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***COMMUNIQUES DE PRESSE***

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Press release No. 1814  
27 January 1998

### **PRESIDENT OF KYRGYZSTAN VISITS ICRC**

Geneva (ICRC) - The President of the Kyrgyz Republic, Mr Askar Akayev, accompanied by a government delegation and the country's Permanent Representative in Geneva, today visited the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), where he was received by ICRC President Cornelio Sommaruga.

President Akayev paid tribute to the ICRC for its work in many crisis situations around the world. He reaffirmed his support for the organization's humanitarian activities and for the basic principles of international humanitarian law, asserting that spreading knowledge of those principles among new generations could contribute to national unity and respect for human dignity.

In his address the ICRC President expressed his appreciation of the Kyrgyz government's interest in humanitarian affairs. He welcomed the fact that Kyrgyzstan, as a State party to the Geneva Conventions, had demonstrated its readiness to make an active contribution to the promotion of international humanitarian law both among the country's armed forces and in schools and universities. Mr Sommaruga encouraged President Akayev to pursue the efforts made by his government to bring national legislation in line with the obligations arising under humanitarian law, adding that the ICRC's work depended largely on the good will and support of States. He also stressed the importance attached by the ICRC to cooperation with the Red Crescent Society of Kyrgyzstan with a view to helping it to develop its operational capacity.

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Press release No. 1815  
27 February 1998

### **ICRC: NEW MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE**

Geneva (ICRC) - The Assembly of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has co-opted three new members, Mrs Gabrielle Nanchen, Mr André von Moos and Mr Olivier Vodoz, to sit on its Committee. This brings the membership of the Committee, which is composed exclusively of Swiss nationals, to 21.

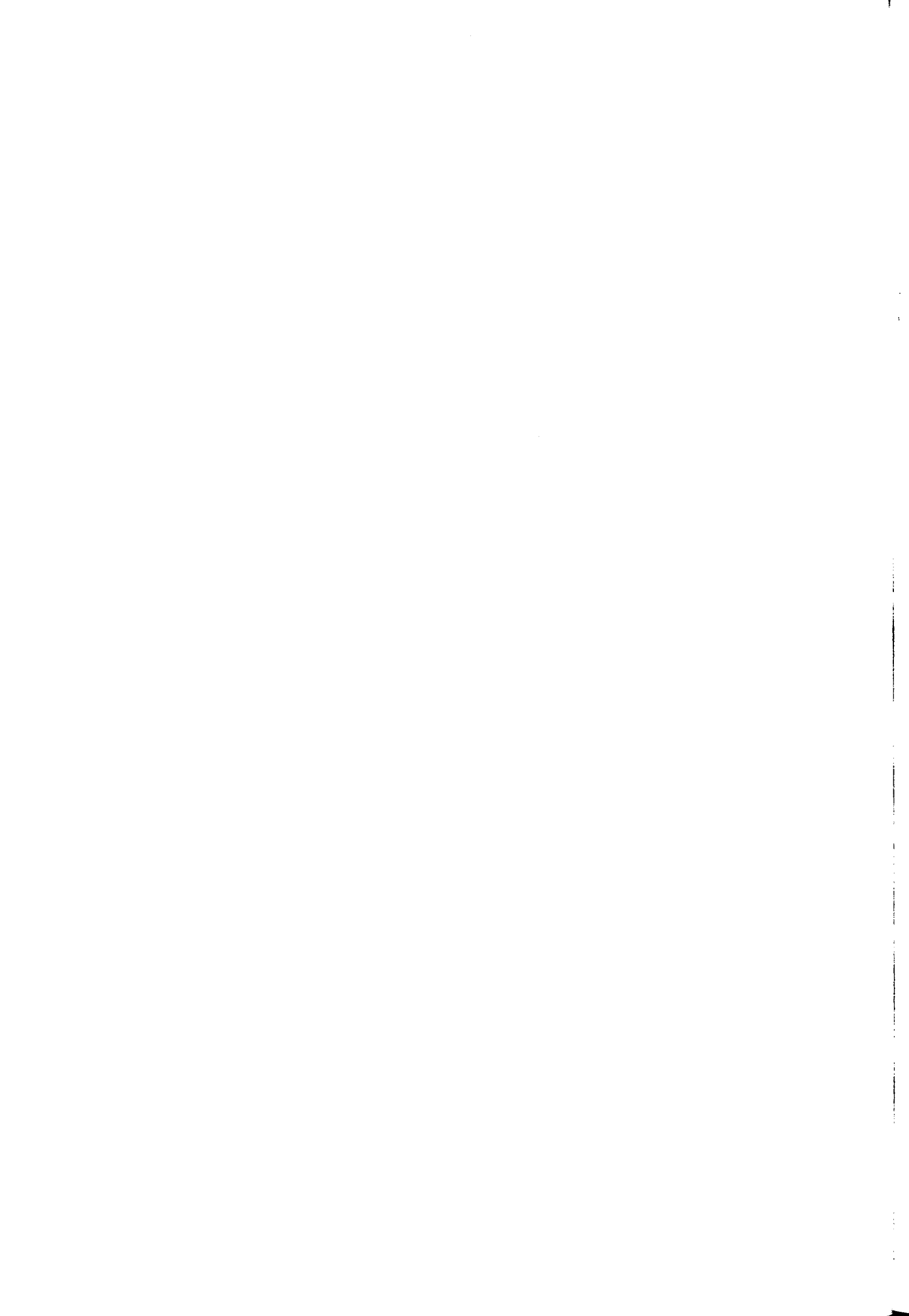
Mrs Gabrielle Nanchen, of Aigle in the canton of Vaud and Icogne in the canton of Valais, was born in 1943. She holds a degree in Social Science from the University of Lausanne and is a qualified social worker with a diploma from the Lausanne School of Social Studies. Mrs Nanchen was formerly a member of the Swiss National Council. Active in the fields of social welfare and development as President of the Swissaid Foundation, Delegate for North-South dialogue of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation at the Council of Europe, and a member of the Executive Council of the North-South Centre in Lisbon, Mrs Nanchen is also a member of the governing board of the Geneva Graduate Institute of Development Studies.

Mr André von Moos of Lucerne was born in 1949. He is a Doctor of Laws of the University of Zurich and holds degrees in economics from the University of St Gallen and Harvard Business School. Formerly Chairman of the von Moos Group, he is now an independent industrialist.

Mr Olivier Vodoz, of La Tour-de-Peilz in the canton of Vaud, was born in 1943. He has a law degree from the University of Geneva and practised at the Geneva Bar from 1971 to 1989. Mr Vodoz served as a Deputy in the Geneva *Grand Conseil* (cantonal parliament) from 1977 to 1989 and as a member of the *Conseil d'Etat* (cantonal government) of the Republic and Canton of Geneva from 1989 to 1997.

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Press release No. 1816  
28 February 1998

**NEW DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS AT THE ICRC**

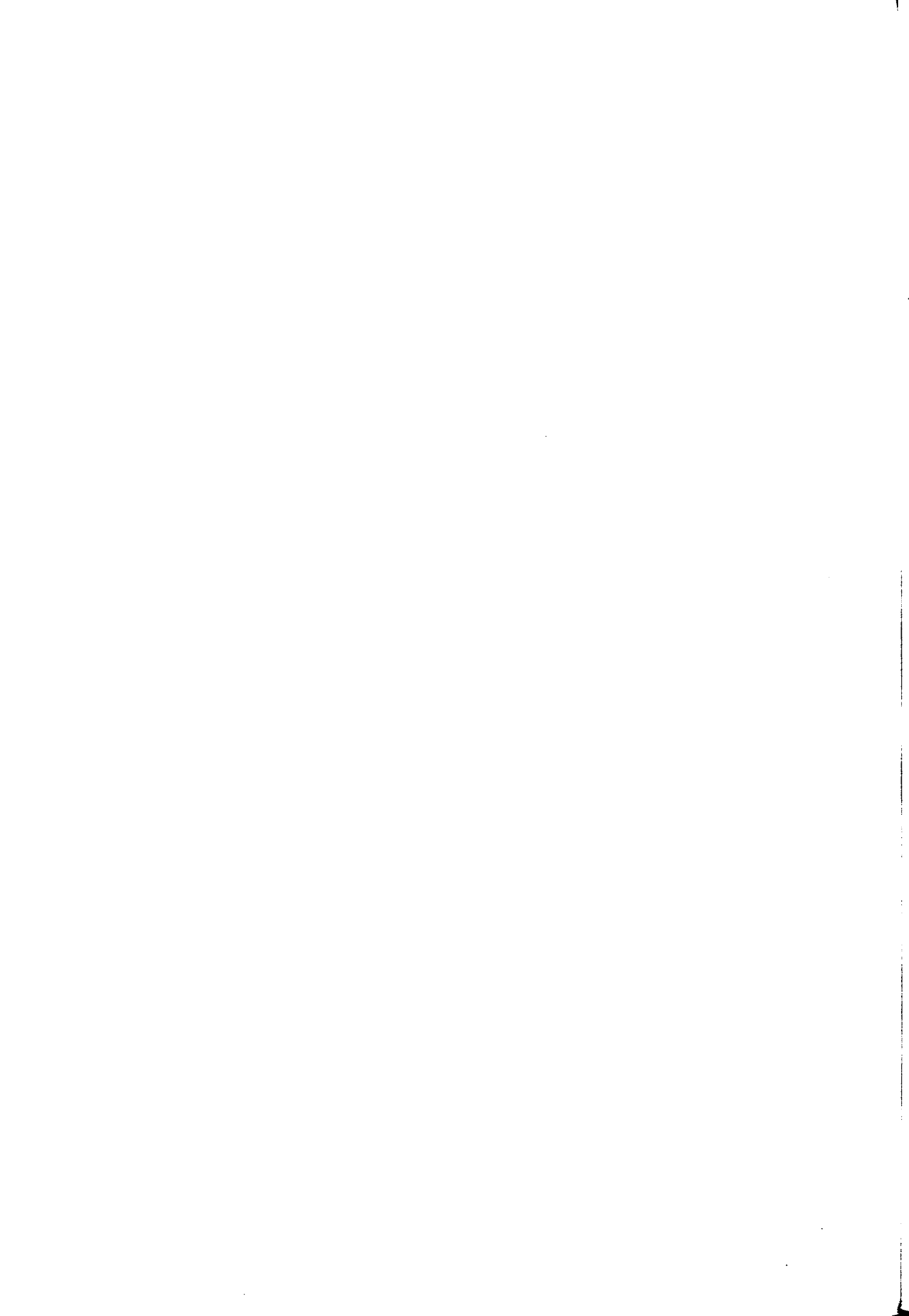
Geneva (ICRC) - At its meeting of 25 February 1998, the Assembly of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) appointed Mr Jean-Daniel Tauxe to succeed Mr Jean de Courten as Director of Operations from 1 May this year.

Mr de Courten has been Director of Operations since October 1989. His decision to stand down, announced last December, was taken in pursuance of the ICRC's new personnel policy aimed at increasing the mobility of senior staff within the organization. Mr de Courten hopes that this move will enable a new generation of staff to assume greater responsibilities in the running of the ICRC. The Assembly expressed its warmest thanks to Mr de Courten for the outstanding services he has rendered to the ICRC over the past 26 years, first as a field delegate, then as Delegate General for Asia and the Pacific, and finally as Director of Operations.

Mr Jean-Daniel Tauxe, who is 44 years of age, joined the ICRC in 1981 after studying economics and law. He held the post of Delegate General for Africa from 1992 to 1997, when he was appointed Deputy Director of Operations.

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Press release No. 1817  
28 May 1998

## **ICRC APPOINTS MEMBERS OF COLLEGIAL DIRECTORATE**

Geneva (ICRC) - At its meeting on 28 May, the Assembly of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) appointed Mr Paul Grossrieder to the newly created post of Director-General.

The Assembly further appointed Dr Jacques Stroun as Director of Human Resources and Finance, and confirmed Mr Yves Sandoz and Mr Jean-Daniel Tauxe in their positions as heads of the Directorate of International Law and Communication and of the Directorate of Operations respectively.

The nomination of the four members of the ICRC's collegial Directorate comes as a result of the reorganization of the institution's internal structure, as provided for in the plan of action adopted by the Assembly in late April 1998 within the framework of the major study on the future of the ICRC (see communication to the press No. 97/36 of 16 December 1997).

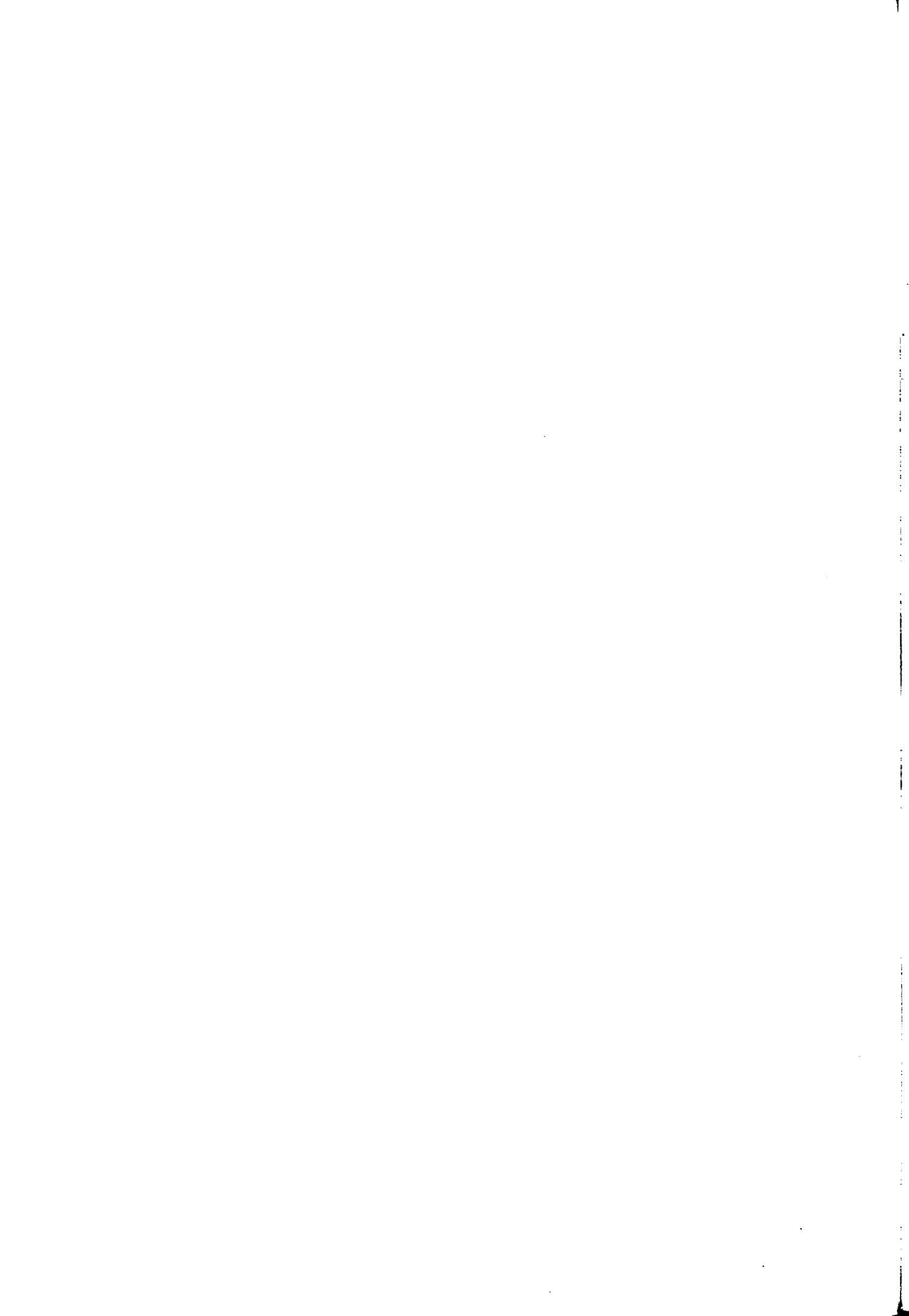
The Directorate will take over on 1 September at the latest, and will be entrusted with the task of pursuing the application of the some 130 measures contained in the plan.

The Assembly wished the new Directorate every success, assuring the four Directors of its full support in the implementation of the decisions taken in the study on the future of the ICRC.

Paul Grossrieder, who began working for the ICRC in 1984, served as Deputy Director of Operations from 1990 to 1996 and took up the post of Director for General Affairs on 1 January 1997. Jacques Stroun has been with the organization since 1980 and was appointed Deputy Director of Operations on 1 January 1997.

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Press release No. 1818  
26 June 1998

**ICRC: NEW MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE**

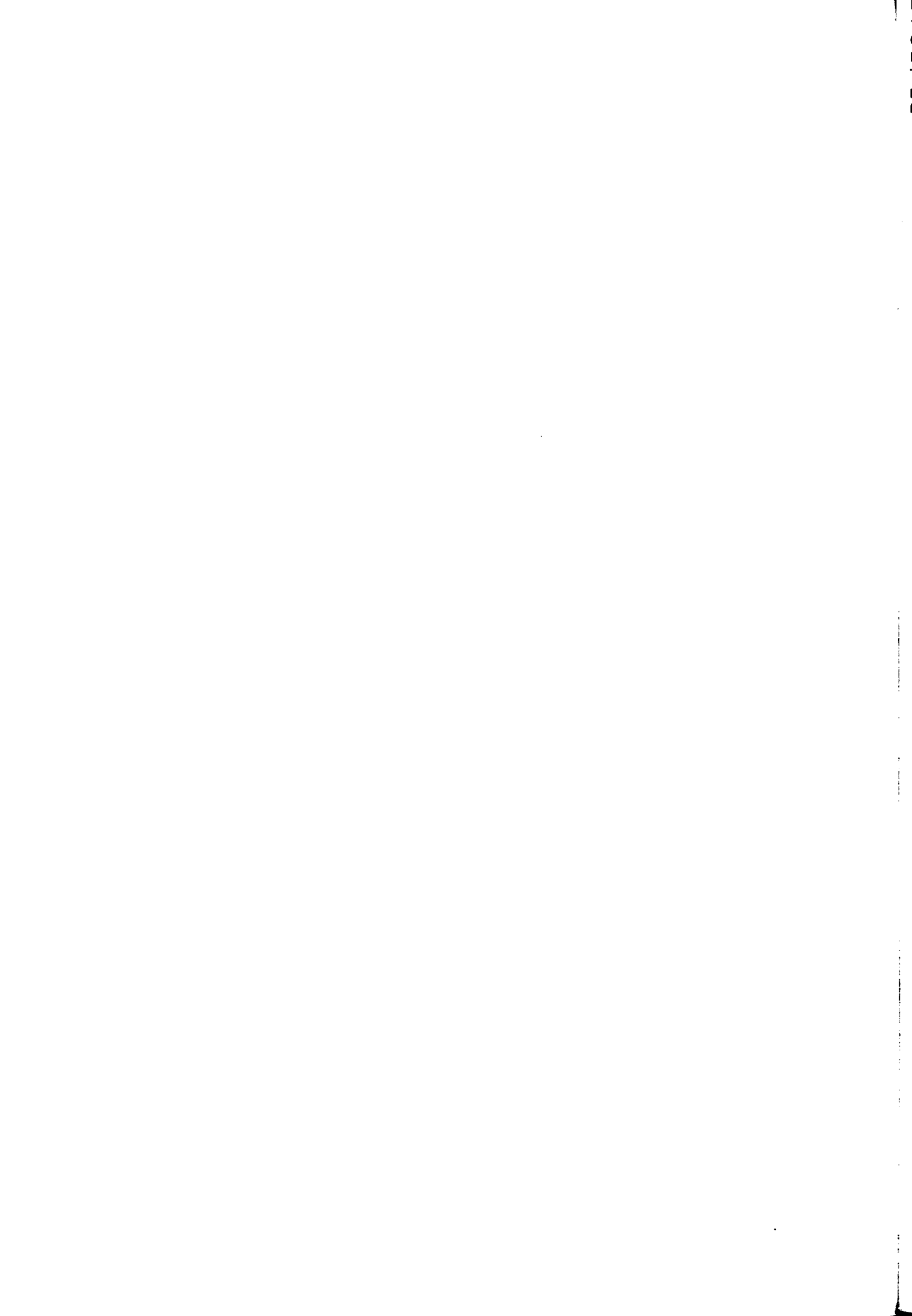
Geneva (ICRC) - At its meeting on 25 June 1998 the Assembly of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) co-opted Mr Jean de Courten as a new member of the Committee. This brings the membership of the Committee, which is composed exclusively of Swiss nationals, to 22.

Jean de Courten, of Monthey in the canton of Valais, was born in 1940. He holds degrees in law and arts from the Universities of Fribourg and Geneva and was a teacher from 1967 to 1971. He joined the ICRC as a delegate in 1972. In 1975 he was appointed regional delegate for the Arabian peninsula, Iran and Iraq, and North Africa, and from 1979 to 1989 served as Delegate General for Asia and the Pacific. Mr de Courten held the post of Director of Operations from 1989 to 30 April 1998, and was also a member of the ICRC's Executive Board from 1991.

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INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS





Press release No. 1819  
18 August 1998

## **PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION VISITS ICRC**

Geneva (ICRC) - Mr Miguel Angel Martínez, President of the Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, accompanied by the organization's Secretary-General and Assistant Secretary-General, was received today at the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) by President Cornelio Sommaruga.

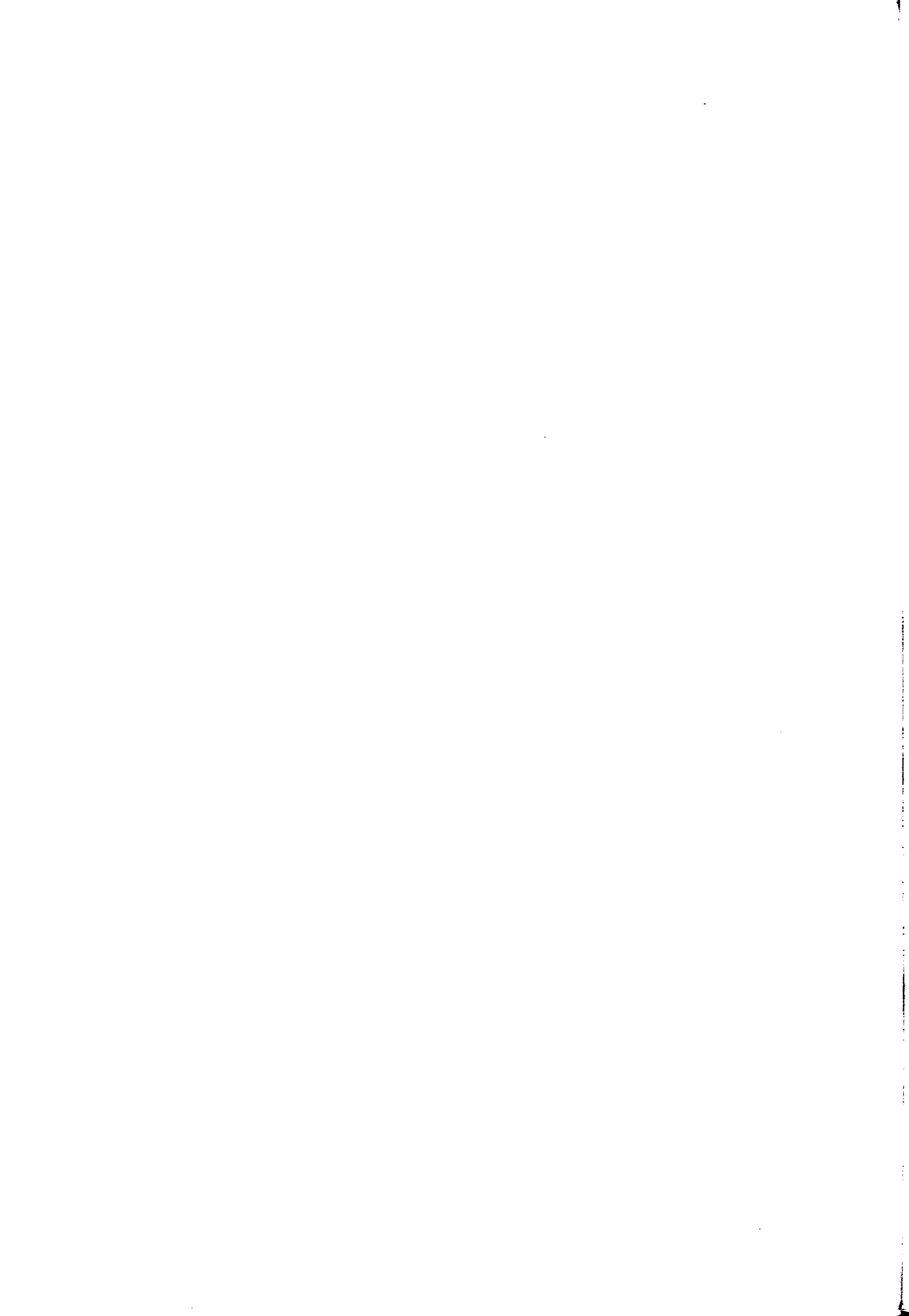
The ICRC President thanked the Inter-Parliamentary Union for its interest in humanitarian issues. He drew attention to the responsibilities incumbent on parliaments and their members to ensure respect for international humanitarian law and to secure a total ban on anti-personnel mines. In this context Mr Sommaruga made particular mention of the adoption of the legislative measures necessary for implementation of international humanitarian law and the obligation to make sure the law was complied with in countries affected by conflict, by supporting the action of international agencies.

President Sommaruga went on to express his appreciation of the activities of the Committee which has been working for two years within the Inter-Parliamentary Union to promote respect for international humanitarian law, and stressed its importance for cooperation between the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the ICRC. Other key subjects discussed were the efforts to promote ratification of the Ottawa treaty prohibiting anti-personnel mines and of the instrument setting up an international criminal court.

For his part, President Martínez paid tribute to the ICRC for its work in crisis situations around the world, and assured the organization of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's full support for its humanitarian activities. He also invited Mr Sommaruga to speak at the Inter-Parliamentary Conference due to be held in Berlin in October 1999, an invitation which the ICRC President was pleased to accept.

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Press release No. 1820  
27 August 1998

## **FUTURE OF THE ICRC PRESIDENCY**

Geneva (ICRC) - On 1 January 2000, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) will have a change of President. The new incumbent will be Mr Jakob Kellenberger, who is currently Swiss Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Professor Jacques Forster will take up the post of permanent Vice-President on 1 August 1999.

In taking this decision the ICRC Assembly settled the question as to who would take over from President Cornelio Sommaruga, due to complete his third term in office at the end of 1999. Professor Forster will replace Vice-President Eric Roethlisberger, whose mandate comes to an end in July 1999.

Accordingly, from 1 January 2000 the ICRC Presidency will comprise:

- . Mr Jakob Kellenberger, President
- . Mrs Anne Petitpierre, non-permanent Vice-President
- . Mr Jacques Forster, permanent Vice-President

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Mr Jakob Kellenberger, of Walzenhausen in the canton of Appenzell Ausserrhoden, was born in 1944 and holds a Ph.D. from the University of Zurich. During his diplomatic career he occupied various posts, notably that of head of the Integration Office of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, with the title of Ambassador. Mr Kellenberger has been Secretary of State since 1992.

Mrs Anne Petitpierre of Neuchâtel, domiciled in Geneva, holds a doctorate in law and is a barrister and a professor at the University of Geneva Law Faculty. Mrs Petitpierre has been a Member of the ICRC since 1987 and became non-permanent Vice-President in 1998.

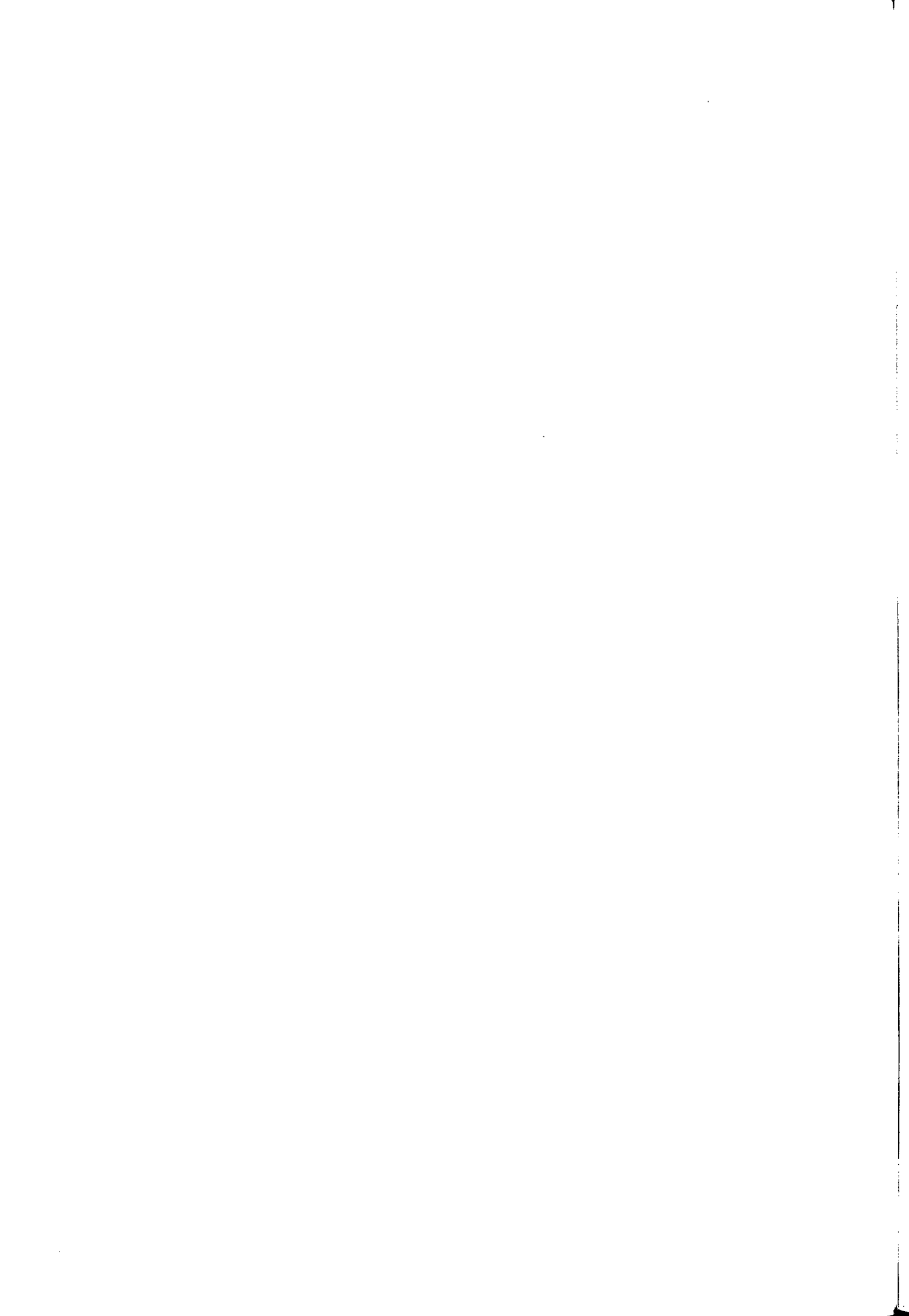
Mr Jacques Forster, of Erlach in the canton of Bern, was born in 1940 and is domiciled in Hauterive, Neuchâtel. He holds a doctorate in economics and is a professor at the Graduate Institute of Development Studies in Geneva, which he headed from 1980 to 1992. Mr Forster has been a Member of the ICRC since 1988.

Mr Eric Roethlisberger has been permanent Vice-President of the ICRC since 1995.

Mr Cornelio Sommaruga has been President of the ICRC since 1987.

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**ICRC**

**PRESS RELEASE**

Press release No. 1821  
Geneva, 17 November 1998

### **SWISS FEDERAL COUNCILLOR PASCAL COUCHEPIN VISITS ICRC**

Geneva (ICRC) - Mr Pascal Couchepin, head of the Swiss Federal Department of Public Economy, was received by Mr Cornelio Sommaruga, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), at the organization's headquarters in Geneva on 17 November.

Mr Sommaruga, accompanied by several members of the Committee and senior ICRC officials, once again expressed his gratitude to the Federal Council for its longstanding support for the ICRC. He proceeded to outline the ICRC's work in the area of prevention, the challenges it is currently facing in the field and its financial situation. He also drew attention to the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, which is to take place on 12 August 1999.

Mr Couchepin commended the ICRC for its presence in all conflict situations throughout the world and for its ability to respond rapidly and capably to the needs of victims. He also underscored the ICRC's independence, its concern for efficiency and its determination to adapt to new types of conflict and the special needs they generate.

The Federal Councillor further stressed that his government was proud to be a major contributor to the ICRC and to provide substantial support for its field activities.

Before leaving Mr Couchepin talked with a number of staff members, including many from his home canton of Valais, and signed the ICRC's visitors' book.

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