and treated humanely. They must also be placed under the continuous supervision of an international body such as the ICRC, in accordance with the relevant provisions of international humanitarian law. The issue of prisoners who should have been released a long time ago, at the close of the hostilities, but were still being held should be addressed

without delay. Some delegations raised the question of people unaccounted for and called for greater readiness to clarify their fate and inform their families.

WEAPONS AND OTHER MEANS OF WARFARE

The proliferation and uncontrolled transfer of weapons, mainly light weapons, was of general concern, as it had proved to be an important source of violations and civilian casualties, even after the end of hostilities. Many delegations stressed the need to actively address this issue. Some highlighted the close link between the tragedy of child soldiers and the availability of large quantities of light weapons which could be handled with ease by children. A number of delegations pointed out that responsibility also lay with States that produced and sold those weapons, and some said that the 1997 Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials should serve as an example. Others mentioned the need for mechanisms to restrict the availability of weapons (one delegation proposed that weapons be labelled), to control their transfer and to prevent their use by belligerents who did not comply with international humanitarian law. Various government delegations suggested that the possibility of collecting and destroying existing weapons be considered.

Some delegations raised the issue of weapons that caused unnecessary suffering or had indiscriminate effects and that were illegal under international humanitarian law. In that respect, particular concern was expressed about the use of biological and chemical weapons. One National Society delegation mentioned the product "agent orange", which continued to cause injuries such as genetic malformations for generations after the end of a conflict, and called for international support for a campaign launched by the Federation to alleviate the suffering produced by that weapon. One government delegation also stressed the need to fight against the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The ICRC said that it would be useful to adopt common criteria to help determine which weapons already in use or still at the planning stage could cause unnecessary suffering and should therefore be prohibited.

The ongoing tragedy caused by mines, mainly anti-personnel mines, was raised by numerous delegations. It was pointed out that mines continued to kill long after the end of a conflict and that they impeded reconstruction and economic recovery. Several delegations said that their governments had ratified or were in the process of ratifying the Ottawa treaty. Many urged that this treaty be ratified by all States without further delay. Some delegations mentioned plans by their governments to ratify amended Protocol II to the 1980 Weapons Convention.

Concerning the huge problem of existing mines, some delegations stressed the importance of destroying stockpiles and of allocating sufficient resources for mine clearance, mine-awareness programmes and assistance to mine victims. In that regard, those who had placed mines bore a special responsibility. One delegation mentioned the need to build indigenous capacities for managing mine-action programmes.

EMBLEM

Only a few delegations raised questions relating to the emblem. One expressed the wish that pending issues regarding the emblem be resolved quickly. Others pointed out that that had to be done in a way that suited all the components of the Movement. Some delegates observed that the red cross and red crescent were above all symbols of humanity and of relief for those who were suffering.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Amb. M. MUHEIM (Vice-Chairman of the Conference)
(*Original French*):

Thank you very much, Mr Buruku, for your comprehensive report on theme I of the draft Plan of Action.

I now give the floor to the Rapporteur of the meeting devoted to theme II, Dr Tahar Cheniti, Secretary-General of the Tunisian Red Crescent.

THEME II: HUMANITARIAN ACTION IN TIMES OF ARMED CONFLICT AND OTHER DISASTERS

Dr T. CHENITI (Rapporteur of the Plenary Commission for theme II) (*Original French*):

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to report to you on the findings of the Plenary Commission with regard to theme II of the draft Plan of Action, namely "**humanitarian action in times of armed conflict and other disasters**".

During its discussion of theme II, the Commission was placed under the chairmanship of Ambassador Christopher Lamb of Australia. In preparing the summary, I was personally assisted by Ms Kuhn of the ICRC and Mr Bracke and Mr Goulay of the Federation.

Our theme was the focus of the meeting of 3 November. My summary nevertheless also refers to contributions made by delegations on 2 and 4 November.

INTRODUCTION

The Conference confirmed the vital importance of humanitarian aid for the hundreds of millions who, each year, were the victims of conflict and other disasters. In the second half of the twentieth century the world had witnessed an upsurge in armed conflicts and the proliferation of all kinds of natural catastrophes. In addition to the more familiar conflicts and disasters which continued to plague the world, humanity now faced new scourges arising from changes in climate, unplanned urban development, new technologies and the inability of health-care and social welfare schemes to cope with the needs of the most vulnerable members of society.

There were not only new kinds of disasters, there were also new kinds of groups becoming involved in humanitarian action. As a major force in disaster response, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement had a duty to improve coordination.

Humanitarian action did not take place in a vacuum. It was only one way in which the world responded to exceptional situations. Humanitarian action complemented political action but could not take its place. The increasing impact of humanitarian action was confirmed by many representatives of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and governments. However, it could not resolve problems of a political or economic nature, which were often the underlying cause of conflicts and of people's increasing vulnerability to disasters of all kinds.

Several delegates made the point that emergency aid was merely the aspect of humanitarian action with the highest profile. That aid was more effective if it was followed up with help in rehabilitating communities affected by conflicts or other disasters and with increased efforts on the part of all concerned to prepare for such events and to build up the capacity for action.

As several delegates pointed out, humanitarian action was not just measured in "kilos of flour". The right to life was inextricably linked to the right to dignity. Special attention must be paid to the particular vulnerability of women affected by armed conflicts and other disasters. Several speakers stressed the importance of engaging not only in emergency aid but also in the struggle against poverty, which continued to be both a consequence and a frequent cause of vulnerability and conflict.

The discussion of humanitarian action focused on four topics:

- the effectiveness of disaster preparedness;
- cooperation and the coordination of humanitarian action;
- protecting the rights of victims;
- the respective roles of the different participants.

1. EFFECTIVENESS OF DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Several speakers stressed the need for a high degree of preparedness in order to limit the devastating effects of conflicts and other disasters. This preparedness must be ensured at all levels: within the local community and at national and international levels.

The Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies had a crucial role to play in that respect since they formed a worldwide network which supported the authorities and had strong roots locally.

The ability of National Societies to prepare for and respond to disasters basically depended on their degree of development and the level of training of their volunteers.

The priorities for all National Societies were:

- to draw up disaster-related contingency plans;
- to recruit and appropriately train volunteers;
- to establish and protect their own organization and facilities.

The sustained participation of the authorities with regard to those priorities was undoubtedly justified in order to speed up and improve local response in the event of disaster.

Several delegates mentioned the role of the Movement in reducing vulnerability at community level and emphasized the importance of local participation. The Movement's activities in that respect must include public information, since integrated human development was essential to strengthening the community.

2. COOPERATION AND THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN ACTION

Several speakers mentioned the growing number of humanitarian agencies in the field; alongside the established organizations there were many new NGOs, with varying motivations and capabilities. That situation diminished the efficiency of humanitarian aid and demand greater coordination between those engaged in it.

Recent catastrophes such as earthquakes, typhoons and floods had necessitated large-scale relief operations. Many governments, National Societies and other humanitarian organizations had shown their solidarity by sending relief teams and equipment, often quite unprompted. With most of those teams, however, lack of autonomy and unfamiliarity with local realities had once again demonstrated the need to tighten up coordination not only nationally but also at international level.

The Movement's specificity and its ability to mobilize its volunteers and encourage the participation of the benefi-

aries themselves gave it a special role in coordinating humanitarian aid.

Both the Code of Conduct for the Movement and NGOs in disaster relief and, more recently, the Sphere Project offered guidelines on conduct and technical standards which could serve as a basis for concerted action. The Code took into account the relationship between humanitarian action and the sovereignty of the State.

In order to maximize the impact of their combined efforts, the various humanitarian agencies must seek out every opportunity for synergy.

Partnership programmes with the authorities could be drawn to assist disaster victims, with due care taken to ensure the independence of humanitarian action. The tripartite project between governments as sponsors, their National Societies and the Federation Secretariat was a welcome example of that.

The Conference expressed its appreciation for the efforts of various components of the Movement, under the terms of the Seville Agreement, to improve cooperation and communication in organizing their international activities. Some speakers stressed the need to continue those efforts. A government delegate also expressed the wish for governments to be more actively involved in preparing future Conferences.

3. PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF VICTIMS

The increasing number of those involved in armed conflicts — particularly internal conflicts — and the actual nature of those conflicts were jeopardizing the safety of non-combatants, the conflict victims themselves, naturally, but also humanitarian workers. The proliferation of light weapons also posed a constant threat to the safety of local people. The international community must demand respect for international humanitarian law and the red cross and red crescent emblems from all parties to conflict. Many delegates called for action to stop the uncontrolled transfer of light weapons and to make such weapons unavailable.

The need to maintain the civilian nature of camps for displaced persons and refugees was also stressed and reference was made to the measures needed to ensure respect for the victims and for their rights. Those measures must give priority to protection for female refugees, who were often the victims of sexual violence.

Support for displaced or refugee children, who were also prime victims of violence, could help to prevent their recruitment by armed groups.

Several delegates reminded governments of their responsibilities towards asylum seekers. The National Societies were called upon to encourage a climate of understanding for the plight of those people. The problem of illegal immigrants required greater attention from the authorities concerned to prevent them from having to live in unhygienic conditions and from falling victim to financial and criminal exploitation.

Several delegations mentioned the suffering of civilians as a result of economic sanctions. One speaker said that civilians' needs had become even more acute since the 26th International Conference, which had already examined the negative impact of economic sanctions on civilians, particularly the most vulnerable groups among them.

The Movement must continue its efforts to alleviate the suffering of people caught up in those situations.

States and organizations imposing sanctions were asked to pay particular attention to the needs of civilians. They must evaluate the impact of those measures not only at the time when they imposed the sanctions but also before, by making

provision for appropriate humanitarian exemptions and respecting the principle of proportionality.

“Creeping” disasters, including HIV/AIDS, were less visible than sudden disasters and there was a real risk of the victims being overlooked. Lavish media coverage of certain kinds of humanitarian aid gave rise to a situation in which the level of response from the general public and corporate sponsors was in direct proportion to the operation’s high profile.

4. RESPECTIVE ROLES OF THE DIFFERENT PARTICIPANTS

The growing involvement of the armed forces in humanitarian action pinpointed the need to clearly define the roles of the various political, military and humanitarian entities involved in order to avoid any confusion. Many delegates mentioned the importance of organizing seminars or training sessions for all those in the field: civil defence organizations, the armed forces, the authorities, the police, NGOs and, last but not least, the general public.

The large number and variety of the parties involved in armed conflicts, particularly internal conflicts, was creating ever more insecurity and difficult operating conditions for humanitarian workers. The international community must ensure that humanitarian law and the red cross and red crescent emblems were respected by all.

The Conference confirmed the importance of spreading knowledge of that body of law and of the crucial role of the ICRC in protecting the victims of conflicts, in particular prisoners and civilians.

CONCLUSION

The reference documents prepared by the Federation and the ICRC outlined the measures proposed in the goals of the draft Plan of Action.

In response, Government and National Society delegates:

- confirmed the acceptance of the Plan of Action by the 27th International Conference;
- enhanced and added to the proposals put forward;
- emphasized the need to adapt humanitarian action to the realities of the field;
- stressed the usefulness of coordinating the activities of the different entities involved;
- underscored the importance of providing safe conditions for humanitarian workers and paid tribute to the tragically high number of victims who had died carrying out their humanitarian mission;
- encouraged various kinds of partnership;
- focused on the situation of the most vulnerable groups;
- stressed the urgent need to promote new mechanisms for institutional development;
- drew attention to the need for an effective process of ongoing recruitment of new volunteers;
- stressed the importance of planning, disaster-preparedness and a coordinated, effective and rapid response;
- encouraged the implementation of prevention programmes to tackle poverty and bring about a sustained reduction of vulnerability.

It is my hope that our findings will help strengthen the power of humanity. Thank you.

(Applause)

Amb. M. MUHEIM (Vice-Chairman of the Conference)
(Original English and French):

Thank you very much, Dr Cheniti, for your report on the findings of the Plenary Commission with regard to theme II of the draft Plan of Action.

I would now like to give the floor to Ambassador Anne Anderson, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Ireland in Geneva, who will report on the discussion of theme III by the Plenary Commission.

THEME III: STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF VULNERABLE PEOPLE

Amb. A. ANDERSON (Rapporteur of the Plenary Commission for theme III) (Original English)

Thank you, Mr Chairman. It was a privilege to have been the Rapporteur for this important theme and I thank the secretariats for their assistance.

DEFINITION OF VULNERABLE PEOPLE

As an appropriate starting point, an attempt was made to define the term “vulnerable people”. Many delegates addressed the question and offered definitions ranging from the general to the highly specific. Perhaps the single point most often made was that poverty created vulnerability and poverty eradication was critical to reducing it.

The shocking statistics of world poverty were quoted — “this battlefield called poverty”, as one delegate called it. The growing economic disparities between and within nations constituted a challenge for all governments as well as for humanitarian actors. Levels of development aid, issues of indebtedness, the rules of international trade — all contributed to the context in which the Red Cross operated. It was emphasized that “globalization of responsibilities” must be part of the overall globalizing trend.

More specific categories of vulnerable people were identified by many speakers. Women, children, the elderly, the disabled, refugees and displaced persons were among the most frequently cited.

One general point, however, was worth making: vulnerability conjured up images of victims. Referring to one vulnerable group — refugees — in her opening address, the Director General of WHO, Dr Brundtland, had said: “Refugee populations are not just passive receivers of handouts, but resourceful participants in their own emergencies within the limitations forced upon them”. That point was echoed by a number of speakers — vulnerable people deserved sympathy but also required respect; they must be involved in humanitarian action rather than be treated as mere objects.

Some speakers described very specific categories of vulnerable people that were the particular focus of their National Society’s activities. One person, for example, identified teenage single mothers and their children as the vulnerable group on which her National Society concentrated most of its endeavours.

It was clear that vulnerability was part of the human condition and that no one was immune. But, as many speakers emphasized, it was the most vulnerable — those who had multiple sources of vulnerability leaving them doubly and trebly at risk — who needed our most urgent attention.

GOAL ONE: IMPROVED HEALTH FOR VULNERABLE PEOPLE BASED ON STRENGTHENED COOPERATION BETWEEN STATES AND NATIONAL SOCIETIES

A number of delegates focused on the improvement of health. It was noted that access to health care was a right that all people should enjoy but also a key ingredient in development.

It was moreover pointed out how far the world was from achieving the goals of the WHO programme "Health for all by the year 2000". The burden of ill-health and disease borne by the population of developing countries was stressed. AIDS, tuberculosis and other infectious and communicable diseases took a terrible and disproportionate toll on the developing world. Child mortality remained high in many countries and access to basic health care was limited. While the lack of resources that governments in developing countries faced was fully recognized, the disparity between military spending and health spending in some of those countries was also pointed out.

Delegates repeatedly underlined the central and inescapable responsibility that governments bore for the health of the population. But that responsibility was best discharged through partnerships at national, regional and international levels. Positive examples of partnership included the new African Red Cross and Red Crescent Health Initiative 2010 (which aimed to bring together ministries of health, National Societies and international organizations) and the World Bank's global road safety partnership, which brought together a number of governments, civil society and the private sector.

Some speakers felt there was considerable scope for further progress with regard to acceptance by international organizations of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies as partners in implementing health care.

Particular attention was paid during the debate to AIDS and tuberculosis. A number of speakers stressed the need for greater international mobilization to deal with the ravages of AIDS in the developing world — the present situation was described as "socially, politically and economically intolerable". Tuberculosis was seen as an "indicator disease that picked out the most vulnerable". Emphasis was placed on its high incidence in societies in transition and on the fact that new WHO care strategies to combat tuberculosis involved tasks that were particularly well suited for ICRC volunteers.

GOAL TWO: NEW INITIATIVES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF VULNERABLE PEOPLE AND TO REDUCE DISCRIMINATION AND VIOLENCE

Among the various categories of vulnerable people highlighted, many speakers focused on children — street children, children who were sexually exploited, those who were victims of the worst forms of child labour and children drawn into armed conflict. Reaching out to those — the most vulnerable among the vulnerable — must be a key priority. A number of governments and National Societies shared their experience and thinking on how that could best be achieved; various initiatives, such as the creation of specific task forces at national level, were described.

Reducing discrimination and violence in the community was also much discussed. As a result of poverty, social isolation and drugs, these problems were pervasive in many societies. The incidence of domestic violence had turned the home into a place of threat and terror for millions of women around the world. As one speaker put it, the home and community had become war zones for many.

Much was said during the Conference about the need to champion individual and community values that encouraged respect for other human beings. Governments and National Societies had traditionally worked to disseminate the Fundamental Principles and to increase awareness of humanitarian law, and that must continue to be a priority. However, there was a call for a more proactive advocacy role in seeking to influence behaviour in the community, oppose discrimination, fight racism, stop violence and build a culture of peace. A stronger collective voice needed to be found.

GOAL THREE: INCREASED NATIONAL SOCIETY CAPACITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS

There was a particularly rich discussion on this topic, with a number of cogent points being made. A range of partnerships was discussed, namely:

- between National Societies and governments;
- with NGOs;
- with other humanitarian actors;
- with businesses and the private sector;
- between National Societies in different countries.

One speaker also referred to new models of partnership between humanitarian actors and the military, and the need for such partnerships to be particularly carefully crafted.

Many government and National Society representatives described innovations in their partnership arrangements. One National Society, for example, described a three-year joint programme with its government, which provided focus and continuity and which could serve as a model for others. Another speaker drew attention to the potential for governments to strengthen National Societies by granting favourable tax treatment to donations.

Many delegations underlined the values which must inform all partnerships: integrity, mutual respect, transparency, recognition of each other's culture, building on respective strengths.

As a contribution to enhancing relationships between National Societies around the world, one delegate proposed that the International Telecommunication Union be approached to provide teleconferencing facilities which would build links between Societies. A more professional approach to communications was seen as important in improving the work of National Societies generally.

The issue of capacity-building was addressed by many speakers as well. Enhancing local capacity was seen as vital in all countries but there was a particular emphasis on capacity-building in disaster-prone countries. In her opening statement, the President of the International Federation, Dr Heiberg, invited governments to unite with National Societies in a "partnership for preparedness". As she and others emphasized, effective preparedness was almost always at local level; planning and training were essential to ensure that response capacities were there when an emergency arose.

It was widely recognized that volunteers provided the backbone of the Red Cross Movement. Some delegates referred to worrying trends in volunteer numbers and stressed the need to recruit, train and particularly to appeal more successfully to young people so as to involve them as volunteers.

Finally, some speakers referred to the need for the Movement itself to constantly strive to become more unified and more transparent. As one speaker put it, we should "look at the future of our Movement without any taboos".

Allow me to conclude, Mr Chairman, by emphasizing the strong support shown for the draft Plan of Action by all those who spoke. Thank you.

(Applause)

Amb. M. MUHEIM (Vice-Chairman of the Conference)
(Original English and French):

Thank you very much, Ambassador Anderson, for this most interesting report on theme III of the draft Plan of Action.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the voting has now come to an end and the counting of ballots is under way. As this will take some time, we are going to show you a video on the joint ICRC/International Federation operation in the Balkans. Our meeting will continue right after the screening.

Screening of the video

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am sorry to have made you wait, but the number of registered delegations had to be verified. According to the roll-call, there are 298 such delegations; it follows that the required absolute majority is 150 votes. The number of validly cast ballots is 298.

We warmly congratulate the following persons, who have been elected to the Standing Commission by an absolute majority:

H.R.H. Princess Margriet of the Netherlands (262 votes)

(Applause)

Ms Christina Magnuson (199 votes)

(Applause)

Mr Tadateru Konoe (192 votes)

(Applause)

The other candidates received the following numbers of votes (I shall read the list that you have received):

Mr Lawrence S. Eagleberger, American Red Cross: 131 votes

Dr Abdul-Rahman Al-Suwailam, Saudi Arabian Red Crescent Society: 115 votes

Dr Mohammed M. Al-Hadid, Jordan National Red Crescent Society: 102 votes

Mr Richard Morgan, Australian Red Cross: 76 votes

Dr Claude Jean-François, Haitian National Red Cross Society: 74 votes

Ms Monique Olga Basque, Red Cross Society of Côte d'Ivoire: 69 votes

Gen. Georges Harrouk, Lebanese Red Cross Society: 48 votes

Mr William Aurélien Eteki Mboumoua, Cameroon Red Cross Society: 40 votes

Prof. Amoussouvi Samuel Ahouangbevi, Togolese Red Cross: 25 votes

Dr Mohlalefi Moteane, Lesotho Red Cross Society: 25 votes

Dr Hugo Palazzi Moscoso, Bolivian Red Cross: 22 votes

Dr Nenad Javornik, Croatian Red Cross: 14 votes

The results will be left in your pigeonholes very shortly and will also appear on the screen.

SECOND ROUND OF THE ELECTION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE STANDING COMMISSION

Amb. M. MUHEIM (Vice-Chairman of the Conference)
(Original French):

This means, Ladies and Gentlemen, that a second round of voting will be necessary. I should therefore inform you of the following: if some candidates not elected in the first round wish to withdraw and not take part in the second round, they must make this known by 2.00 p.m. at the latest in a letter addressed to the Conference Chairman and given to Ms Yolande Camporini. All candidacies will continue to be considered valid unless the intention to withdraw is made known in this way by the deadline.

The session will now be suspended and we shall meet again at 2.30 p.m. in this hall to proceed with the second round of voting. There will be no agenda and there will be an interruption in the afternoon session. I remind you that withdrawals must be notified by 2.00 p.m. I shall announce any withdrawals that have taken place prior to the voting and the results of the second round will be announced at a time that I will specify at the beginning of the afternoon session. Thank you very much for your attention.

(Lunch break)

Amb. M. MUHEIM (Vice-Chairman of the Conference)
(Original French):

Distinguished Delegates, dear colleagues,

I can now inform you that five candidates have formally announced their withdrawal, in writing and before the prescribed deadline. The persons concerned are the following: Professor Amoussouvi Samuel Ahouangbevi of the Togolese Red Cross, General Georges Harrouk of the Lebanese Red Cross Society, Dr Nenad Javornik of the Croatian Red Cross, Mr Richard Morgan of the Australian Red Cross and Dr Hugo Palazzi Moscoso of the Bolivian Red Cross. The remaining candidates in the running for the two places still to be filled on the Standing Commission are Dr Mohammed M. Al-Hadid of the Jordan National Red Crescent Society, Dr Abdul-Rahman Al-Suwailam of the Saudi Arabian Red Crescent Society, Ms Monique Olga Basque of the Red Cross Society of Côte d'Ivoire, Mr Lawrence S. Eagleberger of the American Red Cross, Mr William Aurélien Eteki Mboumoua of the Cameroon Red Cross Society, Dr Claude Jean-François of the Haitian National Red Cross Society and Dr Mohlalefi Moteane of the Lesotho Red Cross Society.

A number of delegations have asked me to interrupt the session at this point in order to allow for consultation on the new situation resulting from the various withdrawals. I am willing to grant a break of not more than 30 minutes, so our proceedings will resume promptly at 3.10 p.m. with the second round of voting.

(Pause)

Amb. M. MUHEIM (Vice-Chairman of the Conference)
(Original French):

Ladies and Gentlemen, you have been informed of the names of the seven remaining candidates for the second round of voting, which will begin very shortly. I immediately give the floor to our Secretary-General, Ambassador Kammer, who will provide you with the information you need on this second vote.

Amb. J.-F. KAMMER (Secretary-General of the Conference)
(Original French):

Thank you, Mr Chairman. I would like to inform the Conference that the voting procedure for the second round is basically the same as that for the first round. From a technical point of view, however, the delegations will not be casting their ballots in groups of 60 by alphabetical order, but will be free to vote at their convenience throughout the afternoon. The polling station will be located in room 15, as it was this morning. Finally, it is important to note that in the second round, in accordance with Article 21, paragraph 4, of the Rules of Procedure, candidates obtaining a relative majority of votes, i.e. those who simply obtain the highest number of votes cast, will be elected. Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Amb. M. MUHEIM (Vice-Chairman of the Conference)
(Original French):

Thank you, Mr Kammer. I would just like to add that the polling station is open from now until 5.00 p.m. The plenary session, which we are now going to suspend, will resume at 5.30 p.m., assuming of course that the technology can be relied upon to deliver the results we need. The voting procedure may begin.

(Pause)

RESULTS OF THE ELECTION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE STANDING COMMISSION

Amb. M. MUHEIM (Vice-Chairman of the Conference)

(Original English):

Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Delegates.

We now have the results of the second round of voting. The following persons have been elected out of the 292 votes validly cast:

Dr Mohammed M. Al-Hadid (126 votes)

Dr Abdul-Rahman Al-Suwailam (117 votes)

The unelected candidates obtained the following numbers of votes: Dr Claude Jean-François (Haitian National Red Cross Society), 105 votes; Mr Lawrence S. Eagleburger (American Red Cross) 102 votes; Ms Monique Olga Basque (Red Cross Society of Côte d'Ivoire) 67 votes; Mr William Aurélien Eteki Mboumoua (Cameroon Red Cross Society), 22 votes; and Dr Mohlalefi Moteane (Lesotho Red Cross Society), 17 votes. Ladies and Gentlemen, this concludes the election procedure for the new Standing Commission. I thank you for your invaluable help in obtaining this result so quickly. I now return the floor to our Chairman, Dr Gabr, with my appreciation for the confidence he has shown me today. Thank you very much.

Prof. M. GABR (Chairman of the Conference)

(Original English):

Thank you very much, Ladies and Gentlemen. It is my pleasure to congratulate, on your behalf, Her Royal Highness Princess Margriet, Ms Christina Magnuson, Mr Tadateru Konoe, Dr Mohammed M. Al-Hadid and

Dr Abdul-Rahman Al-Suwailam on their election. We now have a new Standing Commission, which is invited to convene for its first session tonight at 6.15 p.m. in room 18, level D, one floor down. The second plenary meeting is now coming to a close. We shall meet tomorrow morning at 9.00 a.m. for the final plenary session. Thank you.

(Applause)

(End of the second plenary meeting)

DRAFTING COMMITTEE

9.00 a.m.

WORKSHOPS

2.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m.

Effects of climate change on disaster response

Organizers:

Croatian Red Cross, Finnish Red Cross, Sudanese Red Crescent, Swiss Red Cross and International Federation

Humanitarian action and business: Common interests?

Organizers:

Belgian Government, Belgian Red Cross and Henry Dunant Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue

Implementation of the Statute of the International Criminal Court

Organizers:

Netherlands Red Cross and Yugoslav Red Cross

Health education and first-aid training: A basic arena for Red Cross and Red Crescent voluntary services in community development

Organizers:

Belgian Red Cross, French Red Cross, Nigerian Red Cross and Swedish Red Cross

3.9 FINAL PLENARY MEETING

6 November 1999
9.00 a.m. — 12.30 p.m.

SUMMARY: Results of the election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Standing Commission — Report on the workshops — Report of the Drafting Committee — Adoption of the Conference Declaration and Plan of Action — Adoption of other resolutions — Closing ceremony, reading of the Conference Declaration, presentation of recorded pledges.

RESULTS OF THE ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE STANDING COMMISSION

Prof. M. GABR (Chairman of the Conference)
(*Original English*)

Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Delegates, friends,

Before turning to the agenda of this last plenary meeting, I have the honour and the pleasure of informing the Conference that the new Standing Commission, during its first session yesterday, elected Her Royal Highness Princess Margaret of the Netherlands as its Chairman.

(*Applause*)

It also elected Dr Mohammed M. Al-Hadid of the Jordan National Red Crescent Society as its Vice-Chairman.

(*Applause*)

Given the applause, I don't think I need to extend our congratulations to the newly elected Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

I should also like to inform the Conference that the reports on the three themes dealt with by the Plenary Commission, which you listened to yesterday, will be distributed today in the original languages. In the final report of the Conference, however, they will be included in all the official languages of the Movement.

There are four items on today's agenda, and perhaps also a few hidden items. The four items we have on the table are: the report on the workshops; the report of the Drafting Committee; the adoption of the Conference Declaration and Plan of Action; and the adoption of the other resolutions. The report on the workshops will give us an overview of the results but of course there will be no discussion of the meetings. These reports represent the culmination of four days of work for all of us. Following this, there will be a short closing ceremony, during which the Conference Declaration will be read out and the pledges recorded will be presented. If you agree, we shall start now with the report on the workshops. I invite the Vice-Chairman of the Conference, Ms Katevas de Sclabos, to join us on the podium and present her report.

REPORT ON THE WORKSHOPS

Ms Z. KATEVAS DE SCLABOS (Rapporteur of the workshops and Vice-Chairman of the Conference)
(*Original Spanish*):

This was the first time that workshops were organized during the International Conference and many of us followed this new initiative with interest. Although it was the Conference organizers who created these forums for discussion, the National Societies, the governments, the International Federation and the ICRC were entirely responsible for choosing the topics and running the 14 workshops. We extend our warmest thanks to them for all their preparatory work.

As you know, the purpose of the workshops was to complement the official proceedings of the Conference by giving participants the opportunity to explore and discuss more thoroughly various topics related to the Conference themes. The aim was to provide an informal setting in which to share experiences, compare ideas and find new strategies for carrying the debate forward, and not to reach a consensus or to formulate resolutions on the topics of discussion. Hence it is solely for your information that I am now going to outline some of the results. Half the workshops dealt with subjects relating to armed conflict and the implementation of international humanitarian law. The other half considered subjects internal to the Movement, such as volunteer service, health care, the response to natural disasters and more general topics such as relations with the private sector.

The first workshop presented the results of the worldwide People on War survey. These were well received by the participants, who nevertheless raised the question of whether a new consultation focusing specifically on those bearing weapons might not yield further elements crucial to the debate.

The workshop on widowhood and armed conflict described the difficulties faced by widows on all five continents during and after armed conflicts and the strategies that should be adopted to provide them with support, especially in the form of legal assistance, training, information concerning the fate of missing persons and help in achieving self-reliance.

The workshop on small arms proliferation pointed out that the uncontrolled availability of such weapons jeopardized the implementation of international humanitarian law, and emphasized the success of the West African moratorium on the import, export and manufacture of small arms. Some participants expressed the wish to see similar moratoria in other regions of the world.

The next workshop, which examined the mechanisms for implementing international humanitarian law, stressed that it would be useful to explore the possibility of having greater recourse to the International Fact-Finding Commission. It was proposed that the system of Protecting Powers be re-examined in order to adapt it to the internal conflicts that were currently the most widespread form of warfare. The establishment of a mechanism for exchanging information on the national implementation of humanitarian law was also discussed; some participants expressed the hope that a group of States would offer to test the idea.

In the workshop on the SIrUS project, the organizers submitted a series of proposals that could be used to review the legality of new weapons. It was mentioned that the Australian army intended to implement those proposals in the near future. Some participants agreed that better mechanisms for reviewing the legality of weapons were necessary and that they could be based on the SIrUS project. Another proposal was to create a permanent institution to review the legality of weapons, together with a central information body that would focus on technical aspects.

The workshop on strategies for assisting children affected by armed conflicts addressed many pertinent issues. Most participants were of the opinion that priority should be given to combating the underlying causes of child conscription, especially poverty and lack of educational opportunity. They also felt that the Movement had a role to play in offering young people alternatives to violence.

In the last workshop having to do with international humanitarian law, the organizers reported on recent developments at national and international levels concerning the implementation of the Statute of the International Criminal Court, and on practical difficulties that had been encountered. The participants stressed the importance of mobilizing the Movement to promote implementation of the Statute and proposed concrete measures for making it better known by the National Societies and the public at large.

The workshop on volunteering reviewed the conclusions of a study on the non-profit sector in Europe and analysed problems relating to the decline in volunteering in Europe and Africa. Participants also stressed the need to take advantage of the abundance and diversity of approaches to volunteering on the five continents and proposed specific measures for strengthening civil society.

The aim of the workshop on partnerships between governments and the various components of the Movement was to review strategic links that would lead to an improvement in the dialogue with donors and to the acquisition of the resources necessary to finance long-term programmes. Although the partnership formula still needed some fine tuning, the participants found it interesting and useful in providing more effective help for vulnerable people.

Participants in the workshop on the fight against AIDS in developing countries reviewed initiatives in this field, mainly in Africa. They emphasized the complementarity of targeted prevention programmes and medical treatment of infected persons, discussed efforts undertaken by the National Societies with regard to both prevention and care and urged the Movement to step up its activities in this regard.

In the workshop on humanitarian action and business it was observed that, with the proliferation of internal conflicts and the globalization of the economy, business and humanitarian organizations often found themselves side by side in crisis areas. Besides the question of the financing of humanitarian action by large companies, the workshop debated the moral responsibility of all the players present in crisis zones, including those with economic interests.

The workshop on health education and first-aid training highlighted the global crisis in health care that the world is going through despite the progress made in curative medicine. Disparities in levels of health among different communities remained alarming. Initiatives relating to the environment and lifestyle, which by themselves could reduce the death rate by over 60 per cent, offered ideal ways for the Movement to assist vulnerable communities.

The workshop on the use and development of the standards set by the Sphere Project gave participants the opportunity to share their experiences in using these standards in humanitarian aid activities. They emphasized that even though Sphere standards did not claim to provide a comprehensive solution to all problems in the field, they did offer guidelines and indicators for improved planning and coordination of aid operations and for raising the quality of humanitarian assistance, especially in development programmes.

The workshop on the effects of climate change highlighted the fact that the variations in climate of the past few decades

were much greater and had occurred much more rapidly than those of the preceding five centuries—and this had resulted in a surge in natural disasters. Action on the local level, the more systematic use of meteorological forecasts and closer cooperation with governments were various ways proposed in order to respond to disasters and finance relief operations.

I should now like to conclude by commenting briefly on how these workshops were received. The topics presented attracted much interest, drawing between 250 and 350 participants daily, often at the end of a very full Conference schedule. Many of you welcomed this initiative as a way to address issues more thoroughly and to make contact with specialists in the various areas covered.

As the topics were very diverse, it was only natural that the workshop organizers would choose to approach the subjects in different ways. Some concentrated on giving information by means of detailed presentations on various aspects of the problems under consideration, while others chose to leave more scope for discussion between speakers and the audience. There were some debates among experts — sometimes quite technical — but also some much more general discussions that were accessible to everyone. Some speakers used sophisticated multimedia tools, while others used transparencies prepared by hand. It seems to me that to some extent the very diversity of the methods chosen by the organizers reflects the diversity of our Movement, within which a multitude of means are employed to pursue our common goals.

It is certain that more time than the allotted two hours was generally needed to discuss the subjects thoroughly. Some participants mentioned that they would have liked the presentations to be less detailed so as to leave more time for discussion. Others regretted that concrete measures had not been proposed for solving the problems raised.

But even our frustration concerning these matters is a clear indication that the workshops did not leave us indifferent. If workshops are to be held at the next Conference, it will probably be necessary to make certain changes. One could imagine a more interactive or provocative approach, or presentations and short talks organized alongside the workshops. It would also be possible to set up public debates between experts or other informal events that would better reflect the nature of some of the discussions. A way should be found to provide interpretation services for the workshops in the working languages of the Conference.

As for having workshops held in parallel with plenary sessions, this is an attractive idea but would put the smaller delegations at a disadvantage.

In any event, and whatever the formula chosen, we must absolutely preserve the free exchange of ideas among all components of the Movement and government representatives that we saw during the workshops. We feel that such exchanges are essential to moving forward and devising new strategies for serving victims and the most vulnerable members of society.

(Applause)

Prof. M. GABR (Chairman of the Conference)

(Original English):

Thank you very much, Vice-Chairman de Sclabos, for this excellent report. Indeed, the workshops — which were decided on by the former Standing Commission, chaired by Princess Margriet — proved to be a great success, attracting the participation of many National Society and government delegations. I am sure that the new Commission, again chaired by Princess Margriet, will take into consideration the

useful remarks that Ms de Sclabos has just made about how to maintain the momentum of the workshops and increase their effectiveness at the next Conference.

We shall now listen to the Vice-Chairman of the Drafting Committee, Ambassador Philippe Kirsch. Under his able leadership, the Committee reached a consensus on the various subjects discussed and produced the draft resolutions that were distributed to you this morning. Ambassador Kirsch, you have the floor.

REPORT OF THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE

Amb. P. KIRSCH (Chairman of the Drafting Committee)
(*Original English*):

Thank you very much, Mr Chairman, for this generous introduction.

The task given to the Drafting Committee by the Conference at its plenary meeting on Monday was to review a number of documents and to seek a consensus on their contents, taking into account proposals made to the Committee by members of the Conference. These documents were the draft Plan of Action and the draft Conference Declaration, together with the draft resolution to which those texts would be attached; the draft resolution containing the Appeal of 12 August 1999, the draft resolution amending the Regulations for the Empress Shôken Fund and the resolution on the date and place of the next Conference.

In addition, the Bureau decided on Tuesday to request the Drafting Committee to review a resolution on the emblems. I am pleased to report that, as you mentioned, Mr Chairman, the Drafting Committee reviewed and reached agreement on all those documents, which I am now submitting to the Conference for approval.

The method followed by the Drafting Committee was to work its way through the various documents by systematically considering all the opinions voiced on each of them. Because of the Committee's heavy workload and very tight schedule, I set up a subgroup chaired by Ambassador Marika Fahlén of Sweden. The subgroup focused on Chapters 2 and 3 of the draft Plan of Action, namely "Humanitarian action in times of armed conflict and other disasters" and "Strategic partnership to improve the lives of vulnerable people", while Chapter 1 remained with the Drafting Committee itself. The subgroup then brought the revised text of Chapters 2 and 3 back to the Drafting Committee for final adjustments and approval.

Sir Alan Munro from the British Red Cross and Ambassador Jean-Pierre Cabouat from the French Red Cross, both Vice-Chairmen of the Drafting Committee, conducted consultations on the draft Declaration and a variety of other texts, greatly facilitating efforts to reach a consensus. I should also like to highlight the contribution of the Australian delegation, which took charge of discussions on the important issue of the protection of children. With the exception of the technical resolutions, all texts were read three times by the Drafting Committee or its subgroup, each reading involving a period of discussion, a redrafting of the text, a number of private consultations and finally a new presentation to the Drafting Committee or its subgroup.

Throughout what was at times a slow and lengthy process, I wish to underline that the atmosphere in the Drafting Committee and other groups was excellent. All the delegations worked in a spirit of cooperation and accommodation, showing a real determination to produce a text that would be acceptable to all.

The documents now before the plenary are thus the result of extensive negotiations and do not fully reflect the position of any one delegation. They constitute an attempt to strike a balance which I hope will be acceptable to all present here, highlighting the spirit of cooperation that has so far characterized the deliberations of this Conference.

Finally, I should like to express my warmest thanks, first to the three Vice-Chairmen of the Drafting Committee, Ambassador Fahlén, Sir Alan Munro and Ambassador Cabouat, who skilfully steered so many issues to a successful conclusion and without whom the Drafting Committee simply could not have concluded its work on time. I also wish to thank all the members of the Secretariat, including an excellent team of interpreters and our colleagues from the ICRC and the Federation, for their tremendous support throughout the Conference. There are too many to mention them all by name, but with respect to assistance and the drafting itself, I would like to highlight the outstanding dedication and excellent work of Charlotte Lindsey, Anna Segall and Christophe Lanord. I extend my thanks once again to all the delegations for their cooperation and, last but not least, Mr Chairman, I wish to thank you in particular, and the other members of the Bureau, for your unfailing support throughout the Conference, which sustained us all. Thank you very much.

(*Applause*)

ADOPTION OF THE CONFERENCE DECLARATION AND PLAN OF ACTION

Prof. M. GABR (Chairman of the Conference)
(*Original English*):

Thank you very much, Ambassador Kirsch, for your informative report. I believe the applause you have just heard is a measure of the appreciation we all feel for the outstanding work you and your colleagues have accomplished. I wish to congratulate you especially on your success in achieving a consensus on the final resolutions before us. I should now like to propose that the Conference adopt the Declaration and Plan of Action as presented by the Drafting Committee.

(*Applause*)

Thank you very much. I take it that the Declaration and Plan of Action submitted by the Drafting Committee have now been adopted by consensus.

ADOPTION OF OTHER RESOLUTIONS

We can now move on to the adoption of the technical resolutions, concerning which a consensus has also been reached. You have received a copy of these documents, which are the following: the draft resolution on the Regulations for the Empress Shôken Fund, the draft resolution on the emblems, the draft resolution on the Appeal of 12 August 1999 and the draft resolution on the date and place of the 28th International Conference.

(*Applause*)

Thank you very much. I take it that the Conference adopts all the resolutions submitted to us by the Drafting Committee. Thank you all and thanks again to Ambassador Kirsch for his excellent work and for the consensus achieved.

(*Applause*)

With your permission, I shall now give the floor to Princess Margriet of the Netherlands, Chairman of the former Standing Commission and of the new one.

H.R.H. PRINCESS MARGRIET OF THE NETHERLANDS (Chairman of the Standing Commission)
(*Original English*):

Mr Chairman of the 27th International Conference, Mr President of the ICRC, Madam President of the International Federation, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Delegates, dear friends,

Keeping hope alive was our motto four years ago, and the power of humanity is our motto today. I think we have done justice to both mottos by showing that the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent has found its right place once again as one of the foremost international humanitarian forums. On Sunday when we opened the Conference, we tried to show the world and all the participants here that the power of humanity is in each one of us. I think that you have shown throughout this week's debates, workshops and pledges, that the world community is ready to provide even more and better care for the victims of conflicts and disasters, and other vulnerable people, as we enter the new millennium.

Now that we have discussed our concerns in this global forum, it is time to take action in our own communities, it is up to each one of us to implement the Conference's decisions. Through our participation in the Conference, we have undertaken to give hope to the many men, women and children — in all parts of the world — who need our help. And we must commit ourselves to contributing to a culture of non-violence and peace. The Standing Commission, as the trustee of the International Conference, must keep this hope alive. The Commission has the duty to encourage and further implementation of the resolutions of this Conference. I can assure you, Ladies and Gentlemen, that this will be one of our priority concerns and that we will invite governments and National Societies to ensure that the follow-up to this Conference is a success.

On behalf of the members of the new Standing Commission, I would like to express our heartfelt gratitude for the trust you placed in us yesterday. We can all assure you of our commitment to fulfilling our statutory mandate, which we will carry out in the spirit of the Conference Declaration and through close cooperation with all the components of the Movement. We pledge to do our utmost to live up to your expectations.

We are coming to the close of this Conference, one which has been held under the excellent guidance of our Chairman. We have shared with each other our perspectives on today's humanitarian problems and we must all be guided in our future work by the principles which inspired the Geneva Conventions. These were eloquently phrased in the Appeal of 12 August 1999 as respect for human dignity in all circumstances, compassion for those who suffer and solidarity. We had high hopes that this Conference would be different — in structure and substance — and we therefore introduced workshops and pledges. We also innovated by giving the Conference a measurable Plan of Action and an inspirational Declaration to work on in the hope that these important documents would truly make a difference.

Each one of us can choose how to help those in need. Humanity is as powerful as an outstretched hand, let us seize this opportunity to take action. Thank you.

(*Applause*)

Prof. M. GABR (Chairman of the Conference)
(*Original English*):

Thank you, Your Royal Highness, for those uplifting words. We hope that every member of the Movement will try to fulfil the aspirations you described.

The time has now come to express our gratitude to all those who made this Conference possible. I would like first of all to thank the Co-Chairmen, the Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteurs for their invaluable contributions to the smooth running of the meetings. Particular thanks go to Ambassador Jean-François Kammer, Secretary-General of the Conference, and to his two able assistants, Ms Yolande Camporini and Mr Jean-Luc Blondel.

Thanks are also due to Her Royal Highness Princess Margriet, President Cornelio Sommaruga, President Astrid Heiberg, Mr Yves Sandoz and all the other members of the Bureau for their daily advice and wise suggestions.

We are especially grateful to Ambassador Kirsch, Chairman of the Drafting Committee, and to his team, who facilitated our work and successfully harmonized our views. Our warmest thanks also go out to all the members of the Secretariat, the technical staff, the interpreters and the many others who tirelessly accomplished a wonderful job, starting with the fabulous opening ceremony last week.

Our thanks also go out to the Swiss Government, to the donors for their generosity and to the staff of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Conference Centre for their dedication and support.

(*Applause*)

I now give the floor to Ambassador Muheim.

Amb. M. MUHEIM (Vice-Chairman of the Conference)
(*Original French*):

Thank you, Mr Chairman. After so many words of appreciation, I think the moment has come to speak of you, too. For me it is a privilege and a real pleasure to have the opportunity, on behalf of all the Conference participants, to express our gratitude and admiration to you. As I see it, Dr Gabr, you have a quality which is becoming very rare and which I would call the irresistible charm of a *grand seigneur*. Observing you from afar, wandering about the labyrinthine corridors of the International Conference Centre, one could be tempted to take you for an imitator of the celebrated Professor Tournesol, a character much liked by readers of Tintin. Let it be recalled that the real-life model for Tournesol was none other than the grandfather of Bertrand Piccard, the famous and respected Auguste Piccard, who was the first man to go up into the stratosphere.

But looking at you more closely, and seeing you at work, it quickly becomes clear that even if you have your head in the clouds, you also have your feet on the ground. As an able clinician, you have the gift of diagnosing at an early stage the viruses that untimely initiatives could bring into the Conference. Your motto has been that prevention is better than cure, and in this too you have been faithful to the aims of the Red Cross. You always detected the first symptoms of a disease, and the paediatrician in you was ever anxious to watch benevolently over the welfare of the child who lies dormant in each of us until an advanced age. Even when prospects were not good, which fortunately was very rare, you continued to wear the amused grin that contributes to the charm I mentioned at the outset. On behalf of all of us, thank you, Dr Gabr, for chairing our proceedings with such distinction, courtesy and consideration, and for having been one of the main crafters of the success that the 27th International Conference has enjoyed.

(*Applause*)

Prof. M. GABR (Chairman of the Conference)
(Original English):

Thank you very much, Ambassador Muheim. Thanks to all of you, dear friends, really I am very much embarrassed. I don't know how to respond to these kind words. I cannot compete with the delicate way in which Ambassador Muheim expressed his feelings, I don't think I am up to that standard. But I am most grateful, especially since these words, coming from a Swiss person, must have some basis in reality. And I hope that what you have said will not go to my head and make me the object of envy when I go home. Thank you all. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

Since we are in the mood now, allow me, President Sommaruga and my other colleagues, to take a little time to pay tribute to those who will not be with us in their present capacity at the next International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. Let me begin with Mr George Weber, the dynamic Secretary-General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; then there is Mr Yves Sandoz, the legal brains of the International Committee of the Red Cross; Ms Margareta Wahlström, the Under-Secretary-General of the Federation; and Ms Yolande Camporini, who has been associated with this Conference, I shall not mention for how many years, Yolande, but who will always remain indispensable and from whom we have learned so much.

I do not know how to pay tribute to President Cornelio Sommaruga, who embodies a perfect balance of the sentimental, friendly nature of the Italians and the meticulous, disciplined nature of the Swiss. This may be one of the reasons why he is so close to all of us, whatever language we speak, whatever country we come from. It was as a member of the Swiss diplomatic corps that Cornelio Sommaruga polished his innate problem-solving and negotiating talents. During his presidency of the International Committee of the Red Cross, he strengthened the ICRC's relationship with almost every regional and international organization, and with various countries. The number of governments having ratified the Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions more than doubled during his term, from 71 to 152 for Protocol I and from 64 to 144 for Protocol II.

He is the one who finalized the ICRC's headquarters agreement with the Swiss Government in 1994. He has successfully orchestrated coordination between different humanitarian organizations, prime examples being the Seville Agreement between the ICRC and Federation and the establishment of the Wolfsberg Humanitarian Forum. President Sommaruga was also instrumental in winning major victories on important humanitarian issues, such as the setting up of the International Criminal Court in Rome in 1998 and the adoption of the Ottawa treaty on landmines in 1999.

A tireless and courageous leader, President Sommaruga has visited practically every country in the world, sometimes during the most hazardous circumstances. His visits to Rwanda, Chechnya and the Balkans will always be remembered. He has met hundreds of kings, queens and presidents, and with his friendly, charismatic and trustworthy character, has won the confidence of all.

From a personal point of view, Cornelio Sommaruga is a highly sensitive and emotional man. I still remember how much he was shaken when he lost one of his volunteers. His devotion, sincerity and love for people is the reason why all of us — along with thousands of others — have had the privilege of enjoying his friendship.

I know that many of you would like to pay tribute to Cornelio Sommaruga. It is his wish, however, that we keep this ceremony as brief as possible. On your behalf, Princess Margriet, Chairman of the Standing Commission, we shall therefore simply present him with the small gift you suggested, a gift that will assist him in his ongoing efforts to develop a vision for the future which goes beyond the short term — a pair of binoculars.

(Applause)

We wish you a happy and long life, President Sommaruga, so that you may continue to make an outstanding contribution to the welfare of humanity. Thank you.

Mr C. SOMMARUGA (ICRC) (Original French/English):

Mr Chairman, dear friends,

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, Baron de Montesquieu said that the present of the past is memory, the present of the present is action, and the present of the future is imagination.

My memory, dear friends, is alive with Solferino — the city where in 1859, asserting their independence and neutrality, the women of Lombardy proclaimed "*siamo tutti fratelli*". It is also filled with international humanitarian law, which was created in Geneva on 22 August 1864, along with the protective emblem of the red cross on a white ground. And, above all, I can never forget the priority that must be given to victims. Always present in my mind as well are the National Societies, which are the strength of the Movement and which, whether young or old, are essential to the success of its humanitarian work.

My action, dear friends, is that of the ICRC as a whole. It centres on performing the treaty-based task that you, the States represented here, have given us. It is aimed at protecting and assisting all the victims of armed conflict and violence. The present of the present must also — indeed, above all — consist of prevention, achieved in particular by promoting humanitarian, or ethical values; it is the tangible expression of solidarity and tolerance. Finally, action is, for me, the expression of the power of humanity.

My imagination, dear friends, is fired by a society that firmly believes in these values and that practices non-violence. A world of peace and justice achieved in a symbiosis of forces such as that found here at this Conference, where the members of the Red Cross and Red Crescent are bound by the fundamental principle called humanity, and governments are bound by signed and ratified international humanitarian law. I imagine the complete fulfilment of all the commitments made by the Conference participants in the Plan of Action and in their pledges. In the age of globalization, my imagination demands that responsibilities be globalized.

The Noble Peace Prize laureate Elie Wiesel said in 1986 that "mankind must remember that peace is not God's gift to His creatures, it is our gift to each other". Yes, I am leaving the ICRC, but I will not abandon the motto of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, *per humanitatem ad pacem*.

In thanking you all for having made these 12 years at the presidency of the ICRC most stimulating and hugely rewarding, I also express gratitude to my colleagues and friends Yves Sandoz and George Weber, and to Yolande Camporini and Margareta Wahlström, who are completing their respective terms. I would like to ask you, in friendship, to continue to believe in the humanitarian commitment of the uniquely neutral and independent organization and intermediary that is the ICRC and to give the same support to my successor, President Jakob Kellenberger.

Indeed, dear friends, as one of my predecessors, Max Huber, said — and I am concluding with his words — “The work of the Red Cross comprises service, only service. Easing opposition, seeking prestige and expecting a reward should never be considered”.

Thank you for this present, my dear Princess Margriet. And to you all — thank you, *shukran, tak, obrigado, spasibo, merci, kössonöm, gracias, danke, efharisto*, and so on — *grazie*.

(*Applause*)

Prof. M. GABR (Chairman of the Conference)

(*Original English*):

Thank you all and best of wishes. Cornelio Sommaruga will always remain our President. This brings us to the closing ceremony a little bit earlier than scheduled, thanks to your efforts and to those of all our assistants. We shall start the ceremony with a short video presentation on the power of humanity.

(*Screening of the video*)

3.10 CLOSING CEREMONY

Prof. M. GABR (Chairman of the Conference)
(Original English):

I now have the pleasure of introducing to you a charming young volunteer of the Geneva branch of the Swiss Red Cross, Ms Nadia Isler, who will read out the Conference Declaration.

Ms N. ISLER (Geneva branch of the Swiss Red Cross)
(Original French):

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased and indeed moved to have the privilege of reading out the Final Declaration of the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

Before I begin, allow me, as an active member of the Geneva Red Cross youth chapter, to say a few words about the commitment of young people within the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. The members of the Geneva Red Cross youth chapter have given careful thought to the message they would like to share with you today, which they believe reflects the wishes of their entire generation. The message is simple: old and young alike must unite their efforts and work together. In a world that becomes more divided every day, we are convinced that the place to begin building bridges is within the Movement itself, whose values we support. Only by drawing inspiration from the experience of older people and from the enthusiasm and willpower of younger people will we be able, all of us together, to become more open-minded and remain in touch with reality.

Young people believe in the values of the Movement and have the energy it takes to prove it. But they need, above all, to be shown confidence and to have their work recognized. If they decide to get involved, it is because they are responsible young adults who are aware of the limits to what they can do, but who are firmly convinced that they have a part to play within the Movement. We need support; above all, we need to be listened to. The role of youth is not to call into question what has already proven itself, but to contribute new ideas and new approaches. We want the opportunity to try them out. I mentioned earlier that young people need to be given a vote of confidence. The Geneva Red Cross recently did just that when our Red Cross youth group set up "Operation Balkans", which collected, transported and distributed over 450 tonnes of food and clothing for that region. You have also done so by inviting me to speak here today. This sort of confidence should be shown to all the world's young volunteers; they are counting on you.

READING OF THE FINAL DECLARATION

Declaration of the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

The approach of a new century is a time for reflection. For the Red Cross and Red Crescent, and the governments committed to the Geneva Conventions, it is also a time for concern.

In spite of positive changes in recent decades, conflicts still rage in many countries. Attacks on civilian populations and objects are commonplace. Hundreds of thousands of people have been forced to leave their homes. International humanitarian law is often flouted. Highly destructive natural disasters continue to shatter the lives of large numbers of people. New and old diseases cause widespread suffering.

Health services and social and economic systems struggle to cope with increasing demands. The weakest around the world continue to suffer most.

In the face of this we commit ourselves:

- to bring real help and comfort, wherever it is needed, to save and improve the lives of millions;
- to reinforce our collective commitment to international humanitarian law;
- to campaign for human dignity and the responsibility of each one of us to help others, without discrimination, to mitigate the consequences of disaster and war;
- to support the millions of Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers across the world who daily embody the humanitarian commitment.

"The *power of humanity*" is the strength of individual commitment and the force of collective action. Both must be mobilized to relieve suffering, ensure respect for human dignity and ultimately create a more humane society.

(Applause)

Prof. M. GABR (Chairman of the Conference)
(Original English):

Thank you, Nadia, for conveying to us the aspirations of young people. I assure you that we, your seniors at this Conference, have great confidence in the future of humanity because we trust in the commitment of your generation.

I now have the honour to give the floor to Vice-Chairman Yolande Biké, who will present a summary of the pledges.

PRESENTATION OF RECORDED PLEDGES

Amb. Y. BIKÉ (Vice-Chairman of the Conference)
(Original French):

Mr Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour for me to present to the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent the pledges made during this past week.

Asking the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and governments to make specific pledges at the Conference was a new initiative, and one which, judging from the results, has been a success.

Prior to the Conference, the concept of pledging encouraged discussion, and on some issues intense debate within National Societies and governments, as each member of the Conference sought to find appropriate and measurable pledges.

Some National Societies and governments chose not only to make their own individual pledges, but to prepare joint national pledges underlining the commitment to work together towards a common goal. Some regional groupings of Societies and governments also chose to make joint pledges.

In terms of participation, I am pleased to announce that 163 Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation, 85 governments and 9 observers have submitted a total of 387 pledges.

These pledges have been recorded in an Honour Book, and will subsequently be included in the Conference report as an annex. They can also be consulted on the Movement's Web site.

While it is not possible for me to mention each of the many and varied pledges which have been made, I should nevertheless like to share with you the main trends.

Two pledges relating to children affected by armed conflicts were circulated during the Conference and signed by a great number of National Societies and governments. These pledges aim to promote the adoption of new standards prohibiting the military recruitment and participation in armed conflict of persons under the age of 18 years, as do a number of individual pledges made by National Societies and governments.

Numerous pledges address the issue of protection and assistance for women and children, both in legal and practical terms, with a particular emphasis on the psycho-social and physical needs of those affected by war. Specific measures are proposed, among them, the protection of young people against sexual abuse in refugee camps and the establishment of a trauma clinic and an international information and documentation centre.

Many members of the Conference have committed themselves to a more proactive and preventive approach, pledging to work on a long-term basis to promote a culture of non-violence and tolerance.

The pledges are not only practical, but also legal in nature, with the majority referring to international humanitarian law. Several governments have undertaken to ratify the Additional Protocols or to withdraw reservations to the Geneva Conventions. Both National Societies and governments have pledged to set up national commissions for the implementation of humanitarian law.

Numerous other initiatives have been taken to implement and disseminate humanitarian law, in particular by targeting new groups such as students through "education for peace" programmes or the armed forces and the police through specially designed campaigns. One project concerns the creation of an academy with the aim of training the police to comply with the principles and rules of humanitarian law.

Another major trend is the promotion and ratification of various instruments, in particular the Ottawa treaty banning landmines and the Statute of the International Criminal Court, and the revision of national criminal legislation in order to ensure the punishment of war criminals. The transfer and proliferation of small arms is another issue targeted by a number of pledges.

With regard to the future, a substantial number of pledges relate to the role and responsibilities of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, as an auxiliary to the humanitarian services of governments, in protecting and assisting the most vulnerable people affected by armed conflicts, disasters and socio-economic crises.

Firstly, there is a real recognition of the importance of respect for the red cross and red crescent emblems, as shown by the numerous pledges made to strengthen national laws protecting these emblems, and secondly, emphasis is given to the adoption or revision of national laws on Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

On a more practical basis, many pledges are aimed at strengthening the capacities of National Societies through the implementation of Strategy 2010, which was approved by the General Assembly of the International Federation at its 12th session. It should be noted that all the pledges from one

geographical region, and from a number of other countries, include a specific commitment to ensuring that more women are involved and represented in decision-making bodies.

One focus of National Society pledges is on health and social programmes, not only to continue ongoing and traditional activities, such as first aid and community health services, but also to expand these activities by implementing new programmes in response to changing patterns of society. Among these are programmes to combat tuberculosis and other re-emerging diseases, efforts to contain epidemics, such as HIV/AIDS, and increased action in support of marginalized groups including street children, asylum-seekers and refugees.

Recognizing the role of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in disaster response and disaster preparedness, numerous governments and National Societies have pledged to strengthen national disaster plans, establish regional centres and promote improved training of staff and volunteers.

A final major trend can be seen in the numerous pledges to recruit and train volunteers, and to motivate and involve youth so as to ensure their active participation in the design and implementation of all these programmes.

In this short overview I have only mentioned major trends but in fact the scope of the pledges ranges from the systematic recording of the names of Red Cross and Red Crescent personnel who have died while carrying out their humanitarian work to the establishment of an African humanitarian intervention unit in cooperation with regional and global organizations. And although the pledging was not about money, we have noted that a number of financial commitments were made. We welcome this additional support, which will ensure that we can continue to provide vital humanitarian services.

This initiative has clearly been a success not only in terms of the number of pledges recorded, but also in terms of how practical and realistic they are. As you know, the pledges are not legally binding, but they are the expression of a true moral commitment. Putting these pledges into practice is the challenge now ahead of us, and the inherent value of all these efforts to improve humanitarian action will be measurable when the report to the 28th International Conference is drawn up.

On your behalf, Mr Chairman, I would like to thank all the eminent personalities who came to our desk to sign their pledges, all the delegates to the Conference for the active support they lent to this new initiative, and the pledge team for its work and commitment. It now gives me great pleasure to hand over to you the final result of this initiative — 387 pledges. Thank you.

(Applause)

Prof. M. GABR (Chairman of the Conference)
(Original English):

Thank you very much, Ms Biké, for your excellent presentation. This initiative was so successful that the pledges not only support our Plan of Action but even go beyond it, and we are all looking forward to their implementation.

Prof. M. GABR (Chairman of the Conference)
(Original Arabic):

Now that we are approaching the end of the 27th International Conference of Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, allow me to say that it has been a great honour for me to chair such a distinguished gathering.

Prof. M. GABR (Chairman of the Conference)
(Original English):

I have participated in many conferences before, but I have never been as proud as I am today of what has been accomplished. Together we have shown how the power of humanity can overcome any obstacle on the road to a better future for mankind in the third millennium.

As I mentioned in my opening remarks, and as Princess Margriet has just underscored, this Conference is different from the previous ones. Our Declaration will stand as a landmark at the end of the twentieth century and our Plan of Action will effectively put theory into practice and turn aspirations into reality. No other conference has witnessed so many pledges, made both individually and jointly, by governments and civil society.

The 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent will remain a milestone in the history of the Movement thanks to your enthusiasm, devotion and commitment. What matters now is that we implement our resolutions. Let us go back to our countries and regions committed to moving forward, so that when we meet again in the year 2003 we can see that what we accomplished in Geneva in 1999 truly made a difference. Thank you all, and may God's peace and mercy be with you.

(Applause)

With this applause, and looking forward to meeting you all again in four years' time, I now declare the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent closed.

3.11 RESOLUTIONS

1

Adoption of the Declaration and the Plan of Action

The 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent ("the Conference"),

1. *adopts* the Declaration in annex 1,
2. *adopts* the Plan of Action in annex 2,
3. *urges* all members of the Conference to implement the actions set out in the Plan of Action, in accordance with their respective powers, mandates and capacities, and in the spirit of the humanitarian principles outlined in the Declaration, with a view to reaching the goals defined in the Plan of Action,
4. *invites* international and regional organisations to implement the actions mentioned in the Plan of Action which concern them,
5. *requests* all members of the Conference to make every possible effort so that armed groups in conflict and other actors concerned implement, as appropriate, the actions mentioned in the Plan of Action,
6. *requests* the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent to encourage and further the implementation of the present Resolution according to its statutory mandate, through consultations with States party to the Geneva Conventions and other actors,
7. *requests* the ICRC and the International Federation to present a report to the 28th International Conference on the implementation of the Plan of Action,
8. *requests* the members of the Conference to report to the 28th International Conference on the follow up given to the individual pledges made at the Conference.

Declaration of the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

"the power of humanity"

The approach of a new century is a time for reflection. For the Red Cross and Red Crescent, and the governments committed to the Geneva Conventions, it is also a time for concern.

In spite of positive changes in recent decades, conflicts still rage in many countries. Attacks on civilian populations and objects are commonplace. Hundreds of thousands of people have been forced to leave their homes. International humanitarian law is often flouted. Highly destructive natural disasters continue to shatter the lives of large numbers of people. New and old diseases cause widespread suffering. Health services and social and economic systems struggle to cope with increasing demands. The weakest around the world continue to suffer most.

In the face of this we commit ourselves:

- to bring real help and comfort, wherever it is needed, to save and improve the lives of millions;
- to reinforce our collective commitment to international humanitarian law;
- to campaign for human dignity and the responsibility of each one of us to help others, without discrimination, to mitigate the consequences of disaster and war;
- to support the millions of Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers across the world who daily embody the humanitarian commitment.

"The power of humanity" is the strength of individual commitment and the force of collective action. Both must be mobilized to relieve suffering, ensure respect for human dignity and ultimately create a more humane society.

27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Plan of Action for the years 2000 – 2003

The members of the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, held in Geneva from 31 October to 6 November 1999, adopt the following Plan of Action for the coming four years in order to improve the care and protection of victims of armed conflicts and disasters and more generally of the most vulnerable people. They will implement the actions set out in the Plan of Action in accordance with their respective powers, mandates and capacities.

In adopting this Plan of Action, the International Conference recognises the unique nature of the cooperation between the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement¹ and States² and the specific mandates of each component of the Movement. It also reaffirms the commitment of States, adhering to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, to meet their existing obligations under international humanitarian law to support the work of each component of the Movement and to respect at all times the components' adherence to the Fundamental Principles.

The Plan of Action is divided into long term goals and specific actions which represent the main areas where a renewed effort is required from States and the Movement for their respective commitments in the coming four years.³

The 28th International Conference will evaluate the results attained over the next four years. The Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent will encourage and further the implementation of the Plan of Action, according to its statutory mandate, through consultations with States party to the Geneva Conventions, components of the Movement and other actors, as to the best methods of achieving this.

¹ The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is composed of the International Committee of the Red Cross (referred to herein as the "ICRC"), National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (referred to herein as "National Societies") and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (referred to herein as the "International Federation"). Throughout this document the term "Movement" covers all the aforementioned components.

² Throughout this document the term "States" refers to States party to the Geneva Conventions of 1949.

³ In this document actions to be undertaken solely by States or the Movement only commit the specified actors.

1. PROTECTION OF VICTIMS OF ARMED CONFLICT THROUGH RESPECT OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

Final goals

- 1.1 Full compliance by all the parties to an armed conflict with their obligations under international humanitarian law to protect and assist the civilian population and other victims of the conflict and to respect protected objects
- 1.2 An effective barrier against impunity through the combination of relevant international treaties and national laws concerning the repression of violations of international humanitarian law, and the examination of an equitable system of reparations
- 1.3 Universal acceptance of international humanitarian law and the adoption of all necessary measures by States at the national level to ensure the implementation of their obligations under international law
- 1.4 Integration, by States, of their obligations under international humanitarian law in relevant procedures and training. Promotion of this law among relevant persons and bodies
- 1.5 Conformity of weapons with international humanitarian law, the establishment of effective controls on the availability of arms and ammunition, and an end to the human tragedy caused by anti-personnel landmines

Actions proposed

Final goal 1.1 Full compliance by all the parties to an armed conflict with their obligations under international humanitarian law to protect and assist the civilian population and other victims of the conflict and to respect protected objects

1. All the parties to an armed conflict take effective measures to respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law and to ensure, in particular, in accordance with their relevant obligations under international humanitarian law, that:
 - (a) in the conduct of hostilities, every effort is made — in addition to the total ban on directing attacks against the civilian population as such or against civilians not taking a direct part in hostilities or against civilian objects — to spare the life, protect and respect the civilian population, with particular protective measures for women and girls, and groups with special vulnerabilities such as children, the elderly, persons with disabilities and displaced persons and to protect civilian objects including cultural property, places of worship and diplomatic facilities;
 - (b) strict orders are given to prevent all serious violations of international humanitarian law, including massacres, summary executions, torture, gender-based violence in particular rape and other forms of sexual violence, harassment, enforced disappearances, collective punishment, looting, wanton property destruction, and threats to carry out such actions; effective mechanisms are established to ensure that these orders are duly implemented at all levels and perpetrators punished;
 - (c) actions provoking unwarranted population displacements are avoided and if displacement occurs, that displaced persons are respected and protected, appropriate assistance is provided to them and

they are able to return voluntarily, in peaceful conditions and in safety to their home or to resettle voluntarily elsewhere;

- (d) all persons deprived of their liberty for reasons related to the armed conflict are fully respected and protected; prisoners of war are released and repatriated without delay after the cessation of active hostilities, unless subject to due judicial process; the prohibition of taking hostages is strictly respected; the detention of prisoners and internees is not prolonged for bargaining purposes which practice is prohibited by the Geneva Conventions;
 - (e) every effort is made to clarify the fate of all persons unaccounted for and to inform the families accordingly, and to identify dead persons, inform their families and return their bodies to them; in order to ensure this, appropriate procedures be put into place at the latest from the beginning of an armed conflict;
 - (f) children receive the special protection, care and assistance, including access to educational and recreational facilities, to which they are entitled under national and international law; all measures, including penal measures, are taken to stop the participation of children under the age of 15 years in armed hostilities and their recruitment into the armed forces or into armed groups which constitute a violation of international humanitarian law; and, in this context, recall Resolution 2 C (d) of the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent of 1995, which recommends that: “parties to conflict refrain from arming children under the age of 18 years and take every feasible step to ensure that children under the age of 18 years do not take part in hostilities”.
 - (g) every possible effort is made to provide the civilian population with all essential goods and services for its survival; rapid and unimpeded access to the civilian population is given to impartial humanitarian organisations in accordance with international humanitarian law in order that they can provide assistance and protection to the population; the reports and recommendations of impartial humanitarian organisations are seriously taken into account.
 - (h) an attempt is made wherever possible to enhance the safety of protected persons, and in the framework of international humanitarian law or the United Nations Charter, to create a humanitarian space through the establishment of safety zones, humanitarian corridors, and other forms of special protection for civilian populations and other persons protected under international humanitarian law.
2. States stress the provisions of international humanitarian law prohibiting the use of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare and on attacking, destroying, removing or rendering useless, for that purpose, objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population.
 3. Organised armed groups in non-international armed conflict are urged to respect international humanitarian law. They are called upon to declare their intention to respect that law and teach it to their forces.

4. Parties to an armed conflict use their best endeavours to ensure that conditions of security are guaranteed in order that the ICRC, in accordance with international humanitarian law, has access to, and can remain present in, all situations of armed conflict to protect the victims thereof and, in cooperation with National Societies and the International Federation, to provide them with the necessary assistance. Furthermore, the ICRC continues its efforts to seek to engage in a constructive dialogue with all parties to an armed conflict, in cooperation with them and with their consent in regard to which full account of the Geneva Conventions has to be taken, with a view to assisting them in meeting their obligations under international humanitarian law.
5. Contributing States, the United Nations or regional organisations ensure as appropriate that personnel under the command of the United Nations or regional organisations are instructed in international humanitarian law and observe the relevant principles and rules of this law.
6. In situations of serious violations of international humanitarian law, States party to the Geneva Conventions act, jointly or individually, in cooperation with the United Nations and in conformity with the United Nations Charter. Regional intergovernmental organisations may participate in these efforts on the same legal basis.
7. The International Federation, National Societies and the ICRC will continue their efforts in pursuance of decisions taken within the International Movement and notably the *Plan of Action for Children Affected by Armed Conflict* (CABAC), to "promote the principle of non-recruitment and non-participation of children below the age of 18 years in armed conflicts"; meet the physical, psychological and social needs of children who have been affected by an armed conflict; and to contribute to the reintegration into their communities and social environment of children who have participated in armed conflicts.

States are encouraged to engage in a constructive dialogue with the International Federation, National Societies and the ICRC on the *Plan of Action for Children Affected by Armed Conflict* (CABAC).

8. The ICRC formulates a set of guidelines aimed at better addressing the protection and assistance needs of women and girls affected by armed conflict.
9. States take into consideration the report and recommendations of the United Nations Secretary General on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/1999/957 of 8 September 1999).

Final goal 1.2 An effective barrier against impunity through the combination of relevant international treaties and national laws concerning the repression of violations of international humanitarian law, and the examination of an equitable system of reparations

10. States vigorously implement their international obligations regarding the repression of war crimes, cooperating with each other in doing so where necessary. States search for persons alleged to have committed, or to have ordered to be committed, grave breaches and bring them, regardless of their nationality, before their own courts or if they prefer, and in accordance with the provisions of their own legislation, hand over such persons for trial to another State with jurisdiction and

consider taking similar action pursuant to international law in respect of other war crimes. States are invited actively to consider contributing to the setting up of the International Criminal Court and to adhere to its Statute.

11. States examine mechanisms for making reparations for damage inflicted on the victims of violations of international humanitarian law.

Final goal 1.3 Universal acceptance of international humanitarian law and the adoption of all necessary measures by States at the national level to ensure the implementation of their obligations under international law

12. States consider or reconsider, in order to enhance the universal character of international humanitarian law, becoming party to the relevant treaties concluded since the adoption of the 1949 Geneva Conventions. States express their appreciation of the ICRC's continued efforts to promote universal adherence to these treaties. States re-examine ratified instruments with a view to considering the possibility of withdrawing existing reservations.
13. States adopt the necessary implementing measures, in particular national legislation for the repression of war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity and for the protection of the red cross and red crescent emblems. States are encouraged to create or further develop national committees or other mechanisms, with the support of National Societies, in order to facilitate coordination between ministries. Cooperation also takes place at the regional and international levels. An information exchange system on implementation of international humanitarian law is to be considered.
14. The ICRC Advisory Service on International Humanitarian Law, with the assistance of National Societies, strengthens its capacity to advise and assist States, with their consent, in their efforts to adopt national measures of implementation and further develop the database on such measures. States and national committees or other mechanisms are encouraged to send information on legislation, case law and other measures taken and planned to the ICRC Advisory Service.
15. States party to Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions which have not yet recognised the competence of the International Fact-Finding Commission pursuant to Article 90 thereof consider again the possibility of doing so. Parties to armed conflicts are called upon to examine systematically the utility and the possibility of resorting to the Commission in order to clarify facts or facilitate respect for international humanitarian law through its good offices. The International Fact-Finding Commission acts in accordance with international law.

Final goal 1.4 Integration, by States, of their obligations under international humanitarian law in relevant procedures and training. Promotion of this law among relevant persons and bodies

16. States examine their educational and training curricula to ensure that international humanitarian law is integrated in an appropriate manner in their training programmes for armed and security forces and relevant civil servants. States promote knowledge of international humanitarian law among decision-makers and the media and work for the inclusion of international humanitarian law in the general educational pro-

grammes of relevant organisations, professional bodies and educational institutions. To facilitate these tasks, the ICRC will provide, where required, guidelines and material for international humanitarian law training. National Societies will cooperate in providing such training where necessary.

17. States ensure that the rules of international humanitarian law are incorporated into the operational procedures of their armed and security forces and applied by their forces when they are engaged in operations to which the rules apply. To this effect, international humanitarian law will be integrated into their field manuals and, as appropriate, into command procedures, and become a standard norm in command post and staff exercises as well as in military manoeuvres.
18. The ICRC, in cooperation with National Societies and the International Federation, develops innovative ways, in collaboration with bodies such as the media, and religious and other comparable institutions, to promote the acceptance of international humanitarian law and Red Cross and Red Crescent principles by all relevant actors in armed conflict situations. States facilitate this analysis and action by the Movement as appropriate.

Final goal 1.5 Conformity of weapons with international humanitarian law, the establishment of effective controls on the availability of arms and ammunition, and an end to the human tragedy caused by anti-personnel landmines

19. States make all possible efforts to end the human tragedy caused by anti-personnel landmines through concrete steps towards their elimination, for example, considering adherence to relevant international legal instruments and prohibiting the transfer of anti-personnel landmines, and through national and international measures and cooperative efforts in the fields of mine clearance, mine awareness and assistance to mine victims and their communities.

The Movement implements the long-term "Movement Strategy on Landmines" adopted by the 1999 Council of Delegates.

20. States should endeavour, wherever appropriate, to engage in post-conflict discussions with respect to aiding the victims of war.
21. States which have not done so are encouraged to establish mechanisms and procedures to determine whether the use of weapons, whether held in their inventories or being procured or developed, would conform to the obligations binding on them under international humanitarian law. States are encouraged to promote, wherever possible, exchange of information and transparency in relation to these mechanisms, procedures and evaluations.

States and the ICRC may engage in consultations to promote these mechanisms, and in this regard analyse the extent to which the ICRC *SIrUS* (*Superfluous Injury or Unnecessary Suffering*) Project Report to the 27th Conference and other available information may assist States.

22. States take all possible measures for the negotiation of international instruments in order to adequately address the problems caused by weapons. States will make all efforts towards the successful conclusion of the negotiations on a protocol to strengthen the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention.

23. States enhance the protection of civilians in armed conflict and post-conflict situations by seeking to strengthen controls on the availability of arms, in particular small arms and ammunition, at the national, regional and international levels, including by improving national export regulations. States examine the establishment of means to integrate consideration of respect for international humanitarian law into national decision-making on transfers of arms and ammunition, and, where relevant, examine ways of integrating such considerations into "codes of conduct".

The Movement will promote public awareness of the human costs of unregulated arms transfers and widespread arms availability and continue to promote the ratification, and faithful implementation, of the relevant norms of international humanitarian law governing weapons.

2. HUMANITARIAN ACTION IN TIMES OF ARMED CONFLICT AND OTHER DISASTERS

Final goals

- 2.1. Effective response in disaster situations through improved national and international preparedness
- 2.2. Strengthened mechanisms of cooperation and coordination amongst States, the Movement and other humanitarian actors
- 2.3. Provision for the rights and acute needs of the most vulnerable people as the first priority for humanitarian action
- 2.4. Understanding of the respective roles of political, military and humanitarian actors, and protection of humanitarian personnel

Actions proposed

Final goal 2.1 Effective response in disaster situations through improved national and international preparedness

1. States will:
 - (a) establish or update national disaster preparedness plans which incorporate linkages, where necessary, to international systems of disaster response and have clearly defined and agreed roles and responsibilities for National Societies, including representation on appropriate national policy and coordination bodies;
 - (b) examine the vulnerability of their disaster response systems to disaster damage and take steps to ensure that these systems can continue to operate effectively in responding to the needs created by disasters;
 - (c) help, as appropriate, National Societies, in cooperation with the International Federation, to access and benefit from international funding within the multilateral context, with a view to strengthening disaster preparedness.
2. National Societies, supported by their respective governments, the International Federation and the ICRC, will:
 - (a) strengthen their disaster preparedness and response capacities, including the raising of community awareness and support, both nationally and internationally, in response to changing patterns of risk and vulnerability, and through lessons learned

from experience gained over the past decade, including those within the framework of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR);

- (b) examine the vulnerability of their disaster response systems to disaster damage and take steps to ensure that these systems can continue to operate effectively in responding to the needs created by disasters.

3. The International Federation, while drawing upon existing research and the competence of relevant international bodies, will undertake a study to assess the future impact of climatic changes upon the frequency and severity of disasters and the implications for humanitarian response and preparedness.

Final goal 2.2 Strengthened mechanisms of cooperation and coordination amongst States, the Movement and other humanitarian actors

4. The Movement, supported where appropriate by States, undertakes to improve cooperation and coordination in its international activities, both internally as set out in the 1997 Seville Agreement, and with States, the United Nations system, regional, national and sub-national authorities, international organisations and other actors, based upon the "Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organisations in Disaster Relief".
5. States and the Movement will support efforts to develop minimum practical standards for the delivery of humanitarian assistance, such as those elaborated in the *Sphere project* (Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response).
6. The Movement will develop its activities in post-conflict situations. In particular, the International Federation will develop its strategy to guide post-conflict relief and rehabilitation programming based on National Societies' capacity for social mobilisation and service provision. States and the Movement will promote better coordination between States, international organisations, the Movement, NGOs and other organisations in managing the transition from emergency humanitarian assistance to longer term development assistance.
7. States and the Movement will cooperate to further develop:
 - (a) response mechanisms that are, above all, rapid, flexible and effective in responding to needs of victims and vulnerable people;
 - (b) funding mechanisms that provide more predictable and appropriate funding while recognising the accountability requirements of all parties.

Final goal 2.3 Provision for the rights and acute needs of the most vulnerable people as the first priority for humanitarian action

8. States and all parties to an armed conflict will take all necessary measures to ensure the civilian character of refugee and internally displaced persons camps, and that appropriate conditions are met regarding location, environment, camp security, law and order, and registration. The Movement will offer its services, where required, in assisting to meet these responsibilities.
9. National Societies, the International Federation and the ICRC, according to their respective mandates and in accordance with international humanitarian law, may

offer their services on behalf of refugees and asylum seekers in cooperation with UNHCR, and, taking note of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, may also offer their services on behalf of internally displaced persons, and will:

- (a) extend support to States in fulfilling their obligations to assist and protect refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons;
- (b) ensure that their programmes support host government efforts to seek durable solutions for displaced populations, including voluntary repatriation in safety and dignity, in dialogue with countries of origin;
- (c) promote efforts to develop solidarity and understanding between host communities and refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons.

10. States and the Movement encourage the United Nations Security Council, before applying economic sanctions, to take into account the needs of the civilian population and apply humanitarian exemptions, as appropriate. States welcome the note by the President of the Security Council of 29 January 1999 on the work of the sanctions committees, in particular the paragraphs relating to the humanitarian impact of sanctions.

Final goal 2.4 Understanding of the respective roles of political, military and humanitarian actors, and protection of humanitarian personnel

11. Political and military actors and humanitarian organisations, while acknowledging and respecting the clear distinction between their different missions and modes of operations, will undertake at the national and international levels to strengthen their dialogue in order to ensure a clear understanding of, and respect for, each others' mandates and roles.
12. Humanitarian personnel will be respected and protected at all times. Threats to, and attacks on, such personnel will be duly investigated and those alleged to have committed such attacks will be brought to justice under due process of law. In this context, States are encouraged to consider becoming parties to the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel.

3. STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF VULNERABLE PEOPLE

Final goals

- 3.1 Improved health for vulnerable people based on strengthened cooperation between States and National Societies
- 3.2 New initiatives to meet the needs of vulnerable people and to reduce discrimination and violence in the community
- 3.3 Increased National Society capacities and effective partnership with States, and cooperation with relevant humanitarian and development organisations

Actions proposed

Final goal 3.1 Improved health for vulnerable people based on strengthened cooperation between States and National Societies

1. States note the important role of National Societies in providing and advocating for improved health and social services particularly for vulnerable groups, and will strengthen their cooperation with their National Societies to further this end. States will provide

opportunities, where appropriate, for National Societies to be represented in policy, planning and implementation bodies.

2. States, National Societies, and the International Federation, together with the appropriate international and national bodies, will develop their collaboration to increase promotion and provision of primary health care, with particular emphasis on preventative primary health care and the well-being of vulnerable people in inaccessible and under-served areas, and in the most deprived sections of large cities.
3. States recognise that blood service provision as part of health care is the overall responsibility of governments. National Societies will support national blood programmes as needed through the provision of high quality and safe blood services based upon voluntary, non-remunerated blood donation. To this end, States will strive to ensure, where appropriate, that adequate resources are made available to National Societies involved in such programmes.
4. The International Federation and National Societies will, in cooperation with States, and appropriate national and international bodies, further strengthen their capacity to prevent, treat and control communicable diseases (including emerging and re-emerging diseases), especially tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, malaria and vaccine-preventable diseases.
5. States recognise the intrinsic value of first aid training for the public as an effective means for prevention, preparedness and response to emergencies as well as day-to-day health problems. Accordingly, States, where appropriate, will give consideration to providing opportunities for first aid training for school children, public servants, health professionals and members of the community, utilising in particular the expertise and capacity of their National Societies.
6. States will respond to the growing global problem of road accidents through, for example, the further development of road safety measures in collaboration with all concerned partners, in particular National Societies. Concerned National Societies will develop their role in support of first aid training and public awareness activities to reduce levels of road accidents and the resulting casualties, especially amongst vulnerable populations.

Final goal 3.2 New initiatives to meet the needs of vulnerable people and to reduce discrimination and violence in the community

7. The ICRC, the International Federation and National Societies, with the support of States where applicable, will develop innovative ways to explain and communicate the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, inside the Movement and externally to local authorities and the community, as a means of:
 - (a) ensuring that all volunteers and staff of the Movement understand and act on the basis of the Fundamental Principles in their day-to-day work;
 - (b) ensuring that public authorities understand the role of the Movement, use its capacity and facilitate its access to vulnerable people in peaceful and violent circumstances, in accordance with applicable international law;

- (c) developing mutual understanding and fostering initiatives in the community, taking into account the diversity of its cultural, religious and other representative features, to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being.
8. States, where appropriate, will facilitate access to schools and universities for National Societies, the International Federation and the ICRC, and will contribute to the development of communication and teaching materials which foster understanding of the Fundamental Principles.
9. National Societies will review and adjust their service delivery and communication programmes to ensure that they fully represent the application of the Fundamental Principles, with particular reference to advocacy for, and services to, the most vulnerable people in the community.
10. National Societies, in reviewing their programmes, will pay special attention to the needs of children living in difficult circumstances, in particular street children. With the support of the International Federation, they will develop their activities and advocacy, where appropriate, to contribute to meeting these needs. States, where appropriate, will draw on the capacities of National Societies, and support their actions in meeting the needs of street children.
11. States will seek to improve the plight of children living in difficult circumstances by meeting their special needs, with emphasis on prevention of sexual exploitation and physical and other forms of abuse and the sale of children with the ultimate objective of the reintegration of these children into their families and society. States will strive to achieve the rapid conclusion of the work of the United Nations Working Group on an Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.
12. National Societies and States will cooperate and, as appropriate, take initiatives to promote tolerance, non-violence in the community and respect for cultural diversity.

Final goal 3.3 Increased National Society capacities and effective partnership with States, and cooperation with relevant humanitarian and development organisations

13. States, recognising the auxiliary role of National Societies and the growing significance of their work in the provision of services and the fostering of respect for the human being, will:
 - (a) where necessary, commit to further strengthening the capacity of the National Society of their own country, facilitating and supporting its role in response to new challenges in the national context;
 - (b) recognise the growing importance of volunteers as providers of practical and emotional support to vulnerable people in the community, thus complementing the coverage of needs not met by the formal service delivery system. States consequently review, and where necessary, introduce or update legislation so as to facilitate the efficient work of relevant voluntary organisations;
 - (c) increase their support for building a stronger, global National Society network, better able to respond to needs in the community and to

disasters. In this they will give due recognition to the experience of the "Tripartite Process" launched by the International Federation in follow-up to the 26th International Conference;

- (d) as appropriate, increase their support for coordination between the National Society network and relevant humanitarian and development organisations.

14. National Societies, in order to ensure their capacity to respond more effectively to new challenges, will:

- (a) take new initiatives to ensure a well-balanced participation by people from all sectors of society in their organisation and programmes, and promote their integration into National Society decision-making processes and leadership positions;
- (b) review their legal base and statutes to determine whether they need to be updated. As part of this process they will consider the draft model law prepared by the International Federation and the ICRC, the guidelines for National Society statutes and other relevant decisions of Movement and International Federation statutory bodies;
- (c) commit themselves to increased coordination and cooperation with relevant humanitarian and development organisations.

15. The International Federation will:

- (a) continue its research, in cooperation with National Societies, on specific aspects of voluntarism, in order to develop updated policy and guidelines;
- (b) initiate, in cooperation with National Societies and the ICRC, an in-depth study into the working relationship between States and National Societies, taking into account the changing needs in the humanitarian, health and social fields, the auxiliary role of National Societies and the evolving role of the State, the private sector and voluntary organisations in service provision;
- (c) implement "Strategy 2010", adopted by its General Assembly in October 1999, which seeks to build the individual and collective actions of National Societies, in cooperation with States, in order to improve the lives of vulnerable people.

2

Appeal of 12 August 1999

The 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent,

having taken note of the solemn Appeal of 12 August 1999, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions by leading figures invited by the International Committee of the Red Cross (attached),

stressing the relevance of this Appeal,

noting with satisfaction the impact it has already made,

fully endorses the Appeal of 12 August and undertakes to contribute towards the achievement of its aims.

People on War — Solemn Appeal on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions

The universally recognized Geneva Conventions were adopted in this city 50 years ago today. The States Parties

thereby declared their refusal to see the unprecedented horrors of the Second World War repeated.

Since then, these treaties have helped to alleviate much suffering but have not been able to prevent millions of innocent people from falling victim to the conflicts that have ravaged our planet.

Although they are often breached, the Geneva Conventions and the principles on which they are founded remain as valid and relevant as ever.

That is the opinion of thousands of individuals across the world who bear the physical and mental scars of war. Men, women and children have all talked about their experiences, their fears and their expectations. They are the voices of war, and we are convinced that these expectations can be met.

We have come together in Geneva to make a solemn appeal to all peoples, nations and governments. We call on the world:

- to reject the idea that war is inevitable and to work tirelessly to eradicate its underlying causes;
- to demand of all those involved in armed conflicts and all who are in a position to influence the course of such conflicts that they respect the essential humanitarian principles and the rules of international humanitarian law;
- to spare civilians the agony of war;
- to foster relations between individuals, peoples and nations on the basis of the principles that inspired the Geneva Conventions, namely,
 - respect for human dignity in all circumstances;
 - compassion for those who suffer;
 - solidarity.

We are convinced that disregard for these principles sets the stage for war and that respecting them during wartime facilitates the restoration of peace.

On the eve of a new millennium, let us all undertake to defend these principles and thus give hope to future generations.

This Solemn Appeal was signed in the Alabama Room of Geneva Town Hall on 12 August 1999 by:

- His Highness Prince Sadrudin Aga Khan
- Mr Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations
- Ms Shabana Azmi, India, actress
- Ms Geraldine Chaplin, United Kingdom, actress
- H.R.H. Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan
- Fayrouz, Lebanon, singer and poet
- Mr Serge Klarsfeld, France, President of the *Association Fils et Filles des Déportés Juifs de France*
- Mr Chris Moon, United Kingdom, supporter of organizations for the disabled
- Mr Jean Pictet, Honorary Vice-President of the ICRC
- Mr Vladimir Pozner, Russian Federation, journalist
- H.E. Mr Mário Soares, former President of Portugal
- H.E. General Amadou Toumani Touré, former President of Mali
- Ms Marian Wright Edelman, President of the Children's Defense Fund
- Mr Zhang Yuan, China, stage and film director

Mr Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, Argentina, 1980 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, was unable to attend for health reasons.

3 Emblems

The 27th International Conference,

taking into account Resolution 2 concerning the establishment of a working group on the emblems adopted by the Council of Delegates on 29 October 1999 (attached),

recognising the points raised in the above-mentioned Resolution,

accepts the proposals made in the Resolution.

Council of Delegates of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (Geneva, 28-30 October 1999) Resolution 2: Emblem

The Council of Delegates,

recognising the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's fundamental principle of universality and the common goal of States, which are parties to the Geneva Conventions, and of the Movement to remove any obstacles to the universal application of the 1949 Geneva Conventions,

further recognising the current problems in some States and National Societies regarding the emblems of the red cross or red crescent,

taking into account and commending the work and consultations undertaken since 1995 by the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent at the request of the Movement, and in particular resolution 2 of the 1997 Council of Delegates,

1. calls upon the 27th International Conference
 - (a) to invite the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent to establish a joint working group from the Movement and States on the emblems with a mandate to find a comprehensive solution, as rapidly as possible, which is acceptable to all parties in terms of substance and procedure,
 - (b) to invite the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, to nominate the membership of the joint working group which will represent the shared responsibility of the Movement and States on the emblem, and to establish its terms of reference,
 - (c) to request the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent to establish the practical arrangements with States to carry out the tasks of the joint working group.
 - (d) to request the joint working group to report back, through the Standing Commission, to the 2001 Council of Delegates and to the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

4 Revision of the Regulations for the Empress Shōken Fund

The 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent,

having taken cognizance of the report of the Joint Commission of the Empress Shōken Fund,

1. *thanks* the Joint Commission for its management of the Empress Shōken Fund *and approves* all the allocations made by it,
2. *requests* the Joint Commission to transmit this report to the Imperial Family of Japan through the intermediary of the Japanese Red Cross Society,
3. *approves* the new Regulations for the Empress Shōken Fund, the text of which is as follows:

REGULATIONS FOR THE EMPRESS SHŌKEN FUND

(Approved by the Sixteenth International Conference of the Red Cross, London 1938, and revised by the Nineteenth International Conference, New Delhi 1957, the Twenty-fifth International Conference, Geneva 1986, the Council of Delegates, Budapest 1991, and the Twenty-seventh International Conference, Geneva, 1999)

Article 1 — The sum of 100,000 yen in Japanese gold presented by H.M. The Empress of Japan to the International Red Cross on the occasion of the Ninth International Conference (Washington, 1912) to promote "relief work in time of peace", was increased to 200,000 yen by a further gift of 100,000 yen from their Majesties The Empress and The Dowager Empress of Japan, on the occasion of the Fifteenth International Conference, (Tokyo, 1934). The Fund was further increased by a gift of 3,600,000 yen from H.M. The Empress of Japan, on the occasion of the Red Cross Centenary in 1963, and by successive contributions from the Government of Japan since 1966, and from the Japanese Red Cross Society. This fund shall be entitled: "The Empress Shōken Fund".

Article 2 — The Fund shall be administered and its revenues distributed by a Joint Commission of six members chosen in their personal capacity. The Joint Commission shall be composed equally of three members appointed by the International Committee of the Red Cross and three by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; the quorum shall be four. The Chairman of the Joint Commission shall be on a permanent basis one of the representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross whereas the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies shall provide the Joint Commission's Secretariat. The Joint Commission shall meet at Geneva, in principle at the headquarters of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Article 3 — The capital of the Fund as well as subsequent donations and contributions shall remain intact. Only revenues provided by interest and capital gains may be used for allocations awarded by the Joint Commission to meet all or part of the cost of the activities enumerated below:

- (a) Disaster preparedness
- (b) Activities in the field of health

- (c) Blood transfusion services
- (d) Youth activities
- (e) First aid and rescue programmes
- (f) Activities in the field of social welfare
- (g) Dissemination of the humanitarian ideals of the Red Cross and Red Crescent
- (h) Such other programmes of general interest for the development of the activities of the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Article 4 — National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies wishing to receive an allocation shall make the necessary application through their Central Committees to the Secretariat of the Joint Commission before 31 December of the year preceding that in which the allocations are to be made. Applications shall be supported by full details concerning the particular activity selected from among those specified in Article 3 above.

Article 5 — The Joint Commission shall examine the applications mentioned in the previous Article and shall make such allocations as it considers just and suitable. It shall each year communicate the decisions it has taken to National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Article 6 — National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies which feel obliged by circumstances to put the allocations received to uses other than those specified in their applications for grants under Article 4 must ask for the Joint Commission's approval before doing so.

Article 7 — National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies shall send to the Joint Commission, not later than twelve months after receipt of the allocations, a report on the use of the allocations received.

Article 8 — The announcement of distribution shall take place each year on 11 April, the anniversary of the death of H.M. The Empress Shôken.

Article 9 — A sum which shall not exceed twelve per cent of the annual interest on the capital shall be set aside to cover the cost of administering the Fund and of assisting the National Societies concerned in the realisation of their projects.

Article 10 — The Joint Commission shall present to each International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent a report on the current financial situation of the Fund, the allocations which have been made since the preceding Conference and the use made of those allocations by National Societies. The International Conference shall transmit this report to the Japanese Imperial Family through the intermediary of the Japanese Red Cross Society.

5

Date and place of the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

The 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent,

decides to hold the 28th International Conference in 2003, the date and place to be decided by the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

3.12 LIST OF DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED TO THE 27TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

- **Provisional Agenda of the 27th International Conference**
 - **Compendium of documents, including:**
 - Draft Plan of Action
 - Reference material
 - Annexes:
 - I. Follow-up to the resolutions of the 26th International Conference
 - II. Report on the First Periodical Meeting on International Humanitarian Law
 - III. Draft model Red Cross/Red Crescent law
 - **Preliminary draft of the Conference Declaration**
 - **Draft resolution on the adoption of the Declaration and the Plan of Action**
- **Revision of the Regulations for the Empress Shôken Fund:** explanatory report and draft resolution
 - **Appeal of 12 August 1999:** text of the Appeal and draft resolution inviting Conference endorsement
 - **Date and place of the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent**
 - **Workshops:** the list of workshops and a short presentation of each workshop (included in the documentation provided upon registration).
 - **Pledges:** a document on this important subject (new to the Conference) and a note explaining how to word the pledges.
 - Study by the ICRC on “Arms Availability and the Situation of Civilians in Armed Conflict”

3.13 LIST OF PLEDGES

Governments that made pledges at the 27th International Conference

Albania	Jamaica
Argentina	Japan
Australia	Korea (Rep. of)
Austria	Laos
Belarus	Lithuania
Belgium	Luxembourg
Bolivia	Macedonia
Brazil	Madagascar
Bulgaria	Mexico
Burkina Faso	Moldova
Burundi	Morocco
Canada	Mozambique
Chile	Myanmar
China	Nepal
Colombia	Netherlands
Congo (Rep. of the)	New Zealand
Costa Rica	Nicaragua
Croatia	Niger
Cuba	Norway
Cyprus	Pakistan
Czech Republic	Palau
Denmark	Paraguay
Dominican Republic	Peru
Ecuador	Poland
Estonia	Portugal
Ethiopia	Russian Federation
Finland	Slovakia
France	Slovenia
Gabon	South Africa
Germany	Spain
Ghana	Sudan
Greece	Sweden
Guatemala	Switzerland
Guinea	Thailand
Holy See	Turkey
Hungary	Turkmenistan
Iceland	Uganda
Indonesia	Ukraine
Iraq	United Kingdom of Great Britain
Ireland	United States of America
Israel	Uruguay
Italy	Venezuela
Ivory Coast	Viet Nam

National Societies that made pledges at the 27th International Conference

Afghanistan — Red Crescent	Belgium — Red Cross
Albania — Red Cross	Belize — Red Cross
Algeria — Red Crescent	Benin — Red Cross
Angola — Red Cross	Bolivia — Red Cross
Antigua and Barbuda — Red Cross	Botswana — Red Cross
Argentina — Red Cross	Brazil — Red Cross
Armenia — Red Cross	Brunei Darussalam — Red Crescent
Australia Red Cross	Bulgaria — Red Cross
Austria — Red Cross	Burkina Faso — Red Cross
Azerbaijan — Red Crescent	Cambodia — Red Cross
Bahamas — Red Cross	Cameroon — Red Cross
Bahrain — Red Crescent	Canada — Red Cross
Bangladesh — Red Crescent	Cape Verde — Red Cross
Barbados — Red Cross	Chad — Red Cross
Belarus — Red Cross	Chile — Red Cross

China — Red Cross
 Colombia — Red Cross
 Congo (Rep. of the) — Red Cross
 Congo (Dem. Rep. of the) — Red Cross
 Costa Rica — Red Cross
 Côte d'Ivoire — Red Cross
 Croatia — Red Cross
 Cuba — Red Cross
 Czech Republic — Red Cross
 Denmark — Red Cross
 Dominican Republic — Red Cross
 Ecuador — Red Cross
 Egypt — Red Crescent
 El Salvador — Red Cross
 Equatorial Guinea — Red Cross
 Estonia — Red Cross
 Ethiopia — Red Cross
 Fiji — Red Cross
 Finland — Red Cross
 France — Red Cross
 Gabon — Red Cross
 Gambia — Red Cross
 Georgia — Red Cross
 Germany — Red Cross
 Ghana — Red Cross
 Greece — Red Cross
 Grenada — Red Cross
 Guatemala — Red Cross
 Guinea — Red Cross
 Guinea-Bissau — Red Cross
 Guyana — Red Cross
 Haiti — Red Cross
 Honduras — Red Cross
 Hungary — Red Cross
 Iceland — Red Cross
 Indonesia — Red Cross
 Iran — Red Crescent
 Iraq — Red Crescent
 Ireland — Red Cross
 Italy — Red Cross
 Jamaica — Red Cross
 Japan — Red Cross
 Jordan — Red Crescent
 Kenya — Red Cross
 Korea (Dem. People's Rep. of) — Red Cross
 Korea (Rep. of) — Red Cross
 Kuwait — Red Crescent
 Kyrgyzstan — Red Crescent
 Laos — Red Cross
 Latvia — Red Cross
 Lebanon — Red Cross
 Lesotho — Red Cross
 Liberia — Red Cross
 Libya — Red Crescent
 Lithuania — Red Cross
 Luxembourg — Red Cross
 Macedonia — Red Cross
 Madagascar — Red Cross
 Malawi — Red Cross
 Malaysia — Red Crescent
 Mali — Red Cross
 Malta — Red Cross
 Mauritania — Red Crescent
 Mexico — Red Cross
 Monaco — Red Cross
 Mongolia — Red Cross
 Morocco — Red Crescent

Mozambique — Red Cross
 Myanmar — Red Cross
 Namibia — Red Cross
 Nepal — Red Cross
 Netherlands — Red Cross
 New Zealand — Red Cross
 Nicaragua — Red Cross
 Niger — Red Cross
 Nigeria — Red Cross
 Norway — Red Cross
 Pakistan — Red Crescent
 Palau — Red Cross
 Panama — Red Cross
 Papua New Guinea — Red Cross
 Paraguay — Red Cross
 Philippines — Red Cross
 Poland — Red Cross
 Portugal — Red Cross
 Qatar — Red Crescent
 Romania — Red Cross
 Russia — Red Cross
 Rwanda — Red Cross
 Saint Kitts and Nevis — Red Cross
 Samoa — Red Cross
 Sao Tome and Principe — Red Cross
 Saudi Arabia — Red Crescent
 Senegal — Red Cross
 Seychelles — Red Cross
 Sierra Leone — Red Cross
 Singapore — Red Cross
 Slovakia — Red Cross
 Slovenia — Red Cross
 Solomon Islands — Red Cross
 Somalia — Red Crescent
 South Africa — Red Cross
 Spain — Red Cross
 Sri Lanka — Red Cross
 Sudan — Red Crescent
 Suriname — Red Cross
 Swaziland — Red Cross
 Sweden — Red Cross
 Switzerland — Red Cross
 Syria — Red Crescent
 Tajikistan — Red Crescent
 Tanzania — Red Cross
 Thailand — Red Cross
 Togo — Red Cross
 Trinidad and Tobago — Red Cross
 Tunisia — Red Crescent
 Turkey — Red Crescent
 Turkmenistan — Red Crescent
 Uganda — Red Cross
 Ukraine — Red Cross
 United Arab Emirates — Red Crescent
 United Kingdom — Red Cross
 United States of America — Red Cross
 Uruguay — Red Cross
 Uzbekistan — Red Crescent
 Venezuela — Red Cross
 Viet Nam — Red Cross
 Yemen — Red Crescent
 Yugoslavia — Red Cross
 Zambia — Red Cross
 Zimbabwe — Red Cross

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Observers that made pledges at the 27th International Conference

Cook Islands — Red Cross

Eritrea — Government

Eritrea — Red Cross

Henry Dunant Society

International Institute of Humanitarian Law

Kazakhstan — Red Cross and Red Crescent

Magen David Adom

Palestine — Red Crescent

The Pan-Pacific and South-East Asia Women's Association
International

World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts
(WAGGGS)

IV
THIRTEENTH SESSION OF THE STANDING COMMISSION
OF THE RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT
(Constitutive meeting)
Geneva, 5 November 1999

Present

Chairman of the 27th International Conference

Dr Mamdouh Gabr

Elected members

H.R.H. Princess Margriet of the Netherlands

Dr Mohammed M. Al-Hadid

Dr Abdul-Rahman Al-Swailem

Mr Tadateru Konoe

Ms Christina Magnuson

ICRC

Mr Cornelio Sommaruga, President

Mr Yves Sandoz, Director

International Federation

Dr Astrid Heiberg, President

Mr George Weber, Secretary-General

Secretary

Ms Kathleen Graf

Other participants

Mr Jakob Kellenberger (ICRC)

Mr Fred Boddens-Hosang, Adviser to the Chairman

Mr Vidar Helgesen, Adviser to Dr Astrid Heiberg

Mr Jean-Luc Blondel (ICRC)

1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Decision: The agenda was adopted.

2. ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE STANDING COMMISSION

The main purpose of the meeting was to elect the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Standing Commission, in accordance with Article 19, paragraph 5, of the Movement's Statutes. The meeting was chaired by Dr Gabr, Chairman of

the 27th International Conference, until the Commission's Chairman was elected.

Princess Margriet was nominated as Chairman and Dr Al-Hadid as Vice-Chairman.

Decision: Princess Margriet and Dr Al-Hadid were unanimously elected Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Standing Commission.

3. DECISION ON THE WORKING LANGUAGE OF THE STANDING COMMISSION

Decision: English was chosen as the working language of the Standing Commission.

4. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF THE LAST TWO MEETINGS (19 NOVEMBER AND 29 NOVEMBER)

Decision: The revised minutes, which incorporated comments received from the participants in the last two meetings, were adopted.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

The Secretariat was instructed to send the minutes of the Commission's last three meetings to Dr Al-Hadid and Dr Al-Swailem for information.

The Chairman requested that she be given the mandate to find a new Secretary of the Standing Commission, in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Commission.

Decision: The Chairman's request was approved. Furthermore, it was agreed that the Secretariat would provide an analysis of the resolutions adopted by the 1999 Council of Delegates and the 27th International Conference for the Commission's next meeting.

6. DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Decision: It was agreed that the next meeting would be held from 18 to 19 January 2000 in Apeldoorn (Netherlands) and that it would be preceded by an informal brainstorming session on 17 January to prepare the programme and discuss the working methods of the Commission's current four-year session.

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