



PROTECTING **HUMAN** DIGNITY



**TWENTY-EIGHTH
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
OF THE RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT**

GENEVA 2003

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REPORT OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT

**INCLUDING THE SUMMARY REPORT OF THE 2003 COUNCIL OF
DELEGATES AND OF THE CONSTITUTIVE MEETING OF
THE 14th SESSION OF THE STANDING COMMISSION**

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

Geneva, 30 November – 6 December 2003
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RESOLUTIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MEETINGS

1.1 RESOLUTIONS OF THE 2003 COUNCIL OF DELEGATES

Resolution 1

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

The Council of Delegates,

taking note of the report submitted by the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (Standing Commission) on its work since November 2001,

commending the Standing Commission, its four working groups for having actively involved the components of the Movement through structured consultations and participatory approach in the preparations for the Movement's statutory meetings,

1. *urges* the Standing Commission to continue to actively promote cooperation among the components of the Movement and to make proposals to enhance this cooperation;
2. *encourages* the Standing Commission to continue in line with article 18 of the Statutes of the Movement and with established practice to involve personalities from National Societies and representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (International Federation) and set up such ad hoc working groups as it deems necessary;
3. *invites* the Standing Commission to maintain a Working Group on the Council of Delegates and to include in its mandate timely planning for the 29th International Conference;
4. *encourages* the Standing Commission to continue its efforts to further promote harmony in the Movement through its consultations with the components of the Movement using various existing Movement fora;

5. *reaffirms* Resolutions 1 of the 1997 and 2001 Council of Delegates that the financial implications of paragraphs 2-4 shall be the joint responsibility of the International Federation, the ICRC and the National Societies, on the basis of 25% from the ICRC, 25% from the International Federation and 50% through voluntary contributions from National Societies.

Resolution 2

Provisional agenda and programme of the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

The Council of Delegates,

having examined the provisional agenda and programme of the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent,

adopts this document and submits it to the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

Resolution 3

Proposal of persons to fill posts at the 28th 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 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent,

endorses the list of candidates and transmits it to the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

- Chairman of the Conference – Président de la Conférence – Presidente de la Conferencia
Mr Jaime Ricardo Fernández Urriola
(Cruz Roja – Panama)
- Vice-Chairs – Vice-président(e)s – Vicepresidentes(as)
Amb. Yolande Biké (Ms) (Gabon)
Mr Abdelkader Boukhroufa
(Croissant-Rouge – Algérie)
Mr Hisham Harun Hashim
(Red Crescent – Malaysia)
Prof. René Rhinow (Croix-Rouge – Suisse)
- Chairman of the Drafting Committee – Président du Comité de rédaction – Presidente del Comité de redacción
Amb. Johan Molander (Mr) (Sweden)
- Vice-Chairs of the Drafting Committee – Vice-Président(e)s du Comité de rédaction – Vicepresidentes(as) del Comité de redacción
Ms Norma Nascimbene de Dumont
(Argentina)
Amb. Valentina Rugwabiza (Ms) (Rwanda)
Ms Heike Spieker (Red Cross – Germany)
- Chairwoman of the Commission A – Présidente de la Commission A – Presidenta de la Comisión A
Amb. Amina Chawahir Mohamed (Ms)
(Kenya)
- Vice-Chairs of the Commission A – Vice-président(e)s de la Commission A – Vicepresidentes(as) de la Comisión A
Amb. Pablo Macedo (Mr) (Mexico)
Ms Elzbieta Mikos-Skuza (Red Cross – Poland)
- Chairwoman of the Commission B – Présidente de la Commission B – Presidenta de la Comisión B
Ms Martine Letts (Red Cross – Australia)
- Vice-Chairs of the Commission B – Vice-président(e)s de la Commission B – Vicepresidentes(as) de la Comisión B
Amb. Love Mtesa (Mr) (Zambia)
Mr Abdul Rahman Attar (Red Crescent – Syria)
- Rapporteur of the Conference – Rapporteuse de la Conférence – Relatora de la Conferencia
Ms Marie Gervais-Vidricaire (Canada)
- Rapporteurs of the Commissions A and B – Rapporteur(se)(r)s des Commissions A et B – Relatores(as) de las Comisiones A y B
Amb. Holger Rotkirch (Mr) (Red Cross – Finland)
Ms Jelma de la Peña (Red Cross – Philippines)
A2 Ms Jacqueline Boga (Red Cross – Papua New Guinea)
A3 Ms Carole Powell (Red Cross – Jamaica)
B2 Ms Lucy Brown (Red Cross – United States of America)
B3 Amb. Tibor Tóth (Mr) (Hungary)
- Secretary General of the Conference – Secrétaire général de la Conférence – Secretario general de la Conferencia
Amb. Thomas Kupfer (Mr) (Suisse)
- Assistant Secretaries General – Secrétaires généraux(ales) adjoint(e)s – Secretarios(as) generales adjuntos(as)
Ms Angela Gussing-Sapina (ICRC)
Mr Frank Mohrhauer (International Federation)

Resolution 4

Biotechnology, weapons and humanity

The Council of Delegates,

recognizing that advances in biotechnology carry enormous potential to benefit humanity;

deeply concerned by the risk that the same advances could be put to hostile use;

regretting the inability of the Fifth Review Conference of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention to agree on a compliance-monitoring regime;

stressing the need to ensure that ancient taboos and modern laws against poisoning and the deliberate spread of disease are upheld and reinforced in the face of new scientific developments :

1. *endorses* the Appeal of the ICRC on “Biotechnology, Weapons and Humanity”;
2. *encourages* the ICRC, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the International Federation to promote the “Biotechnology, Weapons and Humanity” initiative with national authorities, the scientific and medical communities, industry and civil society; and in particular:
 - a. to call on States party to the 1925 Geneva Protocol and the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention to resume efforts to ensure that these treaties are reinforced in the light of scientific developments and faithfully implemented; and
 - b. to urge the scientific and medical communities and the biotechnology industry to ensure that the use of biotechnology for hostile purposes is prevented through the development of codes of conduct and strict controls on dangerous research and biological agents;
3. *supports* in particular the call on States to reaffirm their commitment to the existing norms prohibiting the hostile uses of biological agents in a high-level political Declaration; and
4. *requests* the ICRC to report to the 2005 Council of Delegates on the progress made in promoting the measures proposed in the Appeal on “Biotechnology, Weapons and Humanity”.

Resolution 5

Follow-up to Resolution 6 of the Council of Delegates in 2001 – Emblem

The Council of Delegates,

taking note of the report submitted by the Standing Commission as requested by the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, held in Geneva in 1999, and Resolution 6 of the Council of Delegates in 2001,

reiterating the commitment of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to achieve, with the support of the States Parties to the 1949 Geneva Conventions, a comprehensive and lasting solution to the question of the emblem, on the basis of the proposed draft Third Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions, once it is adopted, as soon as circumstances permit,

recalling the legal and protective value of the emblems used by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, which, by virtue of their inclusion in the Geneva Conventions and continuous practice for over a century, have become universally recognized symbols of impartial and neutral aid and protection to the victims of war, natural disasters and other catastrophes,

1. *welcomes* the work of the Standing Commission, its Special Representative on the Emblem and its ad hoc Working Group, the ICRC and the International Federation to develop the basis for a comprehensive and lasting solution to the question of the emblem;
2. *further welcomes* the progress made since the 27th International Conference, in particular the drafting of the proposed Third Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions on the Emblem (12 October 2000) as well as the adoption of Resolution 6 of the 2001 Council of Delegates;
3. *deeply regrets* developments which have made it impossible to bring the process to its expected outcome with the adoption of the draft Third Additional Protocol;
4. *recalls* the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, in particular the principle of universality;
5. *underlines* the urgency of reinforcing measures for the protection of war victims, medical personnel and humanitarian workers in all circumstances, and the significance in this context of the proposed Third Additional Protocol;
6. *requests* the Standing Commission to continue to give high priority to securing, as soon as circumstances permit, a comprehensive and lasting solution to the question of the emblem, in cooperation with the Swiss government as depositary of the Geneva Conventions and with other governments concerned and components of the Movement, on the basis of the proposed draft Third Additional Protocol;

7. *requests* the Special Representative of the Standing Commission on the Emblem to bring this resolution to the attention of the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

Resolution 6

National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies as auxiliaries to the public authorities in the humanitarian field

The Council of Delegates,

1. *welcomes* the study carried out by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (International Federation) in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in response to the request made by the 27th International Conference and in the Strategy for the Movement on “National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies as auxiliaries to the public authorities in the humanitarian field”,
2. *thinks* all National Societies which have contributed to the production of the report through written or oral comments during the conduct of the study and the debate at the Council of Delegates,
3. *takes note* of the concept outlined in the conclusions of the study concerning the “Characteristics of a balanced relationship between States and National Societies” and invites National Societies to initiate discussions internally and with their governments with a view to further developing the “characteristics” and strengthening government understanding of the value of the auxiliary character of National Societies and the importance of a balanced relationship,
4. *invites* the International Federation in cooperation with the ICRC to press ahead with its work on this subject, including through further consultation with National Societies, States and international organizations,
5. *invites* the International Federation to keep National Societies informed regularly of progress made with the study and to provide updated and more specific guidance for consideration by the Council of Delegates in 2005 and the International Conference in 2007.

Resolution 7

Strategy for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

The Council of Delegates,

recalling Resolution 3 of the 2001 Council of Delegates, which adopted the Strategy for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and invited the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent to establish a task force of experts to develop

procedures for monitoring, evaluation and analysis of progress made by all components regarding the implementation of the Strategy for the Movement,

taking note of the consolidated report of the Standing Commission, the ICRC and the International Federation on the implementation of the Strategy for the Movement,

welcoming the progress made by all components of the Movement in the implementation of the Strategy for the Movement,

stressing the importance of a common Strategy for the Movement and its continued implementation,

1. *reaffirms* the commitment of all components of the Movement to implement the actions outlined in the Strategy for the Movement;
2. *calls* upon the Standing Commission to ensure promotion of the Strategy for the Movement, among all components, taking into account the recommendations given in the report to the Council of Delegates on the implementation of the Strategy;
3. *further calls* upon the International Federation and the ICRC to promote capacity building of National Societies and to continue to extend operational cooperation also to National Societies awaiting recognition and admission with the aim of preparing for their membership in the Movement;
4. *invites* the Standing Commission to extend the mandate of its task force of experts from National Societies, the International Federation and the ICRC, to monitor, evaluate and analyse progress made by all components and to make any necessary recommendations for updating the Strategy;
5. *requests* the ICRC, the International Federation Secretariat and National Societies, through the Federation's Secretariat, to provide progress reports to the Standing Commission's task force of experts on their implementation of the Strategy for the Movement;
6. *further calls upon* the Standing Commission, the ICRC and the International Federation, to consider the progress reports and the recommendations for updating the Strategy made by the task force of experts and to decide on any further work that may be required to update the Strategy at the next Council of Delegates in 2005;
7. *requests* the Standing Commission, the ICRC and the International Federation to submit to the Council of Delegates in 2005 a consolidated report on the implementation of the Strategy by all components of the Movement and a draft proposal for updating the Strategy;
8. *decides* to review and amend the Strategy for the Movement, as necessary, at its next session.

Resolution 8

Implementation of the Seville Agreement

The Council of Delegates,

recalling that its session of 1997 adopted the Agreement on the International Activities of the components of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, known as the Seville Agreement, and that it requested that written reports on its implementation be submitted by the ICRC and the International Federation at each session of the Council of Delegates,

taking note of the joint report by the ICRC and the International Federation "Implementation of the Seville Agreement" 2002-2003 submitted to this Council of Delegates,

taking into account the various years of experience with the implementation of this agreement and the evolution in the practice of cooperation and coordination within the Movement,

bearing in mind the challenges the Movement faces in effectively responding to the humanitarian needs,

reaffirming the validity of the Seville Agreement,

recognizing the need to further specify and clarify the mechanisms for cooperation and coordination within the Movement to fully implement the Seville Agreement in a spirit of partnership,

1. *requests* the Standing Commission to establish an ad hoc working group to work on issues related with the implementation of the Seville Agreement, until the next session of the Council of Delegates;
2. *defines* the general mandate of such a Working Group as follows:
 - a. to identify the main problems that have arisen while implementing the Seville Agreement over the past six years, and opportunities to strengthen cooperation;
 - b. to analyse the procedures for engaging each component of the Movement in a given operation, with a special focus on the roles and functions of the host National Society and of the National Societies working internationally. The special concerns of neighbouring National Societies will also be duly taken into account in this analysis;
 - c. to analyse the experiences of all components of the Movement with situations of transition;
 - d. to include further study of, and practical recommendations for situations in which a National Society could best undertake the function of lead agency within its own territory (as foreseen in the Seville Agreement paragraph 5.3.3 and 6.2), as well as to develop operational guidelines for all components in such situations;
 - e. to make proposals for additions to the Seville Agreement which specify the procedures for the

engagement of each type of component of the Movement in operations, with the view of improving the functioning of the Movement as a global network. Work in this area will specifically take into account the respective functions and roles of the National Society in its own country, of the ICRC, of the International Federation and of the National Societies working internationally, as laid down in the Statutes of the Movement, in the Seville Agreement and in other relevant Movement policy documents, in particular action 7 of the Strategy for the Movement. Such additions would take the form of an addendum to the present text of the Agreement.

3. *defines* the composition and working procedures of the ad hoc Working Group as follows:
 - a. the Working Group shall be composed of 12 persons chosen by virtue of their individual knowledge, interest and commitment to Movement matters;
 - b. the ICRC and the International Federation each will designate three members and the other six will come from National Societies;
 - c. the choice of members coming from National Societies will be made by a decision of the Standing Commission. The names of the members of the Working Group shall be announced at the latest by the end of February 2004;
 - d. the Working Group shall elect its chairperson from among its members, take its decisions and make its recommendations by consensus;
 - e. the Working Group shall meet at least twice a year, or as required. It shall provide a report at each meeting of the Standing Commission on progress achieved;
 - f. the Working Group shall submit for approval of the Standing Commission the budget it will require for its activities.
4. *decides* that the financing of the budget of the Working Group shall be the joint responsibility of the International Federation, the ICRC and the National Societies on the basis of 25 per cent from the International Federation, 25 per cent from the ICRC, and 50 per cent from National Societies, as is the current practice for other ad hoc working groups of the Standing Commission;
5. *requests* the Standing Commission to submit to the next session of the Council of Delegates recommendations for an addendum to the Seville Agreement.

Resolution 9

Promote respect for diversity and fight discrimination and intolerance

The Council of Delegates,

recalling Resolution 12 of the 2001 Council of Delegates which aimed at strengthening humanitarian values across religious, political and ethnic lines,

further recalling that discrimination, intolerance and disrespect for the diversity of human life remains an endemic problem in many parts of the world, jeopardizing the efforts of civil society and governments to build prosperous and sustainable communities in which people can live and work together free from fear and want,

recalling the commitment by National Societies and States to cooperate and, as appropriate, take initiatives to promote tolerance, non-violence in the community and respect for cultural diversity, as stated in the Plan of Action adopted in 1999 by the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent,

taking note of the recommendations and suggestions offered by National Societies, including during the debates at the Council of Delegates 2003,

1. *reaffirms* the commitment of all components of the Movement to strengthen the application of the Fundamental Principles and the promotion of humanitarian values across religious, political and ethnic lines, both in their internal affairs and in their humanitarian services;
2. *requests* the different components of the Movement, in conformity with their respective mandates, to work at the local, national and international levels to promote tolerance, non-discrimination and respect for diversity, and to take actions in conformity with those outlined in the attached annex;
3. *invites* the ICRC, the International Federation and National Societies, on the basis of their participation to relevant meetings and of consultations, to formulate a position paper and/or guidelines for the components of the Movement on respect for diversity and fight against discrimination and intolerance, which will be presented at the 2005 Council of Delegates;
4. *requests* all components of the Movement to relate their work in this area with the implementation of the related aspects of the Declaration and the Agenda for Humanitarian Action adopted at the 2003 International Conference.

Annex to Resolution 9 of the 2003 Council of Delegates

Mobilization and action – The way forward

(Extract from 2003 Council of Delegates – Background paper – item 7.1 of the agenda)

As already outlined, different components of the Movement have undertaken activities which have as their aim the fight against intolerance and discrimination. However, much more can – and must – be done. Individually and together as a Movement a concerted effort needs to be made in this regard. Ideas for mobilization and action include:

1. Ensuring openness and diversity within the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement:
 - a. presidents and Secretaries General within the Movement organizations should undertake an assessment of the composition of the leadership, staff, volunteers and membership of the organizations they lead;
 - b. imbalances in membership on whatever ground – race, religion, sex, age, must be identified and urgently addressed;
 - c. components of the Movement, particularly National Societies, which have already taken actions in this regard are called on to share their experiences, so we can all learn from the work of others;
 - d. a voluntary reporting on the outcomes of actions taken in this regard could be made at the 2005 Council of Delegates.
 2. Looking outward for insight and understanding:
 - a. the Movement should invest resources to understand emerging trends in our communities which fuel intolerance, discrimination and lack of respect for diversity and which can combat them;
 - b. the Movement should systematically network with those who are working for the same endeavour – building partnerships to promote dialogue and inclusion with international and national organizations, in the non-governmental and private sectors.
 3. Promoting public dialogue and advocacy:
 - a. each component of the Movement must review the messages it communicates – not only what it wants to say but what is actually heard by those we want to reach;
 - b. we must understand how we are perceived and ensure that we are viewed as tolerant, non-discriminatory and that we respect diversity;
 - c. we must develop clear and categorical messages that as components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement we are guided by the belief that tolerance is necessary and that the diversity of cultures and beliefs is an essential component of the world we live in;
 - d. we must strengthen or develop advocacy tools in order to promote tolerance, non-discrimination and respect for diversity at national and international forums;
 - e. Movement components should maximize the use of communication tools at our disposal to do this – publications, worldwide web and our messages to the media.
 4. Strength in preparedness – Being proactive and reactive:
 - a. the different components of the Movement in conformity with their respective mandates must work at the local, national and international levels to promote tolerance, non-discrimination and respect for cultural diversity;
 - b. National Societies, with the support of the ICRC and the International Federation, will give particular attention to the needs of persons and groups who are particularly marginalized or in need, particularly those marginalized and living in the shadows of disease, lack of legal status or homelessness;
 - c. such programmes should be inspired by and build on the programmes developed to combat discrimination and violence, and take special account of the needs of children and the ageing, families of persons missing as a result of armed conflict or internal violence, and, other victims of armed conflict;
 - d. the International Federation must expand its Global/Local Action Programme against discrimination and, in cooperation with National Societies, build partnerships with governments and other international organizations to ensure its effective implementation;
 - e. the different components of the Movement must seek out means to support efforts for dialogue, reconciliation and trust-building amongst communities including at the end of hostilities. Initiatives must be taken to bring communities together – recognizing the strength and value that comes from coexistence – and to ensure groups are not forgotten or excluded;
 - f. during situations of armed conflict or internal violence, the ICRC, together with other components of the Movement, must make every effort to encourage respect for and implementation of the Fundamental Principles and international humanitarian law and ensure its dissemination;
 - g. National Societies, with the support of the ICRC, must strengthen their peacetime programmes of dissemination of international humanitarian law and of the Fundamental Principles, evaluating lessons learned from its Exploring Humanitarian Law (EHL) programme and developing innovative ways to reach and influence communities where tensions are high;
 - h. the ICRC and National Societies must make every effort to ensure that persons missing as a result of armed conflict or internal violence and/or persons still deprived of their liberty after the end of hostilities or internal violence are not forgotten and that obligations under international law are met so as to foster reconciliation amongst communities.
5. Learning from experience and developing new initiatives internally and with other organizations:

In order to ensure that the components of the Movement identify the best practices, learn from them and reach out to other organizations, the ICRC and the International Federation should:

- a. convene a meeting or series of regional meetings of experts from inside and outside the Movement to exchange ideas on best practices and initiatives to combat intolerance, discrimination and lack of respect for diversity,
- b. identify, with National Societies, actions that at the national and local level have hindered or helped in the fight against intolerance, discrimination and lack of respect for diversity,
- c. intensify their work with other international organizations working towards similar objectives, both at headquarters and in cooperation with National Societies,
- d. formulate a position paper and/or guidelines for the components of the Movement on tolerance, non-discrimination and respect for diversity, which will be presented at the 2005 Council of Delegates outlining the outcomes of the expert's meeting(s) and experience gained since the 2003 Council.

Resolution 10

Movement action in favour of refugees and internally displaced persons and minimum elements to be included in operational agreements between Movement components and their external operational partners

The Council of Delegates,

continuing to express its deep concern about the need to improve protection and assistance to the tens of millions of persons who have been forcibly uprooted and displaced by armed conflict, violations of international humanitarian law and human rights as well as natural or other human-induced disasters; and about people who have migrated to avoid untenable circumstances and find themselves in a situation of vulnerability in their new country of residence;

noting the profound vulnerability that often accompanies the return of refugees and internally displaced persons ("IDPs") to their places of origin;

recalling and reaffirming the resolutions on this topic adopted by the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (Resolution XXI, Manila 1981; Resolution XVII, Geneva 1986, Resolution 4A, Geneva 1995 and Goal 2.3 of the Plan of Action of the 27th International Conference, Geneva 1999) as well as the resolutions adopted by the Council of Delegates (Resolution 9, Budapest 1991, Resolution 7, Birmingham 1993 and Resolution 4, Geneva 2001);

recalling that resolution 4 of the 2001 Council of Delegates *inter alia* requested the components of the Movement to ensure that their activities for refugees, IDPs and migrants are carried out in respect of the Fundamental Principles of the Movement and existing policy at all times, particularly when they are acting as implementing partners for other humanitarian actors;

welcoming the document prepared by the ICRC and the International Federation entitled "Report on the Implementation of Resolution 4 of the 2001 Council of Delegates – Movement Action in Favour of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons";

commending the components of the Movement for their valuable contributions to improving the response to the plight of refugees, IDPs and migrants:

1. *calls upon* the components of the Movement to continue to pursue and develop their activities for refugees, IDPs and migrants, in accordance with their respective mandates and in respect of the Fundamental Principles, striving always to adopt a global approach addressing all stages of displacement – from prevention through displacement to return, resettlement and re-integration – as well as the needs of resident populations in accordance with the Principle of Impartiality;
2. *recalls* the obligation of National Societies to inform the International Federation Secretariat and/or the ICRC of any negotiations likely to lead to a formal agreement with any United Nations agency or other international organization; and reminds National Societies that the International Federation and/or the ICRC must concur with the terms of any such agreements, in particular those concluded with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR);
3. *welcomes* the document entitled "Minimum Elements to be Included in Operational Agreements between Movement Components and their External Operational Partners" attached hereto and calls upon all components of the Movement to comply with these Minimum Elements when formulating operational partnerships with all external organizations and/or agencies, particularly, but not exclusively, UNHCR.

Annex to Resolution 10 of the 2003 Council of Delegates

Minimum elements to be included in operational agreements between Movement components and their external operational partners

The following elements should be referred to when negotiating or reviewing operational agreements between Movement components (National Societies, the International Federation Secretariat and the ICRC) and external organizations (United Nations Agencies, intergovernmental organizations, international and national non-governmental organizations) in order to ensure any such agreement reflects coherence with Movement Fundamental Principles, policy and practice and complementarity among the components of the Movement.

Movement components are advised to consult with and notify other Movement components prior to the

signature of any operational agreements with external partners. According to the International Conference 1981, Manila, National Societies are obliged to consult the ICRC and the Federation Secretariat in advance of signing any agreement with UNHCR.

■ Substantive content

1. Adherence to Movement principles and policies

National Societies and other Movement components must be able at all times to act in adherence to the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, particularly those of independence, neutrality and impartiality. In addition, the issue of serving only the needs of the Partner's targeted population (i.e. refugees in most cases) and not balancing this with serving the needs of others in the surrounding vicinity who may be facing similar hardship (adhering to Impartiality principle) needs to be monitored. Serving only specific beneficiary groups could result in the National Society not being able to fulfil its duty to assist all those affected without distinction, which in turn could result in a negative image for the National Society. A holistic approach should be adopted, which takes into account both the needs of the refugees and/or IDPs and those of the local population, which may be experiencing even harsher living conditions than the refugees themselves.

National Societies and other Movement components must also adhere to and respect at all times, the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and the Agreement on the Organization of the International Activities of the Components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement "Seville Agreement" as well as the Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Disaster Relief and the Code of Conduct.

The necessity for the National Society and other Movement components to adhere to Movement policies, such as the policy on the Regulations on the Use of the Emblem of the Red Cross or Red Crescent by National Societies and the policy related to the armed protection of humanitarian aid should be clearly described and followed at all times.

Of paramount importance is the absolute imperative for Federation Secretariat, National Society and ICRC personnel to adhere to the principles expressed in the "IASC Policy Statement on Protection from Sexual Abuse and Exploitation in Humanitarian Crisis", which has been signed by both the International Federation Secretariat on behalf of its membership, and by the ICRC.

If at any time, the ability to act in coherence with the above is compromised, National Societies or other Movement components must have the immediate reflex and ability to suspend or terminate the Agreement with the external Partner (see section 10).

2. Identity

The Agreement must reflect that the National Society or other Movement component will at all

times clearly display its own individual identity and be clearly associated to the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It will not assume the identity of the Partner agency through the displaying of double logos or emblems on equipment or through the adoption of vehicle licenses. Its identity must not be compromised at any time while conducting its responsibilities under said agreement. The Regulations on the Use of the Emblem will be followed at all times. The protective emblem will only be utilized in conformity with regulations.

■ General administrative and management content

3. Define partners clearly and correctly

In the title and introductory paragraph of the Agreement, use the legal/official name of the National Society or other Movement component and the organization involved. These names may be followed in parentheses by the abbreviated name which then should be used throughout the Agreement.

4. General situation background and purpose of the Agreement

The context and situation that is leading to this Agreement should be clearly described.

5. Stated goal (or outcomes) and objectives

The Agreement must state the overall goal or outcomes to be achieved through the working relationship and the objectives needed to be accomplished in order to achieve this goal.

Beneficiary determination

In all operational partnerships, the external Partner must respect the need for the Red Cross/Red Crescent Partner to adhere to the requirement to meet the needs of all persons needing assistance and protection. For example, this may include persons not explicitly considered 'convention refugees' but rather persons who may be even more vulnerable owing to the absence of legal status. In order to prevent tensions from mounting in the geographical area, vulnerable persons in the surrounding community may also be assisted.

For this reason, it is advisable for the Red Cross/Red Crescent component to be actively involved in the assessment of needs, which in turn, determines the beneficiary population.

Continuum of support

Care should be taken when determining the goal, to ensure the project is not overly restricted to one period of time in the beneficiary's experience, but rather linked to longer term needs leading to durable solutions such as societal integration, medical needs, family reunification, repatriation and legal guidance.

6. Delineation of roles and responsibilities of each partner to the Agreement

The primary roles and responsibilities of each Partner must be stated clearly, clarifying what they can and cannot expect from each other. Within these roles, the issue

of accountability for resources and the achievement of specific objectives must be detailed. Responsibilities for the following should be clearly articulated:

- assessment of needs,
- determination of beneficiaries,
- planning, formulation of project objectives,
- implementation, with details of specific roles and responsibilities outlined, protection and advocacy,
- financial management including internal and external auditing of accounts,
- financial and narrative reporting as well as monitoring and evaluation should be described clearly,
- monitoring and evaluation.

Additionally, of importance, is the clear establishment of who is responsible for the security of the staff and volunteers while fulfilling their responsibilities.

7. Resource contributions

The financial, material and human resource contributions to be made by each Partner in order to fulfil their respective commitments in the Agreement should be outlined. Care must be taken by both institutions involved in the partnership, to ensure that the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement Partner's capacity is not diminished or overwhelmed, but rather is enhanced.

To avoid the common unfortunate situation where a National Society or other Movement component is actually in financial arrears as a result of such Agreements owing to overhead costs not remunerated by the Partner organization, attention should be given to ensuring adequate financial coverage. Such a situation could be prevented through a procedure of advancement of funds and rigorous and regular quarterly project review meetings (see next section).

8. Description of project coordination and management mechanism

A description of how the overall project will be coordinated and managed between the two Partners should be outlined clearly in the Agreement.

Focal points

Each party will appoint a focal point to serve as the primary liaison between the Parties, to ensure the successful fulfillment of activities.

Coordination meetings

Meetings will be organized as required and will involve other parties concerned if warranted. Formal quarterly project review meetings will occur which will review the implementation plan, reporting and financial management to ensure the Agreement is being implemented as planned. The outcomes of these meetings will be utilized to suggest any project revisions and to guide decisions regarding project revision and/or including prolongation.

9. Agreement provisions

9.1 Commencement, termination and project finalization

The exact date that the Agreement comes into effect must be stated as well as when the active project

implementation is to be terminated. Additionally, the date of the project finalization should be stated, at which time the completion of all required reporting, handover of equipment and materials as necessary, should be completed.

9.2 Review, revision, prolongation

Through the establishment of regular joint monitoring, the review and possible revision or prolongation of certain Agreement elements will be mutually decided. These decisions will be reflected in written and signed addendums to the original Agreement.

Three months prior to the project termination date, as part of the quarterly Project Coordination meetings, decisions will be taken regarding the need to prolong the contract or to adhere to the original project end date.

9.3 Suspension or disengagement clause

9.3.1 In the event of circumstances beyond the control of the partners:

The partners have the right to immediately suspend or cancel the Agreement in the event of circumstances beyond their control such as a major change in the conditions or environment.

Particularly, should there be a change from a situation of peace to one of internal tension, disturbances and/or armed conflict, the National Society or other Movement component must have the possibility to withdraw from the Agreement immediately. If the ability of the National Society or other Movement component to adhere to the Fundamental Principles, or Movement policy or procedures is compromised, it must not hesitate to withdraw from the Agreement immediately. This can take the form of a temporary suspension of the contract until an identified period of time has passed or a change of circumstance has occurred, following which, upon consultation with and agreement of other Movement components, the Agreement can be resumed. Alternatively, a complete disengagement and termination of contract can occur.

Prior to this clause being invoked, consultation will take place between the partners.

The suspension or termination will be effective immediately or within one month following the consultation. During this time, all possible attempts will be made by both partners to ensure the needs of the beneficiaries continue to be met by other means.

10. Non-adherence to Agreement Clauses

Should there be a disagreement that cannot be resolved regarding the implementation of the Agreement or the adherence to certain clauses, a consultation meeting will take place between the partners. Should it be decided, despite invoking the Dispute Settlement clause, to dissolve the partnership as a last resort, it will be done within a minimum of sixty days, maximum of ninety days time frame. During this time, all attempts possible will be made by both partners to ensure the needs of the beneficiaries continue to be met by other means.

Any of the partners may withdraw from the Agreement with sixty days written notice.

11. Signatures of authorized representatives

Before the Agreement is signed, the National Society or other Movement component is obliged (Resolution 4, Council of Delegates 2001) to inform the other Movement components of the negotiation that is leading to a formal Agreement between them and any agency of the United Nations or any other international organization. The International Federation and/or the ICRC must concur with the terms contained in an Agreement with the National Society in order to ensure coherence and complementarity.

Copies of an Agreement with a National Society should be sent by the National Society to the International Federation and the ICRC for their information. Copies of Agreements signed by other Movement components should in turn be provided by them to the other components as well.

Once this has been done, the Agreement needs to be signed by a duly authorized representative of each partner to signify agreement. Under the signature the name of the signatory and his/her designation within his/her respective organization must be clearly stated. Such authorization may depend upon the respective constitution or statutes, or internal regulations of the National Society. Unless there is a specific local provision to the contrary, the person to sign on behalf of a National Society will most likely be its Secretary General.

12. Mechanism for dispute settlement

Regardless of the nature of the relationship between the partners at the time of the agreement, differences or unforeseen problems may arise once the project is underway, or the situation may change making it difficult for one of the parties to uphold their commitments. It is therefore important that the partners agree in advance on a method to resolve issues as they arise. These procedures should be detailed in the Agreement.

Settlement of disputes should begin at the country level and be referred if necessary to the regional level, and then the international headquarters level. At any time, appropriate third party intervention could be sought to aid in resolution as appropriate, including consultation with other Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement components.

Reference documents:

- *Regulations on the Use of the Emblem of the Red Cross or the Red Crescent by National Societies*
- *Policy related to the armed protection of humanitarian aid*
- *Fundamental Principles of Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement Agreement on the International Activities of the components of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement ("Seville Agreement")*

- *Code of Conduct for organizations taking part in disaster relief operations*
- *IASC Statement and Plan of Action for Protection from Sexual Abuse and Exploitation in Humanitarian Crisis, April 2002*
- *Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement adopted by the 25th International Conference of the Red Cross in Geneva in October 1986 and amended by the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in Geneva in December 1995*
- *Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Disaster Relief, Geneva, 1995*
- *Resolution of the 2001 Council of Delegates and background papers for "Movement Action in Favour of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons"*

Resolution 11

Explosive remnants of war and the Movement Strategy on Landmines

The Council of Delegates,

welcoming the report of the ICRC on the follow-up to Resolution 8 of the 2001 Council of Delegates concerning the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and to Resolution 10 of 1999 Council of Delegates adopting the Movement Strategy on Landmines,

remaining alarmed about the widespread and preventable death and injury caused during and after armed conflict by landmines and explosive remnants of war, which no longer serve any military purpose, and their devastating long-term consequences for civilians,

noting that the similar effects on civilian populations of landmines and of explosive remnants of war call for similar humanitarian responses, including the establishment of legal norms, the raising of awareness in affected communities of the dangers posed by these devices, the provision of care and assistance for victims, and measures to facilitate mine clearance,

expressing satisfaction at the significant progress in anti-personnel mine destruction, awareness and clearance made since the entry into force in 1999 of the Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines (the "Ottawa Convention"), and recalling the instrumental role of the components of the Movement in achieving that progress,

stressing the need to achieve universal adherence to the "Ottawa Convention" and the importance of continued efforts by the components of the Movement to promote this objective,

emphasizing that the period between the First Review Conference of the Ottawa Convention in 2004 and the mine-clearance deadlines occurring for many States Parties in 2009 will be crucial in the effort to ensure that the promises made by the Convention to mine-affected communities are fulfilled,

expressing satisfaction with the results of the 2001 Review Conference of States Parties to the CCW, which extended the Convention's scope of application to non-international armed conflict, led to negotiations on explosive remnants of war and commissioned further work on anti-vehicle mines,

warmly welcoming the adoption on 28 November 2003 by States Parties to the CCW of a new Protocol V on explosive remnants of war,

1. *extends* the Movement Strategy on Landmines through 2009 and extends the activities listed therein to cover all explosive remnants of war;
2. *calls* on all components of the Movement to mobilize their members and staff, civil society, the media and governments with a view to ensuring, by the 2004 Ottawa Convention Review Conference, commitment to the full implementation of the Ottawa Convention at the highest political levels, in particular through increased efforts to achieve mine clearance by the 10-year deadlines beginning in 2009 and the mobiliza-

tion of adequate resources to ensure that all the Convention's objectives are met;

3. *urges* all components of the Movement to work to ensure that States party to the CCW adhere to the new Protocol on explosive remnants of war, and that States which are not yet party adhere to the Convention, to all its Protocols and to the amendment adopted in 2001 extending its scope to non-international armed conflicts;
4. *urges* all components of the Movement to work to ensure that States take effective measures to reduce the likelihood that ordnance will become explosive remnants of war, and to support ongoing efforts to prohibit the use of cluster-bombs and other submunitions against military objectives located in or near civilian areas;
5. *requests* the ICRC to report to the 2005 Council of Delegates on the progress made in implementing the Movement Strategy on Landmines, and on explosive remnants of war and the extension of the scope of application of the CCW.

1.2 RESOLUTIONS OF THE 28TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT

Resolution 1

Adoption of the Declaration and Agenda for Humanitarian Action

The 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent ("the Conference"),

A.

taking note with appreciation of the measures taken to implement the Plan of Action adopted by the 27th International Conference,

welcoming the report on implementation of the Plan of Action adopted by the 27th International Conference, prepared by the ICRC and the International Federation,

encouraging all members of the Conference to continue their work on the implementation of that Plan of Action,

B.

1. *adopts* the Declaration of the 28th International Conference,
2. *stresses* the need to reinforce implementation of and respect for international humanitarian law, and in this regard:
 - a. *notes* that all States must take national measures to implement international humanitarian law, including training of the armed forces and making this law known among the general public, as well as the adoption of legislation to punish war crimes in accordance with their international obligations,
 - b. *calls* upon States to use and to ensure the effective functioning of existing implementation mechanisms of international humanitarian law, pursuant to international obligations undertaken by them, and calls upon States party to the 1977 Additional Protocol I to the 1949 Geneva Conventions, which have not yet recognized the competence of the International Fact-Finding Commission pursuant to Article 90 thereof, to consider again the possibility of doing so,
3. *adopts* the Agenda for Humanitarian Action,
4. *urges* all members of the Conference to implement the Declaration and the Agenda for Humanitarian Action, in accordance with their respective powers, mandates and capacities, with a view to reaching the goals defined,
5. *invites* international and regional organizations to implement the commitments of the Declaration and the Agenda for Humanitarian Action which concern them,

6. *requests* all members of the Conference to make every possible effort to ensure that all actors concerned implement, as appropriate, the Declaration and the Agenda for Humanitarian Action,

7. *requests* the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent to encourage and further the implementation of the present Resolution, including the Declaration and the Agenda for Humanitarian Action, according to its statutory mandate, through consultations with States party to the Geneva Conventions and other actors,

8. *requests* all members of the Conference to inform the ICRC and the International Federation on progress made with the implementation of the Declaration and the Agenda for Humanitarian Action, with a view to the presentation of a report on implementation to the International Conference in 2007,

9. *requests* the ICRC and the International Federation to implement and support the implementation of the Declaration and the Agenda for Humanitarian Action through the work of their respective headquarters and delegations,

10. *requests* the members of the Conference to report to the International Conference in 2007, on the follow-up given to their pledge(s).

C.

11. *thanks* the ICRC for its report on "International Humanitarian Law and the Challenges of Contemporary Armed Conflicts" and invites it to continue to generate reflection and conduct consultations on the issues identified therein as well as to analyse future challenges,

12. *notes with appreciation* the efforts undertaken by the ICRC to conduct the study on customary international humanitarian law and requests the ICRC to continue its work and to report to the International Conference in 2007,

13. *welcomes* the study carried out by the International Federation in response to the request made by the 27th International Conference on "National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies as auxiliaries to the Public Authorities in the Humanitarian Field", in particular notes the concept outlined in the conclusions of the study concerning the "Characteristics of a balanced relationship between States and National Societies", and invites the International Federation to continue its work on this subject, further extending the work to include more in-depth consultations with States, as well as with National Societies and to report further to the International Conference in 2007.

Declaration

“Protecting human dignity”

Gathered in Geneva for the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent we, members of this Conference, cannot accept that millions of people are unable to meet their basic needs because of armed conflicts, disasters and diseases. As representatives of the States party to the Geneva Conventions and the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, we therefore affirm our commitment, through this Declaration, **to protect human dignity** in all circumstances by enhancing respect for the relevant law and reducing the vulnerability of populations to the effects of armed conflicts, disasters and diseases.

Protecting human dignity calls for a renewed partnership between States and components of the Movement to promote respect for all human beings in a spirit of solidarity, irrespective of their origins, beliefs, religions, status or gender. We thus commit ourselves to reaffirming and applying the principles and rules of international humanitarian law, including customary rules, to increasing respect for humanitarian principles and values, to promoting tolerance, non-discrimination and respect for diversity among all peoples, and we welcome regional and other initiatives to promote respect for all human beings.

Armed conflicts, indiscriminate violence and acts of terror continue to threaten the safety and security of innumerable people and undermine efforts to bring about lasting peace and stability in the world. We call on States to consider ratification of, or accession to, treaties of international humanitarian law to which they are not yet party. We reaffirm the responsibility of all States to respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law, regardless of the nature or origin of the conflict. We also call upon them to make use of existing implementation mechanisms, such as Protecting Powers and the International Fact-Finding Commission, pursuant to international obligations undertaken by them. States shall disseminate international humanitarian law to their armed forces and the civilian population. Efforts to educate the civilian population may be undertaken in collaboration with the Movement and such bodies as the media and religious and other comparable institutions. Convinced that the existing provisions of international humanitarian law form an adequate basis to meet challenges raised by modern armed conflicts, we solemnly urge all parties to an armed conflict to respect all applicable treaties and customary rules of international humanitarian law.

We call upon all parties to an armed conflict to make all efforts to reduce incidental and prevent deliberate injury, death and suffering of civilian populations. The principle of distinction between the civilian population and combatants and between civilian objects and military objectives, and the principle of proportionality in the conduct of hostilities must be upheld in all circumstances. We call upon all parties to an armed

conflict to take all feasible precautionary measures to minimize incidental civilian casualties and damage. We urge all parties to an armed conflict to ensure special respect for and protection of women and children in accordance with international humanitarian law. In addition, the cultural heritage of peoples should be protected. We call on all parties to an armed conflict to take all feasible measures to prevent pillage of cultural property and places of worship and acts of hostility against such property not used for military purposes, as well as to prevent adverse effects on the environment. We also call on States to comply fully with the provisions of international humanitarian law, in particular, the Fourth Geneva Convention in order to protect and assist civilians in occupied territories.

Deploping in particular the rising humanitarian costs of non-international armed conflicts, we urge States to strengthen implementation of existing protections for civilian objects and persons affected by these conflicts and to examine if more elaborate rules on their protection are needed. In no case should existing standards of protection be weakened.

New security threats endanger the world today. International humanitarian law is applicable to all situations of armed conflict and foreign occupation. We vigorously condemn all acts or threats of violence aimed at spreading terror among the civilian population. In addition, we recall the protections granted by international humanitarian law to persons captured in connection with an armed conflict. All detainees must be treated with humanity and with respect for their inherent dignity. The inherent dignity of every human being can best be promoted and safeguarded through a complementary application of, in particular, international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law, as appropriate. International humanitarian law is not an obstacle to justice, and it requires that all persons alleged to have committed crimes be granted due process of law and fair trial. Moreover, we affirm that no State, no group or individual is above the law and no one should be considered or treated as beyond its reach.

Every year, millions of people are killed as a consequence of disasters, diseases and armed conflicts. The largest number of deaths occur from these events among the world's most vulnerable populations living in poverty and lacking access to basic services, information, or decision-making processes. Infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria are having a staggering effect on our world. Those who suffer most are the poor, refugees, internally displaced persons, migrants, minorities, the indigenous, and disabled persons, together with others rendered vulnerable by armed conflicts, disasters or social marginalization, in particular, women and children. Stigma and discrimination against such persons further increases their vulnerability and risk. **Protecting human dignity** requires the raising of health standards and the reduction of health risks through comprehensive prevention, treatment and care measures, including access to medicines at affordable prices. Accordingly, we

commit ourselves to efforts to reduce the risks and effects of disasters on vulnerable populations, as well as to reduce their vulnerability to disease due to stigma and discrimination, particularly that faced by people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS. In doing this, we will work together through new initiatives to respond to the challenges in building local capacity and enhance volunteerism and strengthen partnership between States, the components of the Movement and other organizations.

Profoundly alarmed by the growing number of acts of violence or threats against humanitarian workers, we state that they must be respected and protected in all circumstances in their vital role to prevent and alleviate suffering. Their independence from political and military actors must be reaffirmed. States are urged to ensure that crimes against humanitarian workers do not remain unpunished. They shall denounce such crimes and do their utmost to prevent attacks on humanitarian workers and relief aid. Furthermore, humanitarian workers should be allowed free and unimpeded access in accordance with the rules provided for in relevant international law to populations affected by armed conflicts, disasters and diseases, or under foreign occupation. We reaffirm the responsibility of States to respect the adherence of the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to its Fundamental Principles in order to provide impartial, neutral and independent protection and assistance for all those most in need. We also reaffirm the responsibility of the components of the Movement to cooperate with States in accordance with their respective mandates and the Statutes of the Movement.

The commitment in this Declaration is complemented by our resolve to undertake specific actions identified in the Agenda for Humanitarian Action which focuses on four issues: missing persons and their families; the human costs of the availability, use and misuse of weapons; reducing the risk and impact of disasters on vulnerable populations; and reducing the vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and other diseases due to stigma and discrimination.

These threats to human dignity represent some of the most pressing humanitarian challenges facing the world today.

Agenda for Humanitarian Action

The Agenda for Humanitarian Action focuses on the main theme and overall goal of the International Conference, namely **Protecting Human Dignity**, and sets out action-oriented goals and measures that States and the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement¹ can undertake to protect human dignity.

Four humanitarian concerns are addressed in the Agenda:

- *Address the issue of persons missing in connection with armed conflict or other situations of armed violence leading to numerous persons becoming missing (hereinafter referred to as "other situations of armed violence") and that of assistance to their families, taking into account the observations and recommendations of the ICRC International Conference of Governmental and Non-Governmental Experts held in Geneva on 19-21 February 2003;*
- *Address the human costs of the availability, use and misuse of weapons in armed conflicts;*
- *Reduce the risk and impact of disasters and improve preparedness and response mechanisms;*
- *Reduce the risk and impact of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases with regard to vulnerable people.*

The Agenda for Humanitarian Action sets out a number of clear, measurable, realistic objectives for Conference members to achieve from 2004 to 2007. These objectives relate to areas in which the International Conference, as a unique forum bringing together States and the components of the Movement, can make a specific contribution to solving current concerns and challenges in the humanitarian field, without duplicating existing efforts in other international fora to address similar issues. However, the impact of the Agenda for Humanitarian Action will depend on the active commitment of all Conference members to its full implementation.

Enhancing protection in armed conflicts and other situations of armed violence

General objective 1 – Respect and restore the dignity of persons missing as a result of armed conflicts or other situations of armed violence and of their families

The aim is to resolve the problem of missing persons, assist their families and prevent others from becoming missing,

by increasing efforts by governments, the military, and national and international organizations – including the worldwide Red Cross and Red Crescent network – to take concrete action and to reaffirm, reinforce and steadfastly respect and implement the protection afforded by international law,

in order to ensure accountability on the part of the authorities responsible for resolving these issues.

Final Goal 1.1 – Prevent persons from becoming missing

In armed conflict or other situations of armed violence, all persons are protected from becoming missing, without distinction as to the deliberate or incidental character of the event.

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"), the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (referred to herein as the "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.

Actions proposed

- 1.1.1 State authorities take effective measures to provide means of personal identification, at a minimum identification discs, for all members of armed and security forces and to ensure their compulsory and proper use.
- 1.1.2 State authorities take effective measures to provide means of personal identification for minors at risk and to make such means readily available to all persons concerned.
- 1.1.3 State authorities and other actors concerned, in particular National Societies, take effective measures to increase knowledge among civilians on how to protect themselves from becoming missing. These actors and the ICRC take measures to gain access to all civilians and to register those at risk of becoming missing.
- 1.1.4 State authorities and other actors concerned, in particular National Societies and the ICRC, take effective measures to ensure that during armed conflict or other situations of armed violence all persons are allowed to maintain contact with their relatives.
- 1.1.5 State authorities take effective measures to immediately notify families, counsel and any other person with a legitimate interest in the matter, of the situation of persons deprived of their liberty and to prevent extra-judicial executions, torture and detention in secret locations.

Final Goal 1.2 – Ascertain the fate of missing persons

Article 32 of the 1977 Additional Protocol I refers to the right of families to know the fate of their relatives. In this spirit, families are to be informed of the fate, including the whereabouts, and, if dead, the cause of death of their family members who are missing as a result of armed conflict or other situations of armed violence. Families and communities receive acknowledgement of the events leading to persons becoming missing, and the perpetrators of violations leading to such situations are held accountable.

Actions proposed

- 1.2.1 State authorities and other actors concerned, in particular National Societies and the ICRC, take effective measures to ensure that families know the fate, including the whereabouts, of their missing relatives. In case of death of these relatives, family members should know the cause and circumstances of death, in order to facilitate acceptance of their death and the commencement of the mourning process.
- 1.2.2 State authorities take effective measures to set up, whenever necessary, appropriate mechanisms for responding to the need of families for information, official acknowledgement and accountability.

Final Goal 1.3 – Manage information and process files on missing persons

The collection and sharing of information by all those concerned is properly and actively undertaken and coordinated, thereby strengthening the effectiveness of actions taken to ascertain the fate of missing persons as a result of armed conflict or other situations of armed violence.

Actions proposed

- 1.3.1 State authorities and other actors concerned, in particular National Societies and the ICRC, take effective measures to properly compile, manage and process files on missing persons and to properly centralize personal information that may serve to ascertain their fate.
- 1.3.2 State authorities and other actors concerned, in particular National Societies and the ICRC, take effective measures to respect relevant standards and principles regarding the protection of personal information wherever such information, including medical and genetic information, is collected, managed and processed.

Final Goal 1.4 – Manage human remains and information on the dead

Information is provided on those who have died in connection with armed conflict or other situations of armed violence so as to reduce the number of missing persons, help ascertain the fate of those who are missing and put an end to the uncertainty and anxiety of their families.

Actions proposed

- 1.4.1 State authorities and other actors concerned, in particular National Societies and the ICRC, take effective measures to properly search for, collect, identify and dispose of human remains without adverse distinction, while respecting the dead and the secular and religious mourning practices of the individuals and communities concerned.
- 1.4.2 State authorities and other actors concerned take effective measures to agree upon a framework for exhumation and identification before beginning any such process, and ensure that forensic specialists, whenever possible, carry out all procedures to exhume and identify human remains.

Final Goal 1.5 – Support families of missing persons

While the families of missing persons undergo much the same experiences as the rest of the population affected by armed conflict or other situations of armed violence, in addition, they have unique needs associated with the disappearance of a relative, which vary according to the context and are specifically addressed.

Actions proposed

- 1.5.1 State authorities and other actors concerned, in particular National Societies, the ICRC and the International Federation, take targeted measures to protect and assist the families of missing persons, paying attention to the particular needs of women and children.

Final Goal 1.6 – Encourage organized armed groups engaged in armed conflicts to resolve the problem of missing persons, assist their families and prevent others from becoming missing

States Parties to the Geneva Conventions and other actors concerned, in particular the ICRC and, where possible, National Societies, encourage organized armed groups to fulfil general objective 1, including its final goals and the corresponding actions.

General objective 2 – Strengthen the protection of civilians in all situations from the indiscriminate use and effects of weapons and the protection of combatants from unnecessary suffering and prohibited weapons through controls on weapons development, proliferation and use

The aim is to protect human dignity in the face of continued human suffering caused by anti-personnel mines and explosive remnants of war, the widespread proliferation of weapons and disregard of rules concerning their use, and the development of new weapons and technologies that can be used for hostile purposes,

by reaffirming, reinforcing and steadfastly respecting and implementing the protections afforded by international humanitarian law,

in order to ensure that the means used to conduct military operations are consistent with international humanitarian law; that adequate measures are taken to prevent serious violations of the law; and that existing legal norms are maintained in the face of scientific developments.

Final Goal 2.1 – End the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines

Global mine action efforts are increased and the goal of the eventual global elimination of anti-personnel mines is pursued.

Actions proposed

- 2.1.1 States, in partnership with the components of the Movement, will provide assistance for the care, rehabilitation, social and economic reintegration of war-wounded, including mine victims; for mine-awareness and clearance programmes. The ICRC will continue to play a lead role in the implementation of the Movement Strategy on Landmines. National Societies, in partnership with the ICRC and States, will maintain mine action among their priorities and develop their capacity in this regard.

- 2.1.2 All States will pursue the ultimate goal of the eventual global elimination of anti-personnel mines. States not yet party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction, are encouraged to consider adhering to it at the earliest opportunity.

- 2.1.3 States party to this Convention should develop, in time for the First Review Conference, national programmes for clearance, stockpile destruction, mine awareness and victim assistance consistent with the Convention's deadlines. States Parties in a position to do so are encouraged to increase their efforts to ensure the resources necessary to fully implement the Convention. Each State party to this Convention should adopt all necessary measures to implement it, including criminal sanctions and the harmonization of military doctrine with the Convention's obligations.

Final Goal 2.2 – Minimize suffering from weapons that may be excessively injurious or have indiscriminate effects

Civilian deaths and injuries caused by explosive remnants of war should be significantly reduced. Adherence to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, its Protocols and the amendment extending the Convention's scope of application to non-international armed conflict is increased.

Actions proposed

- 2.2.1 The Conference warmly welcomes the adoption of the Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW, Protocol V), and encourages States to consider its ratification as soon as possible. The global human and social costs of explosive remnants of war should be addressed through increased international efforts in the fields of clearance, risk education and victim assistance and, when ratified, the implementation of the new Protocol. The Movement will implement its Strategy on Landmines, as extended to explosive remnants of war, and develop its capacity for this purpose.
- 2.2.2 States are encouraged to continue efforts to reduce the effects on civilians of mines, booby-traps and similar devices through considering ratification of amended Protocol II to the CCW and its full implementation.
- 2.2.3 States, both through national measures and further efforts in the context of the CCW, are encouraged to consider measures to minimize the risk of explosive ordnance becoming explosive remnants of war and to reduce the human costs of mines other than anti-personnel mines.
- 2.2.4 In order to minimize civilian deaths and injuries resulting from certain munitions, including sub-munitions, States will rigorously apply the rules on distinction, proportionality, and precautions

in attack. In this regard, components of the Movement will continue to promote measures to avoid civilian casualties resulting from explosive remnants of war and submunitions.

- 2.2.5 States should take all necessary measures to ensure the full implementation of the Protocols to the CCW to which they are a party. States not yet party to the CCW and all its Protocols are encouraged to consider adhering to these instruments. States Parties that have not already done so should consider adhering to the extension of the Convention's scope of application to non-international armed conflict.

Final Goal 2.3 – Reduce the human suffering resulting from the uncontrolled availability and misuse of weapons

In recognition of States' obligation to respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law, controls on the availability of weapons are strengthened – in particular on small arms, light weapons and their ammunition – so that weapons do not end up in the hands of those who may be expected to use them to violate international humanitarian law. Complementary steps are taken to reduce the misuse of weapons through the promotion of respect for this law.

Actions proposed

- 2.3.1 States should make respect for international humanitarian law one of the fundamental criteria on which arms transfer decisions are assessed. They are encouraged to incorporate such criteria into national laws or policies and into regional and global norms on arms transfers.
- 2.3.2 States should take concrete steps to strengthen controls on arms and ammunition. In particular, States should urgently enhance efforts to prevent the uncontrolled availability and misuse of small arms and light weapons, taking into account the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and other relevant instruments, particularly those developed in a regional framework.
- 2.3.3 States, with the support of the ICRC and National Societies, should ensure that armed, police and security forces receive systematic training in international humanitarian law and human rights law, in particular concerning the responsible use of weapons. Where appropriate, similar training should be encouraged for organized armed groups.
- 2.3.4 States, the ICRC and National Societies should strive to reduce the demand for and misuse of weapons by promoting a culture of tolerance and establishing educational programmes or similar initiatives among the civilian population. They will also increase awareness of the risks to safety of small arms and light weapons, especially among children.
- 2.3.5 States, the ICRC and National Societies in a position to do so will strengthen efforts to record and document the impact of armed violence on civilians, contributing to a better understanding of its human costs. The ICRC will also document the impact of armed violence on its operations.

Final Goal 2.4 – Protect humanity from poisoning and the deliberate spread of disease

In light of recent advances in biotechnology that could be misused to create new means or methods of warfare, urgent action is taken to prevent the misuse of biotechnology for hostile purposes and the erosion of the prohibitions of poisoning and the deliberate spread of disease contained in international humanitarian law.

Actions proposed

- 2.4.1 States party to the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention are encouraged to continue their efforts under the Biological Weapons Convention Programme of Work to reduce the threat posed by biological weapons.
- 2.4.2 Recognizing the primary importance of the Biological Weapons Convention Programme of Work, States are invited to work with the ICRC to develop a ministerial-level declaration that would support efforts in the framework of the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention, on preventing the hostile use of biological agents as called for in the ICRC Appeal on Biotechnology, Weapons and Humanity. The components of the Movement will promote the concerns expressed in the ICRC Appeal.
- 2.4.3 States that have not yet done so are encouraged to:
- consider becoming party to the 1925 Geneva Protocol, the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention and the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention before the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Conference in 2007;
 - adopt appropriate national legislation to investigate and prosecute acts prohibited by the 1925 Geneva Protocol, the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention and the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention;
 - integrate relevant ethical and legal norms into medical and scientific education, as well as professional and industrial codes of conduct at national and international levels with a view to minimizing the risk of use of biological agents for hostile purposes; and
 - continue efforts to establish comprehensive surveillance and assistance mechanisms at the national and international levels to detect, analyse and respond to unusual outbreaks of disease.
- 2.4.4 States are called upon to uphold the object and purpose of the 1925 Geneva Protocol, the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention and other relevant norms of international law, including by monitoring closely advances in the field of the

life sciences, taking practical action to effectively control biological agents that could be put to hostile use, and by improving international cooperation.

Final Goal 2.5 – Ensure the legality of new weapons under international law

In light of the rapid development of weapons technology and in order to protect civilians from the indiscriminate effects of weapons and combatants from unnecessary suffering and prohibited weapons, all new weapons, means and methods of warfare should be subject to rigorous and multidisciplinary review.

Actions proposed

- 2.5.1 In accordance with 1977 Additional Protocol I (Article 36), States Parties are urged to establish review procedures to determine the legality of new weapons, means and methods of warfare. Other States should consider establishing such review procedures. Reviews should involve a multidisciplinary approach, including military, legal, environmental and health-related considerations.
- 2.5.2 States are encouraged to review with particular scrutiny all new weapons, means and methods of warfare that cause health effects with which medical personnel are unfamiliar.
- 2.5.3 The ICRC will facilitate the voluntary exchange of experience on review procedures. States that have review procedures in place are invited to cooperate with the ICRC in this regard. The ICRC will organize, in cooperation with government experts, a training workshop for States that do not yet have review procedures.

Reducing the risk and impact of disasters

General objective 3 – Minimize the impact of disasters through implementation of disaster risk reduction measures and improving preparedness and response mechanisms

The aim is to protect human dignity, lives and livelihoods from the devastating impact of disasters,

by fully integrating disaster risk reduction into national and international planning and policy instruments and implementing appropriate operational measures to reduce risks, and by implementing appropriate legal, policy and operational measures to facilitate and expedite effective responses to disasters,

in order to reduce the risks and effects of disasters on marginalized and vulnerable populations.

Final Goal 3.1 – Acknowledge the importance of disaster risk reduction and undertake measures to minimize the impact of disasters on vulnerable populations

Comprehensive disaster risk reduction, including disaster management, prevention and mitigation can be

achieved through education and awareness-raising activities. Other measures to minimize the impact of disasters include: effective management of natural resources and protection of the environment; the implementation of early warning systems; ensuring that building codes, particularly in disaster prone countries, are implemented and enforced to limit suffering caused by structural damage; supporting sustainable recovery; and optimizing capacity-building opportunities for vulnerable populations. Of particular importance is directing such efforts towards populations that are most at risk, including those marginalized because of poverty, discrimination or social exclusion, or those that do not have access to disaster preparedness and response services as a consequence of their circumstances or legal status.

Actions proposed

- 3.1.1 States should, in accordance with the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, review their existing legislation and policies to fully integrate disaster risk reduction strategies into all relevant legal, policy and planning instruments in order to address the social, economic, political and environmental dimensions that influence vulnerability to disasters.
- 3.1.2 State authorities should take appropriate operational measures to reduce disaster risks at the local and national levels, including sustainable natural resource, environmental and land-use management, appropriate urban planning, and enforced building codes. States should, in cooperation with National Societies and other concerned agencies, implement disaster risk awareness programmes, public education programmes, early-warning systems, contingency planning, disaster management training and other mitigation and preparedness measures, based on risk, vulnerability and capacity assessments.
- 3.1.3 States, in cooperation with National Societies, are urged to incorporate risk reduction as a central feature in national development plans, poverty-reduction strategies and post-disaster recovery plans, be it on their own territory or through their development and cooperation assistance in a bilateral, multilateral or regional context, with a special emphasis on reducing the vulnerability of populations in hazard-prone areas or otherwise at risk owing to poverty, marginalization, social exclusion or discrimination.
- 3.1.4 States are strongly encouraged to prioritize and provide resources to implement comprehensive disaster risk reduction measures, including measures to address issues relating to climate change and variability. National Societies will increase their cooperation with States and experts in the area of climate change in order to limit the potential negative impact on vulnerable populations. In so doing, they may draw on the recommendations outlined in the report *Preparedness for climate change* as requested by the

Plan of Action of the 27th International Conference in 1999.

- 3.1.5 States, recognizing the importance of the independent and auxiliary role of National Societies with respect to the public authorities in providing humanitarian services in the field of disaster management, should negotiate clearly defined roles and responsibilities with their respective National Societies in risk reduction and disaster management activities. This may include National Society representation on relevant national policy and coordination bodies as collaborative partners with States. States should also take specific legal and policy measures to support and assist National Societies in building sustainable volunteer and community capacity, particularly promoting the participation of women, in the areas of risk reduction and disaster management.
- 3.1.6 The components of the Movement, in cooperation with States, will prioritize and scale up efforts to build sustainable capacity and improve performance in the area of disaster risk reduction, including disaster management, awareness-raising and advocacy activities at the local, national and regional levels. This will include an emphasis on building effective and inclusive partnerships with populations that live in hazard-prone areas or are otherwise vulnerable owing to poverty, marginalization, social exclusion or other forms of discrimination and will involve all relevant partners.
- 3.1.7 The International Federation will support the efforts of National Societies to strengthen their capacity in the field of disaster risk reduction through continued knowledge sharing on best practices, resource mobilization and advocacy on disaster risk reduction issues with States and other relevant international, regional and national actors, including with the private sector.

Final Goal 3.2 – Enhance international disaster response through support for the compilation and application of the laws, rules and principles applicable to international disaster response

It is essential to provide neutral and impartial assistance to all populations affected by disasters, without discrimination and on the basis of vulnerability and need. Experience has shown that achieving this goal depends to a significant extent on improved understanding of the regulatory framework within which international disaster response is provided. Global research conducted as part of the International Federation's International Disaster Response Laws Project identified that there are many instruments aimed at improving international disaster response but that awareness of them is often lacking and implementation inconsistent.

Actions proposed

- 3.2.1 All members of the Conference welcome the work undertaken by the International Federation

in cooperation with National Societies, States, the United Nations and other bodies to collate and examine the effectiveness of laws, rules and principles applicable to international disaster response, as noted in United Nations General Assembly Resolution on strengthening the effectiveness and coordination of international urban search and rescue assistance (A/RES/57/150).

- 3.2.2 All members of the Conference recognize that improved awareness, clarification, application and development of laws, rules and principles applicable to international disaster response will assist in facilitating and improving the coordination, timeliness, quality and accountability of international disaster response activities and can therefore make a major contribution to the protection of human dignity in situations of disasters.
- 3.2.3 States and the components of the Movement are encouraged to work together to ensure the fullest possible consideration and application, where appropriate, of the laws, rules and principles that pertain to international disaster response, as well as the recommendations of Resolution 6 of the 23rd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent on measures to expedite international relief and United Nations General Assembly Resolution on strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations and its accompanying Annex (A/RES/46/182).
- 3.2.4 States, recognizing the importance of the independent and auxiliary role of National Societies with respect to the public authorities in providing humanitarian services in the event of disaster, are encouraged to work in cooperation with their respective National Societies and the International Federation to review existing disaster management laws and operational instruments at the national, regional and international levels so as to enhance harmonization with relevant laws, rules and principles, and where feasible, guidelines applicable to international disaster response.
- 3.2.5 States that have not yet done so are encouraged to consider acceding to and implementing the Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations in order to facilitate the effective use of telecommunications in disaster and emergency relief operations. States will, as appropriate, also implement the relevant resolutions of the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, International Telecommunication Union and United Nations related to the use of telecommunications in disasters, as well as access and protection of disaster response and mitigation workers.
- 3.2.6 The International Federation and National Societies will continue to lead collaborative efforts, involving States, the United Nations and

other relevant bodies, in conducting research and advocacy activities relating to the compilation of the laws, rules and principles applicable to international disaster response. This includes identifying any outstanding needs in terms of the legal and regulatory framework and the development of models, tools and guidelines for practical use in international disaster response activities. This also includes the active promotion of the awareness, dissemination, clarification and application, where appropriate, of the laws, rules and principles applicable to international disaster response, as well as applicable guidelines by States and the international community at all levels. The International Federation will submit a progress report to the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in 2007.

Reducing the risk and impact of diseases

General objective 4 – Reduce the increased vulnerability to diseases arising from stigma and discrimination and from the lack of access to comprehensive prevention, care and treatment

The aim is to protect human dignity from the devastating consequences of HIV/AIDS and other diseases faced, in particular, by groups that are stigmatized, discriminated against or socially marginalized because of their situation or circumstances and often lack access to comprehensive prevention, treatment, care and support,

by addressing the legal and policy barriers, as well as underlying societal attitudes, which stigmatize and discriminate against people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) and other highly vulnerable populations, and

by providing equitable access to prevention, treatment and health care, including psycho-social support, for all people, including displaced persons and other marginalized groups, such as prisoners and detainees,

in order to reduce the impact and further spread of HIV/AIDS and other diseases and promote the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health as one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition, with a special emphasis on marginalized and vulnerable populations.

Final Goal 4.1 – Eradicate the stigma, discrimination and denial faced by populations affected by and living with HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS represents one of the most serious threats to human dignity today. Despite a growing awareness of the scale of the epidemic, the global response to HIV/AIDS continues to be hampered by attitudes that stigmatize people affected by and living with HIV/AIDS and highly vulnerable populations. Discriminatory legislation and policies directly and indirectly deny these populations access to adequate prevention, treatment and care. The response to HIV/AIDS must address social, legal and policy barriers

that stigmatize and discriminate against infected, affected and highly vulnerable populations. Health care and social services must be based on the humanitarian principle of protecting and respecting human dignity, and be provided without discrimination, on the basis of need and vulnerability, using approaches that encourage tolerance, respect and social inclusion.

Actions proposed

- 4.1.1 States, in fulfilment of the commitments made in the Declaration of Commitment adopted by the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS (UNGASS), should eliminate any laws, policies and practices that adversely discriminate against people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), with special attention to women and girls and highly vulnerable groups.
- 4.1.2 States undertake to adopt appropriate and effective measures aimed at enforcing policies and strategies aimed at eradicating HIV/AIDS-related stigma and discrimination, with specific attention paid to the gender implications of HIV/AIDS, and an emphasis on the social inclusion of people affected by and living with HIV/AIDS and other highly vulnerable groups, notably by ensuring the full enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms.
- 4.1.3 States, assisted and supported by National Societies, are urged to undertake operational measures, with special emphasis on empowering women and addressing the gender imbalance, to promote the widespread availability of and equitable access to comprehensive prevention, care and treatment, including improved and enhanced sexual and reproductive health care.
- 4.1.4 States are urged to ensure that a wide range of prevention programmes which take account of local circumstances, ethics and cultural values, is available in all countries, particularly the most affected countries, including information, education and communication, in languages most understood by communities and respectful of cultures, aimed at reducing risk-taking behaviour and encouraging responsible sexual behaviour, including: abstinence and fidelity; expanded access to essential commodities, including male and female condoms and sterile injecting equipment; harm-reduction efforts related to drug use; expanded access to voluntary and confidential counselling and testing; safe blood supplies; and early and effective treatment of sexually transmittable infections.
- 4.1.5 States, assisted and supported as appropriate by the components of the Movement, should undertake operational measures aimed at ensuring continuous progress in the availability of treatment and care for people living with HIV/AIDS, with an emphasis on reaching marginalized groups that do not have ready access to such treatment and care, in order to protect their dignity, lives and livelihoods and prevent the transmission of HIV.

- 4.1.6 States are urged to adopt and implement legislative measures to eradicate discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS in the workplace. In close cooperation with States, civil society organizations and international organizations, the components of the Movement will carry out awareness and education activities aimed at creating positive, socially inclusive workplace environments for staff, volunteers and beneficiaries, and will provide support and assistance for other organizations wishing to implement workplace initiatives to eradicate stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS.
- 4.1.7 States, recognizing the importance of the independent and auxiliary role of National Societies with respect to the public authorities in providing humanitarian services in the field of health and care should negotiate clearly defined roles and responsibilities with their respective National Societies in public health, development and social activities. This could include representation of National Societies on relevant national policy and coordination bodies. States should also take specific legal and policy measures to support and assist National Societies in building sustainable volunteer and community capacity in the area of HIV/AIDS and health promotion and prevention activities.
- 4.1.8 States should facilitate civil society participation in planning and implementation through participation in processes such as the Country Coordinating Mechanisms of the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. This would ensure that disease responses benefit from the unique perspectives, capacities and reach of civil society, and in particular the voice and contribution of affected communities. This includes developing and utilizing the full potential of the network of National Society volunteers to reach vulnerable populations at the community and household levels.
- 4.1.9 States and National Societies are urged to provide in conformity with paragraph seven of the Declaration, including through international cooperation, the necessary human and financial resources and institutional support needed to reduce the risk and impact of diseases.
- 4.1.10 National Societies will continue to implement the global campaign against AIDS-related stigma and discrimination ("The truth about AIDS... Pass it on") and, in cooperation with States, will prioritize and scale up efforts to strengthen sustainable capacity and improve the effectiveness of health and HIV/AIDS awareness and advocacy activities at the local and national levels, with an emphasis on building effective and inclusive partnerships with people affected by and living with HIV/AIDS and other populations that are vulnerable owing to poverty, marginalization, social exclusion and discrimination.
- 4.1.11 The International Federation will support the efforts of National Societies to strengthen their

capacity to implement HIV/AIDS and community health interventions through continued knowledge sharing on best practices, resource mobilization and advocacy on stigma and discrimination issues with States and the international community.

- 4.1.12 The Movement will cooperate closely with UNAIDS and its co-sponsors at all levels. National Societies will contribute to and strengthen the International Federation's status as a UNAIDS Collaborating Centre and its partnership with the Global Network of PLWHA (GNP+) for the elimination of stigma and discrimination, through the mobilization of volunteers at the national, regional and international levels.

Final Goal 4.2 – Reduce the risk of and vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and other diseases faced by people who suffer most as defined in paragraph seven of the Declaration and other marginalized groups, such as prisoners and detainees. Because of their legal status or circumstances, such people have limited access to health education, promotion and care, treatment, and disease prevention

It is imperative, both from humanitarian and public-health perspectives, to provide neutral and impartial assistance for all populations affected by HIV/AIDS and other diseases, without discrimination and on the basis of vulnerability and need. Many groups do not have full access to basic prevention, health-care and social services as a result of legislation, policies and practices with discriminatory effects, thereby increasing their risk of and vulnerability to diseases. Of particular concern are migrants and displaced populations, prisoners and detainees. Effective health programmes based on tolerance and social inclusion, and focusing on physical, mental and social well-being are critical to protecting the human dignity of these populations and ensuring their successful integration into society.

Actions proposed

- 4.2.1 States are urged, in cooperation with National Societies, to review existing laws and policies in order to promote the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health as one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition.
- 4.2.2 States, in close cooperation with the components of the Movement and vulnerable populations, should implement socially inclusive prevention and health-care interventions appropriate for displaced and marginalized populations. This implies moving beyond emergency needs to integrate physical and mental health and social well-being into programming.
- 4.2.3 States and the components of the Movement, with other relevant partners, are called upon to

address, in a multi-sectoral and coordinated manner, the problems associated with HIV/AIDS and other diseases in armed conflicts, disasters and emergencies, recognizing the special vulnerability and capacity of displaced populations, host communities, military and peacekeeping personnel.

- 4.2.4 States, in cooperation with the Movement, are urged to address the special needs and vulnerability of people affected by HIV and AIDS in emergency situations with special attention to food security.
- 4.2.5 States, in cooperation with the components of the Movement, are urged to implement policies and operational measures in prisons in order to create a safer environment and reduce the risk of transmission of HIV, tuberculosis and other diseases among detainees, prisoners and staff. This includes voluntary and confidential testing for HIV infection, adequate pre- and post-test counselling and awareness programmes.
- 4.2.6 National Societies will prioritize and expand efforts to build sustainable capacity and increase their effectiveness in health awareness and advocacy activities at the local and national levels, with an emphasis on building effective and inclusive partnerships with populations that are vulnerable owing to poverty, marginalization, social exclusion and discrimination.
- 4.2.7 The International Federation will support the efforts of National Societies to strengthen their capacity in the field of community health through the continued sharing of best practices, resource mobilization and advocacy on stigma and discrimination issues with States and the international community.

Resolution 2

Revision of the Regulations for the Empress Shôken Fund

The 28th International Conference of Red Cross and Red Crescent,

having taken cognizance of the report of the Joint Commission of the Empress Shôken Fund,

1. thanks the Joint Commission for its management of the Empress Shôken Fund and approves all provisions 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 Shôken Fund, the text of which is as follows:

Regulations for the Empress Shôken 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 Shôken 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 in 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 Council of Delegates 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 Council and the use made of those allocations by National Societies. The Council of Delegates shall transmit this report to the Japanese Imperial Family through the intermediary of the Japanese Red Cross Society.

Resolution 3 Emblem

The 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent,

recalling Resolution 3 (27th International Conference) adopted on 6 November 1999,

adopts Resolution 5 adopted by the Council of Delegates on 1 December 2003 (see annex).

Annex

Resolution 5 Follow-up to Resolution 6 of the Council of Delegates in 2001

Emblem

The Council of Delegates,

taking note of the report submitted by the Standing Commission as requested by the 27th International

Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, held in Geneva in 1999, and Resolution 6 of the Council of Delegates in 2001,

reiterating the commitment of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to achieve, with the support of the States Parties to the Geneva Conventions, a comprehensive and lasting solution to the question of the emblem, on the basis of the proposed draft Third Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions, once it is adopted, as soon as circumstances permit,

recalling the legal and protective value of the emblems used by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, which, by virtue of their inclusion in the 1949 Geneva Conventions and continuous practice for over a century, have become universally recognized symbols of impartial and neutral aid and protection to the victims of war, natural disasters and other catastrophes,

1. Welcomes the work of the Standing Commission, its Special Representative on the Emblem and its ad hoc Working Group, the ICRC and the International Federation to develop the basis for a comprehensive and lasting solution to the question of the emblem;
2. Further welcomes the progress made since the 27th International Conference, in particular the drafting of the proposed Third Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions on the Emblem (12 October 2000) as well as the adoption of Resolution 6 of the 2001 Council of Delegates;
3. Deeply regrets developments which have made it impossible to bring the process to its expected outcome with the adoption of the draft Third Additional Protocol;
4. Recalls the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, in particular the principle of universality;
5. Underlines the urgency of reinforcing measures for the protection of war victims, medical personnel and humanitarian workers in all circumstances, and the significance in this context of the proposed Third Additional Protocol;
6. Requests the Standing Commission to continue to give high priority to securing, as soon as circumstances permit, a comprehensive and lasting solution to the question of the emblem, in cooperation with the Swiss government as depositary of the Geneva Conventions and with other governments concerned and components of the Movement, on the basis of the proposed draft Third Additional Protocol;
7. Requests the Special Representative of the Standing Commission on the Emblem to bring this resolution to the attention of the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

Resolution 4

Date and place of an International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

The 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent,

decides to hold an International Conference in 2007 in Geneva, the date to be decided by the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

LISTE DES DÉLÉGUÉS LIST OF DELEGATES LISTA DE DELEGADOS

2.1

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

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. L'ordre alphabétique suivi correspond à celui de la liste des États Parties aux Conventions de Genève établie par la Suisse.

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. The alphabetical order corresponds to the list of States Party to the Geneva Conventions as established by Switzerland.

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. El orden alfabético corresponde al de la lista, elaborada por Suiza, de los Estados Partes en los Convenios de Ginebra.

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- Mr Abdul Alim Atarud
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- Mr Mohammad Salim Bahramand
Head, Information and External Relations

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department
- Mr Ghulam Seddiq Rasuli
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- Mr Themba Mbele
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- Mlle Patience Tendongmo Ntemgwa
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- Ms Judy Fairholm
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- Maj. Gen. J.S.T. Pitzul, Q.C.
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- Mme Nouroulhoudat Mohamed
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DJIBOUTI / DJIBOUTI / DJIBOUTI

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- D. Francisco Fernandez
Presidente Comité Asturias
- D. José L. Rodríguez Villasante
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Internacional Humanitario (CEDIH)
- D. Manuel Pérez González
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- Sr. Diego Blazquez
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- Sra. Maria Merle Roig Garriga
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Société nationale / National Society / Sociedad Nacional

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État / State / Estado

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Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Madrid

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Ms Battulga Narmandakh
Officer, International Relations Department

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Voluntary and Youth Programme

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Mr Ayodeji Ajayi
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État / State / Estado

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M. François Bugnion
Directeur du droit international
et de la coopération au sein du Mouvement
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	Mr Frank Kennedy Head, Regional Delegation Almaty
	Mr Pentti Kotoaro Head, Regional Delegation Budapest
	Ms Françoise LeGoff Head, Regional Delegation Nairobi
	Mr Bob McKerrow Head, Regional Delegation Delhi
	Mr Carl Naucier Head, Regional Delegation Ankara
	Mr Leon Prop Head, Regional Delegation Suva
	Ms Lotta Relander Head, Regional Delegation Lima
	Mr Alassane Senghore Head, Regional Delegation Harare
	Mr Jürgen Weyand Head, Regional Delegation Bangkok
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Prof. René Rhinow Vice-President ex officio
Mrs Janet Davidson Vice-President
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2.2
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DE LA CROIX-ROUGE ET DU CROISSANT-ROUGE
STANDING COMMISSION
OF THE RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT
COMISIÓN PERMANENTE
DE LA CRUZ ROJA Y DE LA MEDIA LUNA ROJA

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Chairman (The Netherlands Red Cross)
Dr Mohammed Al-Hadid
Vice-Chairman
(Jordan National Red Crescent Society)
Dr Abdul Rahman Al-Swailem
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Mr Tadateru Konoe
Member (Japanese Red Cross Society)
Mrs Christina Magnuson
Member (Swedish Red Cross)

Mr Jakob Kellenberger
Member (ICRC)
Mr François Bugnion
Member (ICRC)
Mr Juan Manuel Suárez del Toro Rivero
Member (International Federation)
Mr Markku Niskala
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Mrs Helena Korhonen
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2.3

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A. Sociétés Nationales en attente de reconnaissance et d'admission / National Societies pending recognition and admission / Sociedades Nacionales en espera de su reconocimiento y admisión

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OF ERITREA**

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IN ISRAEL**

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Coordinator, International Department

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**PALESTINE / PALESTINE RED CRESCENT
SOCIETY**

Head of Delegation

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President

**TIMOR-LESTE / TIMOR-LESTE RED
CROSS SOCIETY**

Head of Delegation

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Chair of the ad interim National Board

Ms Isabel Guterres
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B. Entités et organisations ayant participé en qualité d'observateurs / Entities and organizations having participated as observers / Entidades y organizaciones que han participado en calidad de observadoras

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- Mr Martin Loftus
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Director of OCHA, Geneva
Mr Franz-Josef Homann-Herimberg
Special Adviser to the Assistant Emergency
Relief Coordinator and Director
Mr Sergio Piazzi
Chief, Advocacy and External Relations
Mr Daniel Augstburger
Senior Emergency Officer
Mr Arjun Katoch
Chief, Field Coordination Support Section,
Emergency Services Branch
Mr Stephen Tull
Senior Policy Advisor

UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUNDS (UNFPA)

Head of Delegation

- Dr Ali J. Buzurukov
Programme Officer

UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS (UNV)

Head of Delegation

- Mr Robert Leigh
Head, UNV Representation in North America

UNIVERSITY OF HARVARD, Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research

Head of Delegation

- Mr Claude Bruderlein
Director, Program on Humanitarian Policy
and Conflict Research

Mrs Lise Boudreault
Project Coordinator for the IHL Research Initiative
Ms Margaret Kowalsky
Program Associate

UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (UNRWA)

Head of Delegation

Mr Matthias Burchard
Chief, Liaison Office, Geneva

WORLD ASSOCIATION OF GIRL GUIDES AND GIRL SCOUTS (WAGGGS)

Head of Delegation

Ms Georgina Peek
Communications Officer
Ms Judith Verkooijen
Representative to the United Nations

WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME (WFP)

Head of Delegation

Mr James T. Morris
Executive Director
Mr Claude Jibidar
Deputy Director
Mr Daly Belgasmi
Director, WFP Geneva Office
Mr Francesco Strippoli
Director, Division of External Relations
Mr Carlo Scaramella
Chief, Preparedness and Response Unit (OEP)
Ms Monica Trujillo
Early Warning and Preparedness Officer
Ms Cecilia Lonnesfors
Contingency Planning Officer
Ms Marianne Ward
Head, International Organizations Unit

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)

Head of Delegation

Dr D. Nabarro
Representative of the Director General for Health Action in Crises
Dr A. Lorette
Department for Health Action in Crises
Dr M. Tailhades
Department of HIV/AIDS

Dr D. Meddings
Department of Injuries and Violence Prevention
Dr K. Tamura
Department of HIV/AIDS
Mr L. Tillfors
Department of Governance
Ms N. Rifai
External Relations and Governing Bodies Cluster
Ms T. Sleuwenhoek
Department for Health Action in Crises
Dr Ottorino Cosivi
Communicable Disease Surveillance and Response Department
Ms H. Nygren-Krug
Department of Ethics, Trade, Human Rights and Law
Mr Lauri Jalanti
Department of Governance

WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION (WIPO)

Head of Delegation

Mr Khamis Suedi
Special Counsel to the Director General

WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

Head of Delegation

Mr Daniel Lack
Legal Adviser
Ms Maya Ben-Haim Rosen
Member

WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION (WMO)

Head of Delegation

Mr C. Wang
External relations Officer
Mr C. Tavares
Consultant for the Program for Advocacy, Fundraising and Communication

WORLD VISION INTERNATIONAL

Head of Delegation

Mr Tom Getman
Director of Humanitarian Affairs and International Relations

2.4 INVITÉS GUESTS INVITADOS

A. Orateurs invités / Guest speakers / Oradores invitados

- Her Majesty Queen Rania al-Abdullah of Jordan,
Amman
- Ms Micheline Calmy-Rey
Federal Councillor, Head of the Federal
Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland
- Dhr Guup Baron Kraijenhoff
Former Chairman, Honorary Member,
of the Netherlands Red Cross
- Mr Laurent Moutinot
President of the Council of State
of the Republic and Canton of Geneva
- Mr Christian Ferrazino
Administrative Counsellor of the City
of Geneva
- Mr Jan Egeland
Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian
Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator,
United Nations Organization
- Dr Kak-Soo Shin
General Treaties Bureau, Minister of Foreign
Affairs Rep. of Korea
- Mr Tom Buruku
President, Uganda Red Cross Society
- Mrs Visaka Dharmadasa
President, "Parents of Servicemen missing
in action"
- Prof. Marco Sassóli
Université du Québec à Montréal
- H. E. Mr Minoru Endo
Ambassador of Japan, Special Assistant
to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tokyo
- Mr Edgardo Calderón Paredes
Chairman, Disaster Preparedness and Relief
Commission of the International Federation
(President Peruvian Red Cross)
- Prof. Malcom Dando
Neurologist, biologist, Professor of international
security in the Department of Peace studies,
Bradford University (UK)
- Dr Patricia Lewis
Nuclear physicist, Director of the UN Institute
for Disarmament Research, (UNIDIR)
- Ms Marika Fahlen
Director, Social Mobilization and Information,
Joint United Nations Programme on
HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)
- Mr Tito Fachi
Vice Chairman, Health Commission
of the International Federation (President,
Zambia Red Cross Society)

- Ms Anandi Yuvarag
International HIV/AIDS Alliance,
Representative of the Global Network
of People Living with HIV/AIDS (India)
- Mr Julian Hows
Global Network of People living with
HIV/AIDS
- Ms Deborah Verzuu
Representative of the United Nations Volunteers
Programme
- Ms Caroline Wyatt
British Broadcasting Corporation

B. Autres invités / Other guests / Otros invitados

- Mr Pierre Müller
Mayor of the City of Geneva
- Mr Ruud Lubbers
High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- Mr Sergei Ordzhonikidze
Director General of the United Office
at Geneva (UNOG)
- Mr Bertrand Ramcharan
Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights
(OHCHR)
- Mr Ross Mountain
Director, United Nations Office
for the Coordination of Humanitarian Action
(OCHA)
- Mr Anders P. Johnson
Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary
Union (IPU)
- Mr Gerry Van Kessel
Coordinator, Inter-Governmental
Consultation / International Organization
for Migration (IOM/IGC)
- Mr Martin Griffiths
Director, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue
(Henry Dunant Centre)
- H.E. Mr Théodore Winkler
Ambassador, Director, Geneva Centre for the
Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF)
- H.E. Mr Gérard Stoudman
Ambassador, Director, Geneva Centre
for Security Policy (GCSP)
- Mr Claude Péclard
Deputy Director, Centre d'Accueil Genève
International (CAGI)
- Mr Baldwin de Widts
Legal Adviser, North Atlantic Treaty
Organization (NATO)
- Mr Guy Mettan
Director, Geneva Press Club

Mr Roger Mayou
Director, International Red Cross and Red
Crescent Museum
Dr Otto Hieronymi
Head, Department of International Relations,
Webster University, Geneva

Mr Abdulla Bin Mohammed Al Hazaa
Secretary General of the Organization of Arab
Red Crescent and Red Cross
Mr Jalal Abdel Majeed Ahmad
Administrative Director, General Secretariat of
the Organization of Arab Red Crescent and
Red Cross



2003 COUNCIL OF DELEGATES

3.1 CONVOCATION

To all members and observers of the Council of Delegates

30 November – 2 December 2003

Geneva, 15 October 2003

Dear Sir/Madam,

It is our pleasure to enclose herewith the official documents of the 2003 Council of Delegates, which will be held at the International Conference Centre of Geneva (CICG) from 30 November to 2 December 2003.

As we informed you in our letter of 28 May 2003 convening the Council, we look forward to welcoming you for the opening ceremony

in Geneva
on Sunday 30 November 2003
at 7.00 p.m.
at the International Conference Centre of Geneva (CICG)
Rue de Varembe, 15 – 1211 Geneva 20

The working sessions will start on 1 December from 9 a.m.

Please find attached a list of the enclosed official documents of the Council which we are sending in accordance with Rule 7 of the Rules of Procedure of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. These documents will enable you to better familiarize yourself with all the subjects to be dealt with in the plenary sessions and commissions. We hope that the resulting discussions will be constructive and substantial on all items of the agenda.

We wish you every success in your work at the Council.

Yours sincerely,

Juan M. Suárez del Toro R.
President
International Federation of Red Cross
and Red Crescent Societies

Jakob Kellenberger
President
International Committee of the Red Cross

3.2 AGENDA

COUNCIL OF DELEGATES OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

Geneva, 30 November – 2 December 2003

Evening of 30 November

- Opening ceremony
- Award of the Henry Dunant Medal
- Reception

1-2 December

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
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 of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

The Standing Commission will report on its work since the last Council of Delegates in 2001, that of its ad hoc working groups on the emblem, the Council of Delegates and the International Conference and that of its task force on the implementation of the Strategy for the Movement, in relation to the Council of Delegates resolutions pertaining thereto.

5. 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

5.1 Adoption of the provisional agenda of the Conference

In conformity with Art. 14.2 (b) of the Statutes of the Movement, the Council of Delegates will adopt the provisional agenda of the Conference.

5.2 Proposals to the Conference of persons to fill the posts of Chairman, Vice-Chairmen, Secretary General, Assistant Secretaries General and other officers of the Conference

In conformity with Art. 14.2 (a) of the Statutes of the Movement, the Council of Delegates will propose to the Conference the persons to fill the posts mentioned in Art. 11 paragraph 3.

5.3 Preparation of substantive issues

- Biotechnology, weapons and humanity

- Emblem (Report on Resolution 6 of the 2001 Council of Delegates)
 - Auxiliary role of the National Societies
- Under this item, the Council will discuss issues of importance to the Movement as a whole, including those mentioned above, which will be dealt with at the 28th International Conference.

6. Strategy for the Movement

6.1 Implementation of the Strategy for the Movement

Report on the implementation of the Strategy for the Movement pursuant to Resolution 3 of the 2001 Council of Delegates.

6.2 Implementation of the Seville Agreement

Report on the implementation of the Seville Agreement pursuant to Resolution 6.5 of the 1997 Council of Delegates.

7. Tolerance, non-discrimination and respect for diversity

An important concern for the Movement as a whole is how to promote tolerance, non-discrimination and respect for diversity.

The discussion will focus on specific action that each component of the Movement can take, in accordance with its specific nature and role, to address this concern and the challenges it poses.

The discussion will take place in three parallel commissions.

8. Follow-up reports

Under this agenda item, members may comment on progress reports regarding the follow-up given to the resolutions of the 2001 Council of Delegates. No introduction planned.

- Movement action in favour of refugees and internally displaced persons (Resolution 4),
- International disaster response law (Resolution 5),
- Explosive remnants of war and the Movement strategy on landmines (Resolution 8),
- Participation of Red Cross and Red Crescent workers in proceedings related to violations of international humanitarian law (Resolution 9),
- Protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict (Resolution 11).

9. Miscellaneous

10. Date and venue of the next Council of Delegates

3.3 COUNCIL OF DELEGATES CHAIRMANSHIP

Chairman:

Mr Jakob Kellenberger (ICRC)

Vice-Chairman:

Mr Hisham Harun Hashim (Malaysian Red Crescent Society)

Secretaries:

Mr Jean-Luc Blondel (ICRC)

Mr Frank Mohrhauer (International Federation)

Commissions on tolerance, non-discrimination and respect for diversity

Commission 1

Chairman:

Ms Bahare Haghshenas (Swedish Red Cross)

Vice-Chairman:

Mr Mostafa Mohaghegh (Iranian Red Crescent Society)

Rapporteur:

Mr Chrystold Chetty (Seychelles Red Cross Society)

Commission 2

Chairman:

Mr Jean Coffi Boko (Red Cross Society of Côte d'Ivoire)

Vice-Chairman:

Ms Pum Chantinié (Cambodian Red Cross Society)

Rapporteur:

Ms Rola Hitti (Lebanese Red Cross Society)

Commission 3

Chairman:

Mr Novruzali Aslanov (Red Crescent Society of Azerbaijan)

Rapporteur:

Ms Fernanda Teixeira (Mozambique Red Cross Society)

3.4 SUMMARY RECORD

3.4.1 FIRST MEETING – OPENING CEREMONY

Sunday, 30 November 2003
7.00 p.m.

Ms Korhonen (Secretary of the Standing Commission) welcomed the participants, who included the members of the Standing Commission. It was a special pleasure to welcome H.R.H. Princess Margriet, Chairman of the Standing Commission.

Address by H.R.H. Princess Margriet, Chairman of the Standing Commission

H.R.H. Princess Margriet of the Netherlands, briefly reviewed the Standing Commission's activities during the eight years of her term of office, in particular regarding the conception, adoption and implementation of the Strategy for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and of the Seville Agreement on the organization of the international activities of the Movement's components. The Standing Commission attached great importance to the question of the emblem and to the solution proposed in the draft third protocol additional to the Geneva Conventions. The Movement was in a unique position to discuss the world's most important humanitarian issues with governments and was potentially the world's essential independent humanitarian force, one that could adapt to a constantly changing environment and rise to meet new challenges while allowing the victims' voices to be heard. She paid special tribute to the volunteers around the globe and called for a minute's silence to honour the Movement's devoted delegates, staff and volunteers who had lost their lives in the line of duty while helping victims and people in need.
(A minute of silence was observed).

H.R.H. declared the Council of Delegates open.

Award of the Henry Dunant Medal

Mrs Christina Magnuson thanked Princess Margriet for her opening address and for her warm tribute to the Movement's volunteers, who provided an example of the power of humanity. The beauty of the Movement lay in that it enabled people to undertake activities together as Red Cross and Red Crescent workers. That was why the Standing Commission recognized outstanding achievements and awarded the Henry Dunant Medal to distinguished members, whether volunteers or staff, who had made a difference through their work and contribution. The medal, the Movement's highest distinction, was given in recognition of outstanding service and acts of great devotion, usually of international significance, to the Movement's cause. The presentation ceremony was a celebration of the humanitarian spirit that prompted the recipients to go beyond the call of duty. She thanked the Australian

Red Cross for financing the production of the medals awarded at the present ceremony.

Mr André Durand

André Durand had joined the ICRC at the height of the Second World War, doing tracing work in connection with prisoners of war. He had subsequently been sent to the Middle East, where he was seriously wounded in 1948; on his recovery he had resumed his mission to assist combatants and victims, and had saved many lives. With inexhaustible enthusiasm, he had dedicated himself to the Movement's ideals and Fundamental Principles for over 20 years, serving in the war-torn countries of south-east Asia. He had sometimes travelled for days on forest paths to reach isolated prisoners who would otherwise have been forgotten and abandoned to their fate. He brought them messages, relief parcels and, most important, hope. He negotiated their release. Many former prisoners owed him their freedom and even their lives. He had retired in 1977 as the ICRC Delegate-General for Asia, after 35 years of service, and devoted his retirement years to writing a history of the ICRC and the Movement. He was immensely learned, yet imbued with personal warmth, passion, perseverance and sincerity.

The Standing Commission had unanimously agreed to award André Durand the Henry Dunant Medal for his personal commitment, his important contribution to the development of humanitarian activities and his work in promoting the Movement's Fundamental Principles and ideals.

Prof Frits Kalshoven

Professor Kalshoven had made an outstanding contribution to the development and promotion of international humanitarian law. He had taught international public law and humanitarian law at Leiden University, and had been legal adviser for international affairs at the Netherlands Red Cross from 1971 to 1993, representing the Society at numerous Movement meetings to which he had contributed his deep knowledge of the law, sound judgement, integrity and considerable negotiating skills. Credited with being one of the driving forces behind the Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions, he had been a member of the International Fact-Finding Commission for more than ten years and its President since 1997. His books had been praised by both academics and humanitarian workers for their insight into humanitarian law issues.

The Standing Commission had unanimously agreed to award Professor Frits Kalshoven the Henry Dunant Medal for his personal commitment and the major contribution he had made to the development and promotion of international humanitarian law.

Ms Noreen Minogue

Noreen Minogue had been a devoted member of the Australian Red Cross since joining as a young volunteer

in 1941. Her administrative skills and dedication had helped her rise to the post of Deputy Secretary General in 1963. She had contributed enormously to the Australian Red Cross's development and had furthered Red Cross ideals in the community. While working in what was then the League's Development Department, Ms Minogue had wholeheartedly promoted the Movement's objectives among numerous sister Societies. In relief operations for war victims, she had proven to be a decisive and effective field worker, one who understood the value of international humanitarian law. Between 1974 and 1997, she had been a member of the Australian Government Delegation to the diplomatic conferences that produced the Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions. Since her retirement, Ms Minogue had continued to contribute to the work of the Australian Red Cross as a volunteer, especially in the field of humanitarian law. Members of the Australian Red Cross looked to her as a role model who put the Movement's values into practice.

The Standing Commission had unanimously agreed to award Noreen Minogue the Henry Dunant Medal for her personal commitment, the major contribution she had made to the development of humanitarian activities, and her work in promoting the Movement's ideals.

Ms Monique Basque

Monique Basque had played a vital role in setting up and developing the Red Cross of Côte d'Ivoire following her country's independence. She had established health centres, kindergartens and primary schools to meet community needs and promoted first-aid training and community health activities in rural areas. Ever an active promoter of the Movement's principles and international humanitarian law, she had been a member of the International Federation's Youth Commission and had worked for the establishment of the Federation's regional delegation in Abidjan. She had also been a founding member of the Association of African French-speaking Red Cross Societies (ACROFA) in 1982. At the League's request, she had been in charge of assistance for Biafran children until the end of the war in Nigeria. As one of the first to realize the danger of HIV/AIDS, she had persuaded her country's president to set up a national AIDS committee to combat the epidemic. Ms Basque had led the Red Cross of Côte d'Ivoire for 40 years, energetically pushing through programmes to deliver her Society's capacity to assist the most vulnerable.

The Standing Commission had unanimously agreed to award Ms Monique Basque the Henry Dunant Medal for her personal commitment and the major contribution she had made to the development of humanitarian activities.

Prof Kalshoven, speaking on behalf of the recipients, expressed their profound gratitude for the honour they had received and their pride at having been awarded such a prestigious medal. He recalled the 50th anniversary celebrations for the Geneva Conventions, at which many speakers had referred to the rising tide of

disrespect for the Conventions and international humanitarian law in general. Armed conflicts had already then become the scene of horrific crimes, yet worse was still to come, such as the use of civilian aircraft in the attacks on 11 September 2001. Extremists now resorted to systematic attacks against civilians and other protected persons, such as at United Nations headquarters in Baghdad, and against religious buildings such as synagogues in Istanbul.

The attack on the ICRC office in Baghdad had been intended to strike at the ICRC itself, the vehicle used to deliver the bomb being an ambulance marked with the red crescent emblem. Ambulances used to transport the wounded had once had no protection and were regularly attacked by the enemy. The initial Geneva Convention of 1864, inspired by Henry Dunant, had provided for the protection of ambulances and their personnel, and had introduced the red cross on a white ground as a distinctive emblem. In Lebanon in the 1970s and 1980s, for example, National Society ambulances bearing the emblem could move about unhampered, whether they were marked with the red cross, the red crescent or indeed the red shield of David. The recent spate of violence against ICRC delegates and National Society personnel amounted, it was to be hoped, to no more than isolated incidents, but the attack on the ICRC was of a different order. It betrayed an utter disregard for the values and principles the organization stood for, not least the principle of neutrality. It was literally a crime against humanity. He hoped the ICRC would show its usual resilience in the face of such setbacks.

Although National Societies were subject to different influences in their respective environments, they were united not only by their membership of the International Federation but also, at a deeper level, by their shared values. At a critical juncture such as the present, with international society in turmoil, the Movement's principles, and the need for all members to respect them, were all the more important. The theme of the 27th International Conference had been "The power of humanity", but it was now the vulnerability of humanity that was increasingly evident. It was to be hoped that humanity, the most basic of the Movement's Fundamental Principles, would prevail.

The opening ceremony concluded at 20.05 p.m.

3.4.2 SECOND MEETING

Monday, 1 December 2003
9.00 a.m.

Elections, agenda and procedural matters

Item 1 of the agenda

Opening of the 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, welcomed the

delegates, especially the new members: the Cook Islands Red Cross Society, the Kazakh Red Crescent Society and the Micronesia Red Cross.

The opening day of the Council of Delegates was World AIDS Day. It was important to mark that day, for the fight against AIDS presented a mounting challenge for the Movement, and was thus an important issue for the International Conference. The next day and a half would be spent preparing the International Conference, a unique forum in which to engage governments about the Movement's concern for humanity and to agree on how to protect human dignity in the coming years.

The Report on the Implementation of the Strategy for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (document CD 2003 6.1/1) showed that more needed to be done to transform the Council of Delegates into the Movement's highest deliberative body. It suggested that the Strategy could be the basis for future Council agendas. The Council of Delegates also provided the Movement with an opportunity to assess how well the Seville Agreement worked in practice. The Movement had to follow clear principles and rules to be effective and united in action. That issue would certainly benefit from open and participatory dialogue.

The Council was in charge of drawing up the agenda of the International Conference, of proposing the Conference officers and of preparing the Movement's position on the substantive issues the Conference would deliberate. When meeting with governments, it was of paramount importance to speak with one voice on issues such as the emblem. In conclusion, she urged the delegates to participate actively in the commissions and especially in the Drafting Committee, which would finalize the Conference documents.

Item 2 of the agenda Election of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretaries of the Council of Delegates

H.R.H. Princess Margriet of the Netherlands, Chairman of the Standing Commission, proposed that, in keeping with tradition, the Council elect as its Chairman the President of the ICRC, Mr Jakob Kellenberger. She further proposed that Mr Hisham Harun Hashim, Deputy National Chairman of the Malaysia Red Crescent, be elected as Vice-Chairman, and that Mr Jean-Luc Blondel of the ICRC and Mr Frank Mohrhauer of the International Federation be elected as Secretaries.

It was so decided.

Mr Kellenberger took the chair and thanked Princess Margriet for her commitment as the Chairman of the Standing Commission and welcomed all participants to the Council.

Item 3 of the agenda Adoption of the Agenda

The **Chairman** invited the participants to adopt the draft agenda for the 2003 Council of Delegates.

The draft agenda was adopted.

Substantive items

Item 4 of the agenda Work of the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (document CD 2003 4/1)

H.R.H. Princess Margriet of the Netherlands, Chairman of the Standing Commission, introduced the Report of the Standing Commission to the 2003 Council of Delegates (document CD 2003 4/1) and draft resolution 1 on the work of the Standing Commission. She was convinced that the Standing Commission had a role to play in promoting the harmony of the Movement, notably through its preparations for the Council of Delegates. The Council provided an opportunity to discuss and agree on issues and operational methods of concern to all. Although the members shared the same principles, they were also different. The Movement's Statutes and mechanisms such as the Seville Agreement provided the means for resolving the misunderstandings and easing the tension that sometimes arose as a result. Harmony was more than just the absence of conflict, it implied constructive cooperation to find the most appropriate solutions for the people the Movement served.

In 2001, the Council of Delegates had asked the Commission to work in four specific areas: (1) to continue to search for a comprehensive and lasting solution to the question of the emblem; (2) to follow up on the implementation of the Strategy for the Movement and the Seville Agreement; (3) to prepare the 2003 Council of Delegates; and (4) to prepare the 28th International Conference. The work of the Standing Commission had been tremendously enriched by the expertise provided by the National Societies and the staff of the ICRC and the International Federation.

For the 28th International Conference, the Standing Commission had decided to build on the structure adopted at the previous Conference in 1999, and to introduce crucial humanitarian issues which required the full cooperation of States. The Declaration and Agenda for Humanitarian Action remained open to negotiation, and she looked forward to fruitful dialogue in the Council of Delegates. The Movement must keep an independent space for its work and its members ensure respect for their perspective as humanitarian practitioners.

Regarding the emblem, there was a sound basis for a solution. It was up to governments to conclude the negotiations and adopt the draft third protocol. She

hoped that the process would continue as soon as circumstances allowed.

She thanked the working groups for their contribution to the Movement, the ICRC and the International Federation for their support in the form of financial and human resources and the National Societies for their voluntary contributions to the budget.

During the previous four years, the Standing Commission had focused on working as a Movement, promoting harmony and cooperation, in line with Article 18 of the Movement's Statutes. That was a never-ending task. She emphasized the need to strengthen and implement the Strategy for the Movement and the Seville Agreement. The National Societies had to participate more actively in Movement matters, which was why, for example, the Standing Commission had used regional meetings to share information. Those meetings had also enhanced the Standing Commission's knowledge about National Society ideas, concerns and challenges. She encouraged the next Standing Commission to continue that dialogue, which lent legitimacy to its work.

Favourable comments had been received on the new arrangements for elections to the Standing Commission, which had been adopted to ensure fair geographical representation. In reply to inquiries from governments and National Societies, she said that there was no "selection committee", a matter which she suggested that the next Commission should give further consideration to. It might also wish to consider the term of office of elected members since there were no rules on the rotation of members. New people and fresh inputs were as important as continuity.

Mr De Graaf (Netherlands Red Cross) commended the Standing Commission for its transparency and for having involved the National Societies in the deliberation of essential Movement issues. That gave the final decisions taken added legitimacy.

Mr Layoun (Lebanese Red Cross) suggested that the National Societies should help choose the members of the Standing Commission working groups, as they had sufficient capacity to participate in such groups.

Dr Al-Swailem (Saudi Arabian Red Crescent Society) had hoped that the repeated violations of international humanitarian law in Afghanistan and Iraq, including the attacks on the ICRC, the treatment of prisoners and the use of banned weapons would be mentioned.

Ms Davidson (Canadian Red Cross Society) commended the Standing Commission for the comprehensive explanation of its role and especially for making suggestions for the future Commission.

Mr Mboumoua (Cameroon Red Cross Society) hoped that the Standing Commission would ensure that all parties were represented on the Commission, which was not at present the case. He also wished con-

sideration to be given to the process for selecting working group members.

Mr Sharma (Nepal Red Cross Society) stressed that since the Seville Agreement the members of the Movement had been trying to work closely and together. He encouraged the Movement to work as a much more strongly coordinated mechanism.

Mr Bugnion (ICRC) commended the Standing Commission on the performance of its mandate, highlighting the implementation of the Strategy for the Movement, the work on the emblem and the preparation of statutory meetings.

H.R.H. Princess Margriet of the Netherlands, Chairman of the Standing Commission, said that the criteria for selecting the members of the working groups were experience and geographical balance. The new Commission might seek to make the process more transparent.

The **Chairman** invited the participants to adopt draft resolution 1.

Resolution 1 was adopted by acclamation.

Item 5 of the agenda 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

Item 5.1 Adoption of the provisional agenda of the Conference (document CD 2003 5.1/1 Rev.2)

The **Chairman**, introducing document CD 2003 5.1/1 Rev.2 and draft resolution 2, said that the aim of the 28th International Conference was to mobilize as many forces as possible to protect human dignity. The basic structure was the debate on contemporary humanitarian challenges and protecting human dignity, and the outcome the draft Declaration and Agenda for Humanitarian Action. The themes pertaining thereto would be covered in two commissions.

Dr Al-Hadid (Vice-Chairman of the Standing Commission) recalled that Article 14.2(b) of the Movement's Statutes required the Council of Delegates to adopt the provisional agenda of the Conference. The first draft provisional agenda sent with the letter of convocation on 30 May 2003 had included an item on amendments to the Movement's Statutes and Rules of Procedure. It had been clear from consultations with the National Societies and governments that the adoption of those amendments would depend on whether a diplomatic conference was convened on the issue of the emblem. At the preparatory meeting held in Geneva on 10 September 2003, the Standing Commission had decided to withdraw that item from the agenda when it met on 27 November 2003 if the diplomatic conference had not taken place by that date. In line with that decision, the item had been included in the provisional draft agenda mailed with other conference documents on 15 October

2003, but the Standing Commission had decided at its meeting on 27 November 2003 to advise the Council of Delegates to withdraw the item from the agenda of the Conference. The revised draft provisional agenda, document CD 2003 5.1/1 rev.2, had been distributed that morning.

The **Chairman** invited the participants to adopt draft resolution 2 on the provisional agenda and programme of the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

Resolution 2 was adopted by acclamation.

Item 5.2

Proposal of persons to fill the posts of Chairman, Vice-Chairmen, Secretary General, Assistant Secretaries General and other officers of the Conference (document CD 2003 5.2/1 Rev. 1)

Dr Al-Hadid (Vice-Chairman of the Standing Commission) introduced document CD 2003 5.2/1 Rev. 1 and draft resolution 3, and said that Article 14.2 (a) of the Movement's Statutes required the Council of Delegates to propose to the Conference the persons to fill the posts of Chairman, Vice-Chairmen, Secretary General, Assistant Secretaries General and other officers of the Conference (Article 11, paragraph 3). In preparing the proposal, the Standing Commission had carefully considered the personal qualifications of the candidates and had taken care to strike a balance between National Societies and governments, Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, genders and geographical regions.

The **Chairman** invited the participants to adopt draft resolution 3.

Resolution 3 was adopted by acclamation.¹

Item 5.3

Preparation of substantive issues

■ **Biotechnology, weapons and humanity (document CD 2003 5.3/1)**

Mr Sandoz (ICRC) introduced draft resolution 4, on biotechnology, weapons and humanity. Advances in the field of the life sciences could deliver benefits to humanity, but the same advances also presented a growing potential for hostile misuse. Better understanding of and the ability to manipulate basic life processes would make biological weapons cheaper, more effective, more difficult to detect and so increasingly attractive to those with hostile intent.

The ICRC was deeply concerned by the difficulties the international community had encountered in the last decade in responding effectively to the potential threat such advances posed. Negotiations on a protocol to improve compliance with the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention, for instance, had collapsed in 2001.

While it was first and foremost up to States to prevent the use of such weapons, society at all levels also had a responsibility to reduce the risk that the life sciences would be put to hostile use. The Movement, too, had to shoulder some of that responsibility as part of its mission to relieve human suffering and protect human dignity. The ICRC had launched a fresh public appeal in 2002 on "Biotechnology, Weapons and Humanity", urging governments, the scientific and medical communities, industry and civil society to take practical, urgent steps to prevent biological agents being used for hostile purposes. Those steps included a ministerial-level declaration. The adoption by the Movement of a common position on biotechnology, weapons and humanity would send an important message to the 28th International Conference, as the subject was already included in the Agenda on Humanitarian Action.

The **Chairman** invited the participants to adopt draft resolution 4.

Resolution 4 was adopted by acclamation.

■ **Emblem (Report on Resolution 6 of the 2001 Council of Delegates) (document CD 2003 5.3/2)**

Mrs Magnuson (Member of the Standing Commission, Chairman of the Joint Working Group on the Emblem), introducing document CD 2003 5.3/2 and draft resolution 5, said that the challenge had been to find a solution that, while not leading to a proliferation of emblems, overcame the difficulties the National Societies faced with the existing emblems. It had required a thorough analysis of the issue, conducted with creativity and diplomacy, to produce proposals that satisfied the Movement's principles, its Statutes and humanitarian law. The solution had to be acceptable not only to the Movement but also to the States party to the Geneva Conventions. Consultations with the governments and National Societies had led to the conclusion that the only widely acceptable solution was to propose the adoption of a third protocol additional to the 1949 Geneva Conventions that would establish an additional protective emblem that was free of national, political and religious connotations and designed in such a way that the National Societies using it could insert a symbol they already used. Following intensive consultations with governments and interested parties, a draft third protocol had been drawn up as a sound working basis for negotiation at a diplomatic conference to take place in Geneva on 25-26 October 2000. Unfortunately, the diplomatic conference had had to be postponed because of events in the Middle East. The draft third protocol, however, had not been called into question. Indeed, it had received broad support from the international community for making provision for a symbol that could prove useful in certain circumstances without calling into question the continued use of the existing emblems or of National

1. During its Fourth Meeting, the Council of Delegates was informed that Lt General Khan (Pakistan Red Crescent Society) had stepped down as Vice-Chairman of the International Conference and would be replaced by Mr Hisham Harun Hashim (Malaysian Red Crescent Society).

Society names. She hoped that the Council of Delegates would send a strong message about the way the issue could and should be handled. No one disputed that the objectives of the draft protocol were sound and that its adoption would ensure that the Fundamental Principle of universality was honoured. Cooperation with the National Societies seeking recognition and admission once the emblem issue had been resolved had grown tremendously. She was particularly happy to extend a warm welcome to the representatives of those Societies at the Council of Delegates.

Considerable progress had been made since the 27th International Conference, and the continuing grave circumstances in the Middle East made it all the more urgent to pursue the dialogue with the States in order to find a solution to the emblem issue. The growing disrespect for the existing emblems was another reason for finding a harmonious solution to the benefit of all. It was up to each member of the Movement to work tirelessly towards that goal, not only for the sake of universality, but also to strengthen the Movement's foundations and moral authority.

Major General Khan (Bangladesh Red Crescent Society) had experienced many cases of misuse of the emblem in conflict situations and for economic or other advantages. The result was to deny the victims the protection of the emblem in conflict situations, because combatants made no distinction between the emblem when used properly and when it was misused. In peacetime, for example, doctors and pharmacists in his country used the emblem to suggest an accreditation which they did not enjoy. His Society was negotiating with the professional bodies concerned to try to end the misuse, but with limited success. The Government was being urged to stiffen the existing legal penalties for misuse of the emblem. In general, governments, National Societies and the International Federation should take measures to publicize and prevent misuse.

Mr Mboumoua (Cameroon Red Cross Society), while commending the Standing Commission for its work in connection with the emblem, considered its optimism somewhat premature, given the difficulties encountered in convening the diplomatic conference to adopt the third protocol.

Mr Layoun (Lebanese Red Cross) applauded the efforts made to find a solution to the emblem issue. Referring to the different emblems considered for the third protocol, he expressed reservations about the choice of an emblem that might not have the humanitarian connotations of the red cross and red crescent emblems.

Dr Milton (Swedish Red Cross) disagreed, because the emblem proposed in the third protocol was totally neutral and had no religious, political, cultural or ethnic connotations. To encourage the governments to act, the Movement must stand united behind the draft additional third protocol. The Movement had a duty to allow all National Societies that met its criteria to participate under a neutral emblem.

Ms Makabelo Mosothoane (Lesotho Red Cross Society) stressed the importance of avoiding misuse of the emblem in partnerships with other agencies. States should be encouraged to guarantee protection of the emblem so that it could be safely used.

Mr Taumoeofolau (Tonga Red Cross Society) suggested that the Red Cross might in future be called the "Red Plus".

Dr Attar (Syrian Arab Red Crescent) spoke about the problem of lack of respect for the emblem. For example, ambulances marked with the emblem were not respected, in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Mr Ijewere (Nigerian Red Cross Society), while recognizing that some National Societies had difficulties with the existing emblems, said that the proliferation of emblems was a threat to the unity of the Movement, especially in operational situations. It could also encourage misuse, despite the existence of legislation to the contrary. Further broad consultation with the National Societies was necessary before a final decision was taken.

Mr Forster (ICRC) said that the third protocol offered a solution in the form of a simple, easily recognizable emblem without any religious, political or cultural connotations. Although no decision had as yet been taken, the term "red crystal" was gaining acceptance. Unfortunately, present circumstances precluded the completion of the process. The ICRC was nevertheless determined to keep the issue on the agenda and to work to reach a global and sustainable solution based on the third protocol.

Mr Rutaremara (Rwandan Red Cross) deplored the fact that the Movement, as a humanitarian organization, was mired in an endless debate about the emblem, to the detriment of people who were suffering. Those people were not interested in the emblem or what it was called – they wanted action. If no consensus could be reached on the issue, why not use a majority vote? The entire international community should not be taken hostage by a few people who had failed to reach an understanding amongst themselves.

Dr Al-Tuwaijri (Saudi Arabian Red Crescent Society) endorsed the third protocol and the recognition of the Movement's universality. It had been suggested that the proposed new emblem could be used by the Movement's components when necessary, without defining what was meant by "necessary". Leaving the protocol in government hands would allow others to determine the fate of the Movement. Why, he wondered, had the dialogue on the third protocol been interrupted, and why was so much importance attached to the diplomatic dimension? The dialogue within the Movement should continue.

Dr Aziz (Trinidad and Tobago Red Cross Society) said that in some countries, the colour red was not considered acceptable. In his country, objections to the

use of the cross were being raised by non-Christians, who saw it as a Christian symbol. Rather than creating more symbols, should not the Movement seek one single emblem without any political, religious or other connotations for use by all, such as a globe to encompass the entire universe?

Dr Sramany (Lao Red Cross) agreed. The globe was both inclusive and exclusive: inclusive, because it included all the peoples of the world; exclusive from the perspective of the Movement's humanitarian principles, and thus a proper symbol for the Movement.

Mr Niskala (International Federation) said that the emblem was one of the most important and complex issues facing the Movement in terms of both protection and universality. The International Federation had been working closely, within the Standing Commission, with the ICRC and the National Societies and governments most concerned. Draft resolution 5 represented a further if limited step forward in the process. Formal negotiations could not start before circumstances permitted.

Mrs O'Brien (New Zealand Red Cross) said that there seemed to be some confusion as to what exactly the design of the additional emblem was.

Mr Barnes (Canadian Red Cross Society) said that the Movement already had two symbols to reflect the needs of different members. Adding a third symbol carrying no political, religious or ethnic connotations did not put the Movement at risk, nor would it weaken the protective value of the other two symbols. He supported the recommendations of the Joint Working Group on the Emblem.

Mrs Magnuson (Chairman of the Joint Working Group on the Emblem) reiterated the importance of the emblem issue. Alluding to comments on the misuse of and lack of respect for the emblem, she said that everyone had an ongoing responsibility to bring such incidents to the attention of their National Society and to inform the public at large what the symbols meant and why they must not be misused. The ICRC could provide draft legislation on the use of the emblem for economic purposes and could help follow up the issue. In reply to a question from Ms Quezon (Philippines National Red Cross), she said that the third protocol could be signed by any State party to the Geneva Conventions without any obligation to ratify Protocols I and II. Lastly, the dialogue within the Movement and with governments would continue until a diplomatic conference was held on the third protocol. It was up to the National Societies to continue consulting their respective governments about their particular concerns.

The **Chairman** invited the participants to adopt draft resolution 5 on the follow-up to Resolution 6 of the 2001 Council of Delegates.

Resolution 5 was adopted by acclamation.

■ Auxiliary role of the National Societies (document CD 2003 – 5.3/3)

Ms Essack-Kauaria (Namibia Red Cross), introducing draft resolution 6 on behalf of the International Federation, recalled that the 27th International Conference and the Strategy for the Movement had called for an in-depth study into the working relationship between States and National Societies. To that end, the International Federation had examined existing legal provisions and interviewed National Society, International Federation and ICRC leaders. A draft of the study had been circulated to National Societies for comment.

The study looked at how the environment for humanitarian action and the concept of auxiliary status had evolved, from auxiliary to the medical services of the armed forces to the wider concept of auxiliary to governmental humanitarian services. The concept was universal, but there was no common understanding of it, and the partners' expectations varied. However, the Movement's Statutes and international humanitarian law recognized the specific status of National Societies as different from that of other international organizations.

Although a number of texts already provided guidance on the relationship between a State and a National Society – the Fundamental Principles, the conditions for recognition of National Societies, the "Guidance for National Society Statutes", and the "Characteristics of a Well-Functioning National Society" – additional guidance would be valuable.

While bearing in mind the wide range of contexts in which National Societies acted and the need for the relationship to be able to evolve, it was useful to identify the characteristics of a balanced relationship between the two. The proposed characteristics covered: (1) the importance of dialogue and mutual respect; (2) respect for the fact that the National Societies' work in such partnerships had to be guided by the Fundamental Principles; (3) specific points relating to the partnership in armed conflict; and (4) an enabling environment for the work of the National Society and guidance where the integrity of the National Society was in jeopardy.

Mr Konoe (Japanese Red Cross Society) said that a National Society's relationship with its government was of major significance to both. Recently, however, armed forces and United Nations agencies had been playing a growing role in humanitarian assistance, often giving it a strong political overtone. That raised the issue of whether National Societies could hold firm to the Fundamental Principles of neutrality, independence and impartiality while maintaining cooperative relationships with governments. Where governments sent forces abroad, albeit in the context of United Nations peace-keeping operations, the role of National Societies was not always clear. He therefore proposed that where a National Society was operating internationally, it should maintain a certain distance from its country's armed forces, to avoid misunderstandings about its neutrality. The conclusions of the study were

framed in terms that were too general and lacked the necessary urgency. He therefore urged further prompt in-depth consideration of the issue by the International Federation and the ICRC. Finally, he proposed that the last paragraph of draft resolution 6 be amended to read "invites the International Federation to keep National Societies informed regularly of progress made with the study and to propose concrete guidelines for adoption at the Council of Delegates in 2005 and at the International Conference in 2007".

Dr Milton (Swedish Red Cross) welcomed the study's emphasis on a balanced relationship with governments, which was new, and the holistic approach to the issue. In a changing society with new challenges, National Societies constantly had to reassess their independence and their auxiliary role in order to maintain a well-balanced relationship with the public authorities.

Mr Aziz (Trinidad and Tobago Red Cross Society) said that National Societies sometimes had to take a lead role, even when they were working in cooperation with State agencies. He seconded the amendment proposed by the delegate of the Japanese Red Cross Society.

Mr Ijewere (Nigerian Red Cross Society) commended the innovative and proactive work done by the International Federation. The inclusion of National Society statutes in national legislation was a difficult and complex issue. The Red Cross built close links with governments while maintaining its independence. It was not an NGO but an auxiliary to the government.

Prof McClure (British Red Cross) pointed out that if the National Societies had not been granted an auxiliary role it was unlikely that there would be an international conference. The study was therefore timely. Further consideration was needed, however, of how a National Society could assist its government so that the relationship was genuinely symbiotic. The study concentrated on areas of difficulty. Emphasis should be given to positive aspects. National Societies should be encouraged to use their auxiliary role to set themselves apart from other organizations such as NGOs. The question of relations with armed forces might be more usefully dealt with in the discussion on the Strategy for the Movement.

Mrs Johnson (Canadian Red Cross Society) concurred with the representative of the Japanese Red Cross Society on the urgent need for further clarification of the auxiliary role to governments. In an environment of increased competition, governments often acted as if they did not understand the special legal status of the Red Cross. Efforts must be made to educate governments and the public about that role.

Mr Agaya (Gabonese Red Cross Society) agreed that it must be impressed on governments that the National Societies were not NGOs. He supported the amendment proposed by the Japanese Red Cross Society.

Ms Guisan (ICRC) said the study was an important step towards understanding the National Society relationship with governments. In the case of armed conflict, it was essential that the auxiliary role should be compatible with the principles of impartiality, independence and neutrality, which alone could ensure effective action. National Societies operating outside their own country were governed by Article 26 of the First Geneva Convention, which must be strictly respected. Where the National Society was not acting as an auxiliary to its government's armed forces, it must operate in accordance with the Movement's Statutes and with the Seville Agreement, in partnership with the Movement's other components. She hoped that the study and the related resolution would lay the groundwork for an in-depth discussion leading to a sound partnership that respected the Movement's principles.

Mr Graf von Waldburg-Zeil (German Red Cross) said that the auxiliary role of the Red Cross must be clarified, since it seemed to be increasingly challenged by governments, at least in international operations, in some cases giving rise to conflict with the Seville Agreement.

Lt General Khan (Pakistan Red Crescent Society), whose view was endorsed by Major General Khan (Bangladesh Red Crescent Society), said that the guidelines submitted to the 2005 Council of Delegates should be flexible to take account of differing conditions at national level.

Mr Pesmazoglu (Hellenic Red Cross) stressed the concept of partnership between the National Society and its government. The restrictions on relationships with the armed forces in times of conflict were wholly legitimate, although it might be difficult in practice to draw a line between acts which were strictly humanitarian and those which were not. Another issue was the permissible relationship between a National Society and the Movement as a whole, on the one hand, and a totalitarian regime, on the other. The study made no reference to peacekeeping operations.

Ms Essack-Kauaria (Namibia Red Cross), speaking for the International Federation, said that draft resolution 6 was not intended to bind every National Society as to the characteristics of its relationship with government, nor to restrict its operations at national level. Once a State signed the Geneva Conventions, it enacted legislation establishing the National Society. In most National Societies, however, the Society's statutes were amended by their assemblies with the guidance of the International Federation and the ICRC. There was nothing to prevent the National Society from then taking the statutes to the country's parliament. Draft resolution 6 referred to international organizations in order to encompass partnerships such as those with UNHCR, UNAIDS and WHO.

The **Chairman** proposed that Resolution 6, as amended, be adopted.

Resolution 6, as amended, was adopted by acclamation.

Item 7 of the agenda**Tolerance, non-discrimination and respect for diversity**

The **Chairman** invited the Council to appoint the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur of each of the three commissions, as follows:

Commission 1

<i>Chairman</i>	Ms Bahare Haghshenas (Swedish Red Cross)
<i>Vice-Chairman</i>	Dr Mostafa Mohaghegh (Red Crescent Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran)
<i>Rapporteur</i>	Mr Chrystold Chetty (Seychelles Red Cross Society)

Commission 2

<i>Chairman</i>	Mr Jean Coffi Boko (Red Cross Society of Côte d'Ivoire)
<i>Vice-Chairman</i>	Ms Pum Chantini (Cambodian Red Cross Society)
<i>Rapporteur</i>	Ms Rola Hitti (Lebanese Red Cross)

Commission 3

<i>Chairman</i>	Mr Novruzali Aslanov (Red Crescent Society of Azerbaijan)
<i>Rapporteur</i>	Ms Fernanda Teixeira (Mozambique Red Cross Society)

Note: The work of the Commissions is introduced at the end of the Third Meeting (3.4.3) hereunder. The "Consolidated report of the Commissions on tolerance, non-discrimination and respect for diversity" (3.4.5 Annex) is presented at the beginning of the Fourth Meeting (3.4.4).

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.

3.4.3 THIRD MEETING

Monday, 1 December 2003

2.00 p.m.

Substantive items *(continued)***Item 6 of the agenda****Strategy for the Movement****Item 6.1****Implementation of the Strategy for the Movement (document CD 2003 – 6.1/1)**

H.R.H. Princess Margriet of the Netherlands, Chairman of the Standing Commission, introduced document CD 2003 – 6.1/1 and draft resolution 7, saying that since the adoption of the Strategy for the Movement, the National Societies, the ICRC and the International Federation had made considerable progress in integrating it into their respective plans and strategies. The Standing Commission had appointed a task force of experts to answer two key questions: (1) whether the Movement was on track with the implementation of the

Strategy; and (2) whether the Movement's components considered the Strategy relevant to interaction in the Movement. To answer those questions, the task force had conducted an external review, with internal monitoring reports by the National Societies, the ICRC and the International Federation.

By the end of 2002, the governing bodies of the National Societies, the International Federation and the ICRC had largely fulfilled the requirement to examine the Strategy and implement the actions it contained: 81 National Societies had responded to a survey on the matter, a remarkable response rate of nearly 50 per cent. Of those, 83 per cent reported taking specific measures to implement the Strategy. Half of the Societies viewed a Movement-wide approach to capacity-building to be of primary importance. High priority was also given to promoting joint planning, budgeting and evaluation of cooperation activities in a given region. The meaning of capacity-building nevertheless required clarification in order to target the needs for support more accurately.

The working environment posed a growing challenge, with many different players delivering humanitarian services. In times of conflict and in peace, integrity was a crucial issue. Humanitarian practitioners had to provide assistance in an independent, neutral and impartial way, while remaining accountable to the stakeholders for the efficient use of the resources provided. The National Societies showed a broad awareness of the importance of integrity. A quarter had had to deal with issues of integrity in the recent past and most had resolved them. The Movement's credibility depended not only on the efficiency of its work but also on its keeping its own house in order. The review conceded that integrity required the Movement's components to work constantly to safeguard the Fundamental Principles and their public image.

The review had found that measures had been taken to increase cooperation, in line with the second objective of the Strategy. Indeed, that was the area which had seen the greatest progress in the previous sixteen months, in connection with contingency planning and emergency operations. Nevertheless, more needed to be done to promote smoother cooperation, especially in joint international activities. Harmonization of systems and procedures needed to be more actively pursued.

Some of the actions for attaining the third objective, improving the Movement's image and its relations with governments and external partners, had been implemented while others were in progress. The International Federation and the ICRC, in consultation with a number of National Societies, had developed draft ethical guidelines for selecting and dealing with commercial companies. The goal was to adopt the guidelines at the 2005 Council of Delegates following consultation with the National Societies.

New approaches were needed to strengthen the image of the Movement as one. There was a gap between the perception of the Red Cross and Red Crescent as an

entity and the reality of the complex Movement structure. The review had found that there was at present no pervasive sense that individuals in the National Societies, the ICRC and the International Federation shared a sense of being part of the Movement over and above their allegiance to their employing organization, suggesting that continued efforts had to be made to emphasize that together those individuals constituted the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and had to present an image of unity to the outside world. United, they could better serve the vulnerable and those in need.

The review concluded that the Strategy was seen to be a widely relevant tool for achieving the objectives established.

Prof Adugna (Ethiopian Red Cross Society), observing that integrity was crucial in maintaining credibility as a government auxiliary, said that a schedule should be set for the “more probing debate” called for in Recommendation 5. Secondly, he wondered how the recommendation on cooperation with the military in mine clearance and promoting a higher minimum age for military service was to be implemented in practice. Recommendation 12 could be implemented in relation to displaced persons, for example if the ICRC engaged closely with National Societies. However, there was no systemic way of working together – when cooperation was successful, it was thanks to the goodwill of particular individuals. Finally, the Seville Agreement, the ICRC *Avenir* Plan, the International Federation’s Strategy 2010 and the Plan of Action of the 27th International Conference were fine as declarations, but he wondered how the Movement could work together in practice.

Mrs Gräfin zu Eulenburg (German Red Cross) said that the Strategy was timely, but that the actions it called for were ambitious and demanding on the Movement’s components. She was convinced that the Movement needed a common and comprehensive strategy to improve cooperation and individual performance. Despite the progress to date, efforts remained to be made to implement the Strategy in all areas of work.

Ms Kiuru (Finnish Red Cross) recognized the Strategy as a great achievement that allowed the Movement to fulfil its mission. It was encouraging that cooperation in capacity-building had improved, but she strongly supported the recommendation that the concept be clarified. Capacity-building had been split into too many activities and that had created confusion – a more holistic approach was required. Issues of integrity should be given high priority. Noting the minimum standards being developed by the ICRC for recognition of National Societies, she suggested that a single set of standards be developed that were applicable to the entire Movement.

Dr Milton (Swedish Red Cross) stressed the importance of a gender perspective in capacity-building. The National Societies, the International Federation and the ICRC needed to cooperate in order to harmonize

advocacy work and draw maximum benefit from scarce resources. In the eyes of most National Society members, the Red Cross/Red Crescent was one Movement and should therefore act as one.

Mr Store (Norwegian Red Cross) agreed, saying that the Strategy was on the right track and relevant. There was no reason the Red Cross/Red Crescent could not share a single disaster-response system and have one delegation working with the host Society and assisting in the coordination of international activities and support services. Unity must include unity in action.

Mr Roethlisberger (ICRC) welcomed the emphasis on complementarity, mutual respect, dialogue and cooperation in the Movement, whose components had their own specific mandates linked by a common mission and shared vision. The ICRC had striven to implement the measures required by the Strategy with a view to helping the Movement meet the growing challenges it faced. It would continue to support implementation of the Strategy, which should be updated but not fundamentally rewritten.

Dr Mohagheh (Red Crescent Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran) said that National Society capacity-building was crucial to building the capacity of the Movement as a whole. The concept should be expanded to include the National Societies in all aspects of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. New indicators should be developed to measure National Society involvement in the Movement, thereby allowing better use of National Society resources in the Movement’s service.

Dr Duplessis (Canadian Red Cross Society), referring to Recommendation 4, said that the National Societies of the North could and should benefit from the unique expertise available in the ICRC and the International Federation.

Mr Niskala (International Federation) said that Movement cooperation was very important. The Strategy for the Movement complemented the Federation’s Strategy 2010. Its strength was to combine high-level goals with specific tasks. The International Federation had taken steps to implement actions for which it was the designated leader. It had also used the self-assessment process to allow National Societies to report on their implementation of the Strategy. He was committed to further strengthening cooperation in order to enhance services and save costs where possible.

H.R.H. Princess Margriet of the Netherlands (Chairman of the Standing Commission) said that the comments made would be noted for follow-up, in particular the need to clarify the meaning of capacity-building.

Mr Davey (International Federation) said that the International Federation would follow up the comments made on issues of integrity, the need to clarify the concept of capacity-building and harmonization in the field. Indeed, the Federation Secretariat had

created a post for the specific purpose of strengthening Movement cooperation.

Ms Gussing-Sapina (ICRC) added that systems and procedures were being harmonized in a process that covered several areas of work in the field. The International Federation website already mentioned standard items for relief operations and medical equipment, for example. The concerns of the Ethiopian Red Cross could be met through training and by instilling the spirit of the Seville Agreement in all staff and volunteers.

The **Chairman** invited the participants to adopt draft resolution 7.

Resolution 7 was adopted by acclamation.

Item 6.2

Implementation of the Seville Agreement (document CD 2003 – 6.2/1)

Mr Gullet (International Federation), introducing document CD 2003 – 6.2/1 and draft resolution 8, said that there had been greater effective operational cooperation under the Agreement. A large-scale operation had been conducted in Kosovo, where efforts had been made to launch a joint appeal. In Iraq, the International Federation had worked closely with the region's National Societies, the United Nations and the donor community, holding regular briefings and consultations with National Societies from within the region and outside and with the ICRC. There had been increased cooperation on relief, procurement, telecommunications and in disaster management. The Seville Agreement did not provide answers to all the practical issues, which could nevertheless be resolved with goodwill. At times, operational problems arose because the Movement's components had different expectations. Different management styles also had to be reconciled, and efforts were being made in that direction on a case-by-case basis. Another major issue was the pressure for individual visibility, for individual National Societies to have a clear identity and well-defined roles and responsibilities. Better leadership was also required from the lead agency in a given situation.

Mr Kraehenbuhl (ICRC) said that no agreement could cover every eventuality. The important thing was to examine recurrent difficulties systematically. The main problems seemed to arise in high visibility contexts, such as Kosovo and Iraq, where a coordinating framework had to be established in a delicate security environment. The concerns of some National Societies about their involvement in the Iraq operation had been noted. Operational problems had arisen because some National Societies had opted to work outside the coordinating framework. However, many operations around the world, albeit not so large and perhaps more manageable, had worked satisfactorily. The visibility concerns of all the Movement's components must be addressed without placing too heavy a burden on the conduct of a given operation. Sometimes the fact that numerous components of the Movement were directly present on the ground added enormously to the

complexity of an operation. Determination to apply the Agreement in full was also lacking. The concept of lead role, as opposed to lead agency, was still underutilized. The Agreement had generally worked well, but needed to be complemented by terms and procedures, especially regarding the work of National Societies in a given operation. Coordination mechanisms and decision-making also needed specific attention. Leadership should not be confined to control and coordination, but should also comprise guiding the team in an organized and coherent manner. The role of lead agency was a responsibility and not a privilege, and members of the team had to accept the leadership provided and act consistently and responsibly.

Dr Jalloh (Sierra Leone Red Cross Society) said that the Seville Agreement needed to be reviewed in the context of both conflict and post-conflict situations. In his country, cooperation during the conflict period had extended into the post-conflict period. He was pleased that some of the grey areas had been identified and would be addressed, and expressed support for draft resolution 8.

Mr Graf von Waldburg-Zeil (German Red Cross) welcomed the establishment of a working group to review the operations conducted within the framework of the Agreement.

Mr Bruel (Spanish Red Cross) welcomed draft resolution 8, which would allow the Standing Commission to evaluate the Seville Agreement, but questioned the repeated references to the obligation to comply with rules and procedures, which gave the impression that compliance was open to doubt. The implementation of the Seville Agreement had demonstrated the maturity of National Societies and of those working in areas where it was applied.

Dr Gabr (Egyptian Red Crescent Society) said that the Seville Agreement marked a milestone in the life of the Movement. However it was necessary to examine why it had worked well in some situations and not in others. In Iraq, some neighbouring Societies had felt that the Agreement had not been satisfactorily applied. Practical procedures and guidelines were needed to allow the lead agency to enlist practical support from other components of the Movement.

Mr Weil (Colombian Red Cross) said that the Seville Agreement was essential in a country such as his, which was afflicted by armed conflict. It promoted cooperation and harmony in helping the victims. However, the need to work as an auxiliary to the government and in coordination with other organizations should also be borne in mind. He fully supported draft resolution 8 as a means of progressing towards a straightforward and practical Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement in which National Societies had roles and responsibilities as equal members.

Ms Katevas de Sclabos (Chilean Red Cross) welcomed the fact that the report accepted the shortcomings of what was essentially an important

agreement. She stressed the need to respect the individual culture of each National Society and of the country where the operation took place.

Dr Gönen (Turkish Red Crescent Society) endorsed the draft resolution. Recalling the problems that had arisen during the Iraq crisis, he strongly urged that solutions be found so that the lead agency did not delay in engaging the assistance of National Societies, especially assistance to be provided on request through mutual agreements. The inability to respond in a timely fashion ran counter to Article 2(a) of the Seville Agreement that none of the articles in the Agreement should be interpreted in such a way as to hinder the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Prof McClure (British Red Cross) endorsed draft resolution 8. He was convinced that it was vital to retain the Seville Agreement and not renegotiate it. It was necessary to resolve the problems that had arisen so that the lead agency concept would work in practice. That might require further investment in training, for example, of senior field delegates and National Society personnel in the spirit and mechanisms of the Agreement. He further encouraged the Movement to learn from cases where the application of the Agreement had been challenging and problematic. The spirit of the Seville Agreement must be reaffirmed. The needs of the victims must take priority over the players' need for visibility. Internal Movement competition at times of major disaster was detrimental to those the Movement sought to serve and unattractive to those who might wish to support it.

Ms De Pindray D'Ambelle (Malagasy Red Cross Society) said that her National Society was party to the Saint Denis Accord, an Indian Ocean regional agreement on implementation of the Seville Agreement. The Accord sought *inter alia* to integrate disaster management, especially with regard to cyclones, and HIV/AIDS programmes.

Dr Fachi (Zambia Red Cross Society) felt that the actions of the Movement were still at variance with its pronouncements about unity of purpose. The Movement had yet to address structural rigidities and fixed mindsets relating to its mandate.

Mr Rahimov (Red Crescent Society of Azerbaijan) said that the Seville Agreement required all the Movement's components to work together in innovative ways. The degree to which it was implemented varied, however, owing to geographical and political factors. In Iraq, the neighbouring National Societies had been ready to act but had been hampered for institutional reasons. Specific mechanisms or guidelines were required to implement the Agreement in full.

Ms Coulibaly (Red Cross Society of Côte d'Ivoire) said that the Seville Agreement was a good instrument for cooperation, but that there were problems with its practical implementation in the field. She stressed the need for all those working in the field to respect the Agreement's provisions.

Lt General Khan (Pakistan Red Crescent Society) supported the Seville Agreement, having had good experience of its application in his country.

Mr Balla (Sudanese Red Crescent) said it was important to learn from the strengths and weaknesses the Agreement had revealed in practice. During the floods in his country, cooperation between the National Societies, the ICRC and the International Federation had been excellent.

Mr Kinana (Tanzania Red Cross National Society) observed that the Seville Agreement reduced competition between the Movement's components, defined roles and ensured efficient and effective management of financial and human resources. Problems relating to the lead agency arose when the situation was so volatile that the lead agency withdrew, leaving only the operating National Society in place. Should the designated lead agency resume its role when the tension eased?

Dr Attar (Syrian Arab Red Crescent), citing the example of Iraq, suggested that in such a crisis, neighbouring National Societies should be involved because they knew the area and the background. Moreover, they could respond more quickly than the ICRC, which had been too slow. He endorsed the establishment of the ad hoc working group, which should work to a clear schedule so as to be able to contribute should another crisis arise.

Mr Forster (ICRC) said that the ICRC had concluded overall that the Seville Agreement had served to create a new spirit of cooperation when the Movement was in action. It had been successful because it recognized that all the Movement's components had capacities that could be used to best effect in a given operation. However, greater care had to be taken to fulfil the objectives defined in the preamble to the Agreement. The problems encountered were part of a learning process, and the experience of the previous six years showed that they lay with implementation and not with the text of the Agreement itself. The comments made had been noted and would be discussed in depth by the Working Group. The challenge was to build on the Agreement's strengths while ensuring that its implementation was as effective as possible, and to meet the victims' needs while taking account of the needs and constraints of each of the Movement's components.

Mr Izidyar (Afghan Red Crescent Society), recalling the natural and manmade disasters affecting his country, said that his National Society cooperated closely with the ICRC and the International Federation. Implementation of the Seville Agreement was nevertheless problematic in some cases. For example, the ICRC had established hospitals across the country, for which he was grateful, but the National Society was not involved in their running, and neither the ICRC nor the International Federation had provided support for the National Society's own hospital.

Mr Konoe (Japanese Red Cross Society) said that situations could arise where it was not possible strictly to apply the terms of the Seville Agreement and decide which humanitarian organization should be the lead agency. More and more humanitarian crises were complexly interrelated, with no clear transition from the emergency phase to recovery and reconstruction. In some cases, it might be more effective for a local National Society to act as lead agency, but that possibility was extremely limited if not precluded by the Seville Agreement. In Iraq, for example, some held the view that neighbouring Societies should have played a stronger role in relief activities, because they knew the area better and had easier access. The ICRC's new policy on cooperation with National Societies was expected to be key to helping prevent such confusion in the field. The simple assignment of the lead agency role to either the ICRC or the International Federation precluded the creation of genuine partnerships that drew on the strengths of participating and operating National Societies. Situations should be addressed flexibly. He fully supported the establishment of the ad hoc Working Group.

Dr Al-Ali Al-Maadeed (Qatar Red Crescent Society) said that despite past bad experiences, he was encouraged that the ICRC and the International Federation were trying to develop models and procedures. Neighbouring National Societies must, he stressed, be involved, as must the National Society of the country concerned by a given crisis. He hoped that the new procedures would resolve leadership issues. Allowances must also be made for the changing environment and public perceptions in the recipient country.

Dr Hassan (Somali Red Crescent Society) commended the Seville Agreement as a positive step towards universality of the Movement and harmonization of operations in the field. In his country, where the ICRC was the lead agency in the continuing conflict situation, there was good coordination. However, it could not be expected that all problems of implementation would be solved at once, and a continuous process of adjustment was needed to meet changing operational requirements.

The **Chairman**, who had received several written proposals for amendments to draft resolution 8 during the discussion, read out the amended version and invited the participants to adopt it.

Resolution 8, as amended, was adopted by acclamation.

Item 7 of the agenda
Tolerance, non-discrimination
and respect for diversity
(document CD 2003 – 7.1/1) (continued)

The **Chairman** drew the Council's attention to document CD 2003 – 57.1/1 and draft resolution 9. He welcomed the guest speaker, Mr Madanjeet Singh, a former career diplomat and ambassador of India in many countries who had later joined UNESCO and

was currently a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador. In recognition of his lifelong commitment to the cause of peace, UNESCO had established the UNESCO-Madanjeet Singh Prize for the Promotion of Tolerance and Non-Violence in 1995. Mr Singh had also founded the South Asia Foundation.

Mr Madanjeet Singh (UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador) said that the topic of tolerance, non-discrimination and respect for diversity was most important. As a teenager, like many young people, he had joined Mahatma Gandhi's Quit India Movement. What he had learned from Mahatma Gandhi was that tolerance, non-discrimination and respect for diversity were the three major components of life, as important as economic justice, social equality and political freedom. Gandhi had been the apostle of non-violence. Civilization was not just something solid and external, but a people's dream, their imaginative interpretation of human existence, their perception of the mystery of human life. Gandhi had preached about a world where men loved reason, shunned darkness, turned towards light, praised virtue, despised meanness, and hated violence and fundamentalism of any kind.

The three concepts of tolerance, non-discrimination and respect for diversity could only be materialized if connected to a mass movement. He was therefore pleased that the Red Cross and Red Crescent called themselves a movement and were supported by individuals at the grass roots. His South Asia Foundation, for example, was launching three thousand scholarships for marginalized young people from different countries to study in a single institution for a year. In that way, tolerance and respect for diversity did not have to be taught – it was in-built. A similar scheme involved linking universities in different countries in the region for subjects such as environmental studies or teacher training.

Discussion of the item continued in three commissions.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.

3.4.4 FOURTH MEETING

Tuesday, 2 December 2003
9.30 a.m.

Substantive items (continued)

Item 7 of the agenda
Tolerance, non-discrimination
and respect for diversity
(document CD 2003 – 7.1/1) (continued)

Ms Teixeira (Mozambique Red Cross Society) delivered the consolidated report of the commissions on tolerance, non-discrimination and respect for diversity, reproduced in full in Annex [1], and commended draft resolution 9 and its annex to the Council.

Mr Mohaghegh (Red Crescent Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran), **Mr McLaughlin** (American Red Cross), **Mr Pitt** (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Red Cross), **Dr Hassan** (Somali Red Crescent Society), **Ms Powell** (Jamaica Red Cross), **Mr Ijewere** (Nigerian Red Cross Society), **Miss Rola Hitti** (Lebanese Red Cross), **Mr Parascandolo** (Malta Red Cross Society) and **Pastor Williams** (Grenada Red Cross Society) applauded the consolidated report.

Dame Maeve Fort (British Red Cross) suggested that the word “cultural” should be reinserted before “diversity” in preambular paragraph 3 of the draft resolution, for consistency with the 1999 Plan of Action. She further suggested that operative paragraph 3 would read better if the phrase “on the basis of the participation to” was amended to “on the basis of their participation in”.

Prof Shimelis (Ethiopian Red Cross Society) disagreed, observing that in his commission the word “cultural” had been considered limiting, as there were many other forms of diversity. For the sake of inclusiveness, he preferred to omit the term.

Mr De Graaf (Netherlands Red Cross) took it that the second line of the annex to the draft resolution should be corrected to read “the fight against intolerance”.

Mr Bugnion (ICRC) suggested two amendments to the annex of the draft resolution. In Action 4(f), the wording should be amended to dispel the impression that the ICRC might not also be responsible for dissemination of the Fundamental Principles. In Action 4(h), the present wording suggested that international humanitarian law was an obstacle to reconciliation among communities; the last phrase should therefore be replaced by “so as to not to hinder reconciliation amongst communities”.

Mr Cuvillier (French Red Cross) suggested that the amendment proposed by Mr Bugnion might be expressed more positively, i.e. to “foster” reconciliation. He also suggested that the title of the resolution should be amended. “Tolerance” should not extend to tolerance of the intolerable. Bearing in mind the second preambular paragraph, he would prefer the wording of the title to reflect the fight against intolerance and discrimination.

Mr Vickery (Australian Red Cross) was concerned at the use of the word “forcibly” in the annex to the draft resolution, under Action 1(b), which implied duress or physical force. The same objective could be achieved by using the word “urgently”.

The **Chairman** suggested that the proposal made by the representative of the British Red Cross be adopted, especially since the word “cultural” had a very broad meaning in that context. He also took it that the remaining proposed amendments were acceptable. The title of the resolution would be amended to read “Promote respect for diversity and fight discrimination and intolerance”.

On that understanding,
Resolution 9 and its annex, as amended, were adopted by acclamation.

Item 8 of the agenda Follow-up to the resolutions of the 2001 Council of Delegates

Item 8.1 Movement action in favour of refugees and internally displaced persons (document CD 2003 – 8.1/1)

Mr Roethlisberger (ICRC), referring to Resolution 4 of the 2001 Council of Delegates, noted that progress had been made in the meantime. He introduced draft resolution 10, which he said focussed on the practical problems that might arise when operational partnerships were formed between a Movement component and external organizations.

Mr Jones (American Red Cross) supported the goals of transparency and adherence to the Fundamental Principles. Bearing in mind the concerns that had arisen over the years in that connection, operative paragraph 2 should end with a specific reference to agreements with UNHCR. The Minimum elements set out in the annex would be most effective as guidelines rather than restrictive or mandatory provisions.

Mr Barnes (Canadian Red Cross Society) underlined the impact of restoring family links, a key service the Movement could offer to displaced people. He also shared the concern expressed about the growing incidence of xenophobia towards migrants.

Mr Liguita (Red Cross of Chad) commended the Report on the implementation of Resolution 4 of the 2001 Council of Delegates, especially in the light of the refugee situation in his country.

Ms Ovdahl (Swedish Red Cross) welcomed the increased emphasis on the issue, since at least 137 National Societies were working with asylum seekers, refugees and displaced persons. The Movement's actions were timely and appropriate. The Minimum elements to be included in agreements with external partners were a useful tool that enabled the Movement's components to reach the victims in the best manner. She stressed the importance of staying within the Movement's mandate when working with external partners.

Mr Lamb (International Federation) said that the issue of xenophobia was of central importance. Referring to the American Red Cross comment, he said that the Minimum elements had been the subject of wide consultations and legal advice. He agreed that they should be seen as enabling the Movement's components to act in their best interests when negotiating agreements. He agreed that a specific reference should be added to UNHCR, as one had in fact been included in the original draft.

The **Chairman** proposed that draft resolution 10 and its annex, as amended, be adopted.

Resolution 10 and its annex were adopted by acclamation.

Item 8.2

International disaster response law (document CD 2003 – 8.2/1)

Mr Davey (International Federation), referring to Resolution 5 of the 2001 Council of Delegates, drew attention to document CD 2003 – 8.2/1 and its two main conclusions. The first conclusion was that there was a need to know, use and implement existing law better, thus eliminating delays and enhancing coordination. Until the present study there had been no compilation of such law. The second conclusion was that the work done to date confirmed the importance of the project – a good start had been made but it was only a beginning. Much more would need to be done in the years ahead.

Dr Jakovljević (Red Cross of Serbia and Montenegro) fully supported the initiative on international disaster response law. Many issues remained to be resolved. However, it was up to States to enact legislation, and they must fully understand the importance of the initiative. The initiative should nevertheless be limited to humanitarian action in peacetime, since there was already a substantial body of law covering war.

Lt General Khan (Pakistan Red Crescent Society) said that the issue was of paramount importance. The Movement was the only body equipped to take on the task. More attention should be paid to implementation, and for that the National Societies needed to be strengthened.

Document CD 2003 – 8.2/1 was noted.

Item 8.3

Explosive remnants of war and the Movement Strategy on Landmines (document CD 2003 – 8.3/1)

Mr Sandoz (ICRC) introduced document CD 2003 – 8.3/1 and draft resolution 11. Referring to Resolution 8 of the 2001 Council of Delegates, he said that the Movement had built on its efforts to reduce the effects of mines and other forms of unexploded ordnance within the framework of the 1999 five-year Movement Strategy on Landmines, and that draft resolution 11 therefore proposed to extend the Strategy through 2009 and to cover all explosive remnants of war. It was particularly important to extend the Movement Strategy in the light of the First Review Conference of the Ottawa Landmines Convention, which would take place in 2004, and the recent adoption of Protocol V to the 1980 United Nations Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, on Explosive Remnants of War.

Ms Katevas de Sclabos (Chilean Red Cross) welcomed the report and the draft resolution and reported

that her country, working in cooperation with neighbouring countries and international organizations, was making progress in clearing mines.

Dame Maeve Fort (British Red Cross) said that her Society had always sought to promote the unity of the Movement, and much appreciated the spirit of cooperation reflected in the contributions of many other delegations. She would therefore not break the consensus on the draft resolution on explosive remnants of war and the Movement's Strategy on Landmines. However, she had a substantive reservation about the second part of operative paragraph 4, which urged that the Movement's components "support ongoing efforts to prohibit the use of cluster bombs and other submunitions against military objectives located in or near civilian areas". She would have preferred wording other than "to prohibit", such as "to regulate more closely", "to regulate more effectively", or "to ensure rigorous application of the existing humanitarian law rules on targeting and the use of cluster bombs and other submunitions". The alternative wordings reflected her view that effective regulation rather than prohibition should be the concern of the Movement and, as the previous week's adoption of Protocol V had shown, that cooperation with States could bring substantive rewards.

Ms Derlicka (Polish Red Cross) supported the resolution, which would help eliminate the devastating effects of unexploded and abandoned munitions.

Mr Vickery (Australian Red Cross) observed that in operative paragraph 2, the components of the Movement were called on to "ensure" certain objectives, in operative paragraph 3 to make "efforts to ensure" and in operative paragraph 4, to "work to ensure". He was slightly concerned that it was beyond the power of the Movement's components to ensure anything, although all would work hard to achieve the objectives. He would prefer consistent wording in all three paragraphs, with that in paragraph 3 being perhaps the most appropriate.

The **Chairman** invited the participants to adopt draft resolution 11 as amended.

Resolution 11, as amended, was adopted by acclamation.

Item 8.4

Participation of Red Cross and Red Crescent workers in proceedings related to violations of international humanitarian law (document CD 2003 – 8.4/1)

In the absence of any comments on the conclusions of document CD 2003 – 8.4/1, the **Chairman**, referring to Resolution 9 of the 2001 Council of Delegates, proposed that the Council of Delegates take note of the document.

It was so agreed.

Item 8.5**Protection of cultural property
(document CD 2003 – 8.5/1)**

Ms Kraus-Gurny (ICRC), referring to Resolution 11 of the 2001 Council of Delegates, underscored the ICRC's commitment to the protection of cultural property during armed conflicts. Cultural property was part of mankind's global cultural heritage, and the ICRC was convinced that its destruction could unleash further conflict or impede a return to peace.

Ms Mikos-Skuza (Polish Red Cross) focussed on the dilemma caused by demands on scarce resources and the conflicting needs of human victims and cultural property. Her Society had relied on volunteers with expert knowledge and on cooperation with other institutions, and had therefore achieved a great deal without financial costs or placing an excessive burden on its staff.

Dame Maeve Fort (British Red Cross) said that, as recent events had shown, the protection of cultural property during armed conflicts remained an important issue. It was gratifying to see the many activities undertaken to promote the relevant rules. Such norms and practical measures of preparedness and response could be applied to the protection of cultural property in the face of other kinds of disaster. The 50th anniversary of the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict provided the Movement with an opportunity to promote the importance of protecting cultural heritage.

Ms Zupanc (Slovenian Red Cross) said that her Society included the protection of cultural property in its training for staff and volunteers.

Item 10 of the agenda**Date and venue of the next
Council of Delegates**

Mr Niskala (International Federation) said that the International Federation's General Assembly had accepted the proposal by the Republic of Korea National Red Cross to host the 2005 General Assembly in Seoul during the period from 5 to 20 November. The Standing Commission would decide on the final dates in 2004.

The Chairman thanked the Republic of Korea National Red Cross for its invitation and proposed that the next Council of Delegates be held in Seoul, Republic of Korea, in 2005.

It was so decided.

CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

The Chairman thanked the delegates for the good spirit in which the Council of Delegates had taken place and for the clear, strong and consolidated messages it had produced for the International Conference. The debate on issues internal to the Movement had been open and constructive. He partic-

ularly appreciated the emphasis on respect for diversity. He concluded by thanking all those who had worked hard to prepare and ensure the smooth running of the Council of Delegates.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.

3.4.5 ANNEX**Consolidated report of the Commissions on tolerance, non-discrimination and respect for diversity, presented by Ms Fernanda Teixeira, General Rapporteur**

First of all, I am very proud to say that this report is the result of more than one hundred contributions from us all yesterday during the work of the three commissions.

If this report had one main theme, it would be that we need the courage to act, but that we must start with ourselves, both individually and collectively. We have to lead by example.

Yesterday, the three commissions recognized the relevance for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement of the problems of intolerance, discrimination and lack of diversity, and emphasized the particularly challenging environment in which we live and work today. Tolerance, non-discrimination and respect for diversity are intimately linked with our Fundamental Principles. This connection, which was strongly felt by all of us, invests the Movement with a special responsibility to act.

The commissions nevertheless emphasized that two conditions had to be met before the Movement could be mobilized behind these goals.

First, we must all have a common definition and understanding of what tolerance, non-discrimination and respect for diversity really mean. The term tolerance, in particular, requires further clarification. The participants also proposed the concept of "inclusiveness". "Plurality" was considered to be a better term than diversity, because it covers the whole of society, where there are not just differences but also similarities. These terms should be explored within the context of the position paper the Movement's components will prepare on this topic for the 2005 Council of Delegates, as provided for in the resolution to be adopted today.

Secondly, the Movement's components must "put their own house in order" and ensure that the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement becomes more broadly representative of all society, that everyone has a voice and that all voices are really heard.

**1. Tolerance, non-discrimination and respect
for diversity – universal values?**

The participants affirmed the universality of the three values of tolerance, non-discrimination and respect for diversity, recognizing them as part of our common Red Cross and Red Crescent "language" – part of the

Fundamental Principles. They also emphasized that these three values must be understood in the light of specific contexts, and are expressed in many different forms, including cultural and religious forms. Yet, as I mentioned before, tolerance was felt by many as lacking in clarity, while the concept of plurality may prove to be a useful alternative to "respect for diversity". It is a wider and deeper term that covers power structures, gender issues, individual and group-related issues, and issues of diversity. It may therefore provide greater scope for action.

2. What are the new challenges in addressing tolerance, non-discrimination and respect for diversity?

A number of participants pointed out that discrimination is omnipresent. People are not born intolerant, but may become that way as they grow older. Indeed, all of us have at some point experienced discrimination. It is not a remote problem in a far away place, but exists everywhere.

Many speakers emphasized that the worldwide situation is more challenging than ever, what with the rise in nationalism and religious extremism, growing poverty and changes in population demographics and the migration that this may engender. In that situation, Red Cross/Red Crescent values and principles are coming under increasing attack. The loss of life among humanitarian personnel is particularly shocking.

Many participants underlined that some of the biggest challenges come from within ourselves, both individually and within the Movement. It was felt that the Movement's components are not sufficiently representative, that National Societies do not always reflect the diversity of their societies. Even those that are representative sometimes fail to empower sectors of society such as women and youth.

In the face of these challenges, it is crucial that we set priorities, focus our efforts where we can make a difference, and develop indicators and other means of evaluating what we do.

Let us be honest now: do we have the strength and leadership within the Movement to cope with these challenges? Can we afford not to?

3. How do or should the Movement's components respond to lack of tolerance, discrimination and lack of respect for diversity?

A clear consensus emerged from the three groups: we must start at home, within our families, among ourselves, and within the Movement. Self-assessments must be conducted and combined with creative methods of training and educating Red Cross/Red Crescent members and volunteers, as well as external actors. Exclusion and marginalization should not happen, so we must work to integrate and empower, as well as value and appreciate the contributions of all.

This, in turn, is the key to enhancing our own image. If we actively live the values we promote, then others will perceive us as relevant, credible and worthy of support.

Once we are able to lead by example, knowledge and practice must be shared among ourselves and with other organizations. We must stimulate and create forums for dialogue, build bridges between sectors of society. Within this context, it is suggested that the Movement's components should conduct mapping exercises to identify current initiatives to promote tolerance, non-discrimination and respect for diversity and to facilitate contact and exchange.

A number of participants said that attention should not be devoted exclusively to creating new programmes. Equal, if not greater, emphasis should be placed on capitalizing on existing, day-to-day programmes which are carried out at global and local level. In short, we should seek to promote the message of tolerance, non-discrimination and respect for diversity in everything we do, as well as encourage respect for, implementation and dissemination of international humanitarian law.

The three commissions were unanimous in identifying young people as the key players, the main vehicle or agent for change. Young people must be involved in the decision-making process, they must act as catalysts for cultural encounters and understanding. In this respect, I am proud to say that our commissions led by example: three of the nine officers were National Society youth leaders.

Consistent with this emphasis on youth, a number of participants underlined the importance of education. We must find creative methods of promoting our messages in schools, by youth and for youth, of integrating our messages whenever possible into school curricula through programmes such as Exploring Humanitarian Law (EHL).

Many speakers noted that the Movement is particularly well placed and suited to conduct humanitarian advocacy on a global scale, and urged us to promote our messages of tolerance, non-discrimination and respect for diversity in new and innovative ways. We should capitalize on our credibility and moral authority, and use the mass media much more efficiently and aggressively.

Some participants emphasized that the Movement cannot meet these challenges alone. We must forge alliances and partnerships with like-minded organizations, opinion-makers, religious and political leaders, without compromising our Fundamental Principles.

I have now done enough talking. Allow me to finish by saying once more: we need the courage to act, but we must start with ourselves, both individually and collectively. We have to lead by example.

3.5 LIST OF DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED TO THE COUNCIL OF DELEGATES

- Provisional Agenda of the 2003 Council of Delegates

Item 4 - Work of the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

- Report of the Standing Commission to the 2003 Council of Delegates
Report of the Standing Commission

Item 5 - Preparation for the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

- Provisional Agenda and programme of the 28th International Conference
- Proposal of persons to fill posts at the 28th International Conference
- Report on "Biotechnology, Weapons and Humanity" and draft Resolution
Report prepared by the ICRC in consultation with the International Federation
- Report on the follow-up to Resolution 6 on the emblem of the 2001 Council of Delegates
Report prepared by the Standing Commission
- National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies as Auxiliaries to the Public Authorities in the Humanitarian Field: Conclusions from the study undertaken by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Report prepared by the International Federation in consultation with the ICRC

Item 6 - Strategy for the Movement

- Report on the Implementation of the Strategy for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
Report prepared by the International Federation, the ICRC and the Standing Commission
(The Standing Commission has received this report but due to time constraints has not yet reviewed it.)
- Activity Report of the Joint ICRC / International Federation Commission on the Statutes of National Societies

- Report on the Implementation of the Seville Agreement to the 2003 Council of Delegates and draft Resolution

Report prepared by the ICRC and the International Federation

Item 7 - Tolerance, Non-discrimination, Respect for diversity

- Tolerance, Non-discrimination, Respect for Diversity and draft Resolution
Document prepared by the ICRC and the International Federation based on consultations and research provided since the last 2001 Council of Delegates
- Orientations for the questions to be discussed in Commissions on "Tolerance, Non-discrimination, Respect for Diversity"

Item 8 - Follow-up reports

- Report on the Implementation of Resolution 4 of the 2001 Council of Delegates: "Movement Action in favour of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons" and draft Resolution
Report prepared by the ICRC and the International Federation
- International Disaster Response Laws Project Report 2002-2003
Report prepared by the International Federation
- Explosive Remnants of War and the Movement Strategy on Landmines and draft Resolution
Report prepared by the ICRC in consultation with the International Federation
- Participation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Workers in Proceedings related to Violations of International Humanitarian Law
Report prepared by the ICRC and the International Federation
- The Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict
Report prepared by the British Red Cross in consultation with the ICRC

28TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT

4.1 CONVOCAATION

of the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent
Geneva, Switzerland, 2-6 December 2003

Geneva, 30 May 2003

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 28th International Conference, which will be held in Geneva from 2-6 December 2003 at the International Conference Centre (CICG).

The International Conference will be preceded by meetings of the Governing Board 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 addressed to all the members of the International Conference. Pursuant to Article 9 of the Statutes of the Movement, these 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 addressed to the observers invited to attend the Conference.

The Conference is expected to result in:

- a Declaration;
- an Agenda for Humanitarian Action;
- pledges on individual and/or collective action by members.

Please find attached:

- the draft provisional agenda and programme of the Conference;
- the guidelines for pledging by members of the Conference;
- a list of the workshops to be held at the Conference;
- a profile for candidates for election to the Standing Commission and a nomination form for the election of members of the Standing Commission;

- the Conference inscription form (to be completed and returned to the address given on the form before 26 September 2003)
- a practical information note, a list of hotels (with descriptions and prices) and a map of Geneva.

NB: On 12 May 2000, the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent convened the 28th International Conference, which was expected to adopt relevant amendments to the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement following the adoption by the States party to the 1949 Geneva Conventions of a Third Additional Protocol on the emblems. That Conference, which was to take place on 14 November 2000, was postponed on 12 October 2000. Members are hereby advised that the forthcoming Conference will now be referred to as the 28th International Conference.

Rule 6.2 of the Rules of Procedure of the Movement requires that observations, amendments or additions to the provisional agenda be received by the Standing Commission at least 60 days before the opening of the Conference. You are therefore requested to send any comments you may have to the following address prior to 2 October 2003:

Secretariat of the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent
9-11, La Vy-des-Champs
1202 Geneva
Switzerland

The Standing Commission has welcomed Ambassador Thomas Kupfer, who has been placed at its disposal by the Government of Switzerland, as Commissioner responsible for assisting the Standing Commission and the co-hosts in their preparations for the Conference.

The draft elements of the Declaration and the draft Agenda for Humanitarian Action should be sent to all members for comments in early July 2003.

Juan M. Suárez del Toro R.
President
International Federation of Red Cross
and Red Crescent Societies

Jakob Kellenberger
President
International Committee
of the Red Cross

4.2 AGENDA AND PROGRAMME

Tuesday, 2 December 2003

17:00 – 18:45

WELCOMING CEREMONY

1. **Speakers:** *Chairman of the Standing Commission
Head of the Federal Department of
Foreign Affairs of Switzerland*
2. **Multimedia presentation**
3. **Presentation of the Fundamental Principles**
4. **Welcome address:** *Authorities of the Republic and
Canton of Geneva and of the City of Geneva*

18:45 – 21:00

RECEPTION

*(not part of the formal agenda of the Conference)
Offered by the Swiss Federal Council and the
authorities of the Republic and Canton of Geneva
and of the City of Geneva*

Wednesday, 3 December 2003

9:00 – 12:30

FIRST PLENARY MEETING

1. **Opening of the first plenary meeting**
2. **Election of the Chairman, Vice-Chairmen,
Secretary General, two Assistant Secretaries
General and other officers of the
Conference**
3. **Establishment of the Conference's subsidiary
bodies**
 - 3.1 Commissions
 - 3.2 Drafting Committee
4. **Information on the procedure for electing
the members of the Standing Commission,
adopting the Conference Declaration and
Agenda for Humanitarian Action, and
recording pledges**
5. **Contemporary humanitarian challenges and
protecting human dignity**
 - 5.1 Keynote address by the President of the
International Committee of the Red Cross
 - 5.2 Keynote address by the President of the
International Federation of Red Cross and
Red Crescent Societies
6. **General debate on contemporary
humanitarian challenges and protecting
human dignity**
7. **Information on the implementation of
the Plan of Action for the years 2000–2003
adopted by the 27th International
Conference of the Red Cross and
Red Crescent**
8. **Special report *Women and War*
International Committee of the Red Cross**

12:30

INAUGURATION OF THE EXHIBITION “WOMEN AND WAR”

*(not part of the formal agenda of the Conference)
Opening of the exhibition by Her Majesty Queen
Rania Al-Abdullah of Jordan*

14:00 – 16:30

FIRST PLENARY MEETING (continued)

9. Introduction of the Declaration

- 9.1 Protecting human dignity by enhancing
respect for international humanitarian law
- 9.2 Protecting human dignity by mobilizing
humanity to reduce violence, discrimination
and vulnerability

10. General debate on contemporary humanitarian challenges and protecting human dignity including on the Declaration

14:00 – 18:30

DRAFTING COMMITTEE

17:00 – 18:30

WORKSHOPS

*(provisional titles and list of organizers)
(not part of the formal agenda of the Conference)*

Workshop 1:

“International humanitarian law and the challenges of contemporary armed conflicts”

*Organizers: Government of Switzerland,
International Committee of the Red Cross*

Workshop 2:

“Children and armed conflict: protecting and rebuilding young lives”

*Organizers: The Human Security Network: Austria,
Canada, Chile, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Mali, the
Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, South Africa
(observer), Switzerland, Thailand in cooperation with
the Canadian Red Cross*

Workshop 3:

“National Societies in civil-military cooperation – Questions, Challenges, Opportunities and Prospects”

*Organizers: Danish Red Cross, German Red Cross,
The Netherlands Red Cross, Governments of
Germany and Denmark, Institute for International
Law of Peace and Armed Conflict (IFHV) –
Bochum (Germany)*

Workshop 4:

“Biotechnology, weapons and humanity”

*Organizers: Canadian Red Cross, Government of
Canada, Norwegian Red Cross*

Thursday, 4 December 2003

9:00 – 12:00

COMMISSIONS

(debate on the Agenda for Humanitarian Action in parallel Commissions A2 and B2)

1. Commission A2: **Enhancing protection in armed conflict**

Humanitarian aspects of the issue of persons missing in connection with armed conflict

introduction

discussion

2. Commission B2: **Reducing the risk and impact of disaster and disease**

Reducing the risk and impact of disaster and improving preparedness and response mechanisms

introduction

discussion

14:00 – 16:30

COMMISSIONS

(debate on the Agenda for Humanitarian Action in parallel Commissions A3 and B3)

3. Commission A3: **Enhancing protection in armed conflict**

Confronting the human costs of the use of certain weapons in armed conflict

introduction

discussion

4. Commission B3: **Reducing the risk and impact of disaster and disease**

Reducing the risk of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases on vulnerable people

introduction

discussion

9:00 – 12:30

and

14:00 – 18:30

DRAFTING COMMITTEE

17:00 – 18:30

WORKSHOPS

(provisional titles and list of organizers)

(not part of the formal agenda of the Conference)

Workshop 5: “Small Arms and Human Security – Humanitarian Impacts and Options for Action”

Organizers: The Human Security Network: Austria, Canada, Chile, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Mali, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, South Africa (observer), Switzerland, and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue

Workshop 6: “Health and HIV/AIDS – Prevention, care and treatment, stigma and discrimination – four years of action against HIV/AIDS by the Red Cross and Red Crescent”

Organizers: Swedish Red Cross, Ethiopian Red Cross, Kenya Red Cross, French Red Cross, Italian Red Cross, Spanish Red Cross

Workshop 7: “Domestic implementation of the Statute of the International Criminal Court”

Organizer: Government of the Netherlands

Workshop 8: “The role of Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies in disaster risk reduction and the relevant links with governments and other key actors”

Organizers: Nepal Red Cross, Uzbekistan Red Crescent, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), ProVention, International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR)

Friday, 5 December 2003

8:30 – 12:00

SECOND PLENARY MEETING

1. Election of the members of the Standing Commission
roll call
launch of the election
2. Amendments to the Regulations of the Empress Shôken Fund
3. Special report: Auxiliary Role of National Societies
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
4. Report on Resolution 3 of the 27th International Conference on Emblems
5. General debate on contemporary humanitarian challenges and protecting human dignity (continued)
6. Standing Commission election:
Proclamation of results or continuation of election

14:00 – 16:30

SECOND PLENARY MEETING

(continued)

7. Special report: Customary International Humanitarian Law
International Committee of the Red Cross
8. Special session on International Volunteer Day
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

9. General debate on contemporary humanitarian challenges and protecting human dignity (continued)

9:00 – 12:30
and
14:00 – 19:00

DRAFTING COMMITTEE

17:00 – 18:30

WORKSHOPS

*(provisional titles and list of organizers)
(not part of the formal agenda of the Conference)*

Workshop 9: Civil society participation in international public/private health partnerships. Challenges and lessons learnt

Organizers: Sierra Leone Red Cross, American Red Cross, Danish Red Cross, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Workshop 10: “Where disasters meet: similarities and distinct factors involved in NS preparedness to respond in contexts affected by both conflict and ‘natural’ disasters”

Organizers: Government of the United Kingdom (DFID), British Red Cross, Uganda Red Cross Society, Government of Uganda

Workshop 11: “Operational challenges in carrying out humanitarian activities in a changing environment”

Organizers: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, International Committee of the Red Cross

18:45 – 19:00

SECOND PLENARY MEETING

(continued if necessary)

**11. Election of the Standing Commission:
Proclamation of results**

Saturday, 6 December 2003

9:00 – 12:00

THIRD AND FINAL PLENARY MEETING

- 1. Overview of the workshops**
- 2. Overview of the pledges**
- 3. Report on the work of the Commissions**
- 4. Report of the Drafting Committee**
- 5. Adoption of the resolutions of the Conference (Declaration, Agenda for Humanitarian Action ...)**

CLOSING CEREMONY

4.3 CONFERENCE OFFICIALS

4.3.1 CONFERENCE CHAIRMANSHIP

Chairman of the Conference:

Mr Jaime Ricardo Fernández Urriola, National President of the Red Cross Society of Panama

Vice-Chairs:

Ambassador Yolande Biké (Ms), Permanent Representative of Gabon in Geneva

Dr Abdelkader Boukhroufa, President of the Algerian Red Crescent

Mr Hisham Harun Hashim, Deputy National Chairman of the Malaysian Red Crescent Society
Prof. René Rhinow, President ex-officio of the Swiss Red Cross

Rapporteur of the Conference

Ms Marie Gervais-Vidricaire, Director General, Global Issues Bureau (DFAIT), Canada

Secretary General of the Conference:

Ambassador Thomas Kupfer (Mr), Commissioner of the 28th International Conference

Assistant Secretaries General:

Ms Angela Gussing-Sapina, Head, Division for Policy and Cooperation within the Movement, International Committee of the Red Cross

Mr Frank Mohrhauer, Senior Legal Officer, Governance Support and Legal Department, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

4.3.2 CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE CONFERENCE'S SUBSIDIARY BODIES

A. Commission A

Chairman:

Ambassador Amina Chawahir Mohamed (Ms), Permanent Representative of Kenya in Geneva

Vice-chairs:

Ambassador Pablo Macedo (Mr), Alternate Permanent Representative of Mexico in Geneva

Ms Elzbieta Mikos-Skuza, Chair of International Humanitarian Law Commission of the Polish Red Cross

Rapporteurs:

Ambassador Holger Rotkirch (Mr), Member of the Finnish Red Cross

Ms Jacqueline Boga, Secretary General of the Papua New Guinea Red Cross Society

Ms Carole Powell, Immediate Past President of the Jamaica Red Cross

B. Commission B

Chairwoman:

Ms Martine Letts, Secretary General of the Australian Red Cross

Vice-chairs:

Ambassador Love Mtesa (Mr), Permanent Representative of Zambia in Geneva

Mr Abdul Rahman Attar, President of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent

Rapporteurs:

Ms Jelma de la Peña, Officer in charge, OSG and Director of Operations of the Philippine National Red Cross

Ms Lucy Brown, Member of the American Red Cross

Ambassador Tibor Tóth (Mr), Permanent Representative of Hungary in Geneva

C. Drafting Committee

Chairman:

Ambassador Johan Molander (Mr), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sweden

Vice-chairs:

Ms Norma Nascimbene de Dumont, Counsellor, Alternate Permanent Representative to the United Nations Office in Geneva, Argentina

Ambassador Valentine Rugwabiza (Ms), Permanent Representative of Rwanda in Geneva

Ms Heike Spieker, Head, International Relations and International Humanitarian Law, German Red Cross

4.3.3 BUREAU OF THE CONFERENCE

Mr Jaime Ricardo Fernández Urriola, Chairman of the Conference

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

Mr Jakob Kellenberger, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross

Mr Juan Manuel Suárez del Toro Rivero, President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies

Ambassador Amina Chawahir Mohamed (Ms), Chairman of Commission A

Ms Martine Letts, Chairman of Commission B

Ambassador Johan Molander (Mr), Chairman of the Drafting Committee

Ambassador Thomas Kupfer (Mr), Secretary General of the 28th International Conference

Mr François Bugnion, Director, International Committee of the Red Cross

Mr Markku Niskala, Secretary General, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

4.4 OPENING CEREMONY

2 December 2003

5 p.m.

Ms Caroline Wyatt, BBC Paris correspondent

(Original English)

I am delighted to welcome you all here today to Geneva for the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. As one of the BBC's world affairs correspondents, I was especially honoured to be asked to introduce this welcoming ceremony because I have seen at first hand the vital work done by both the Red Crescent and the Red Cross.

I have seen it during the conflict in Kosovo, in the devastating earthquake in Gujarat in India, with landmine victims and many others in Afghanistan and – most recently – during the conflict in Iraq. I have seen men and women working in challenging, sometimes impossible situations and doing their utmost – often at risk to their own lives – to help others.

My own father, David Wyatt, worked for many years for both the British Red Cross Society and the International Red Cross, so I can safely say I know the hard work that all of you here put in on a daily basis.

The theme of this year's conference is "Protecting human dignity". I can think of few other humanitarian organizations in the world which have done so much to protect and ensure the rights of those who cannot protect themselves.

Screening of the video: *Protecting Human Dignity*

This Conference has been organized on behalf of the Standing Commission by the ICRC and the International Federation. The theme "Protecting human dignity" was selected by the Standing Commission because it reflects the basic values of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement since its beginnings.

As we have just seen, that theme is perhaps more relevant now than it was when the Movement was first founded. With continuing conflicts across the globe, as well as man-made and natural disasters, the work of the Movement is more crucial than ever.

Over the past eight years, the Standing Commission has been chaired by Her Royal Highness Princess Margriet of the Netherlands. Under her leadership, the Commission has carried out its mission to promote harmony within the Movement and coordination among the Movement's components with renewed vigour. These tasks were already familiar to her from her earlier work as a member of the Study Group on the Future of the Movement. Her dedication and commitment, despite many other calls on her time, have been an example to all; her grace and her charm

have made colleagues into friends. It is with great pleasure that I invite Princess Margriet to address the Conference.

Welcoming address by H.R.H. Princess Margriet of the Netherlands, Chairman of the Standing Commission

(Original English)

Madam Federal Councillor, Mr President of the Council of State of the Republic and Canton of Geneva, Mr Mayor, Mr President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mr President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Your Royal Highnesses, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Observers and guests, Dear Colleagues and Friends,

It is an honour and a great pleasure for me to welcome you on behalf of the Standing Commission to the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. I am delighted to see so many participants gathered here this evening. This is of particular value and importance at a time when we live in a polarized, anxious world with so much suffering. A troubled world far removed from the high humanitarian ideals of Henry Dunant, the founder of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

We are here to make a difference to the lives of persons affected by armed conflicts, disasters and disease. I should like to thank the Swiss authorities most sincerely for their unstinting support in making this Conference a reality and for hosting us so generously.

The International Conference is a unique forum. The Movement has the exclusive privilege to come together with our governments on matters high on the humanitarian agenda. The Standing Commission is the trustee of the International Conference between two Conferences, its task is to prepare the Conference. When the Standing Commission mandated the ICRC and the International Federation to host the 28th International Conference in Geneva, we were acutely aware that the Conference would take place in an uncertain world situation.

The challenges we face in our day-to-day work, at home and internationally, can only be tackled with the cooperation of governments and the responsibility they take in caring for their citizens. This is why this Conference is so crucial. In 1999 our motto was "The power of humanity". This time we convene under the banner of "Protecting human dignity". We have the power of humanity to protect human dignity.

This Conference is not about words. It is about much needed action. Our relevance will be judged by the difference we make. It is up to us, the Movement and governments, to show the world that we do not want

to be perceived as being more comfortable with present problems than with new solutions.

Every day the headlines in the media show us the great need to protect human dignity in situations of armed conflict and in situations of disaster and disease. The messages in the video were also clear and powerful.

On *armed conflict* we heard that “protecting human dignity in conflict requires a strong commitment from States and armed groups to *respect and ensure respect* for international humanitarian law”, and that “no State is above the law. No person falls outside the protection of the law”.

On *disasters and diseases* we heard that “disasters bring devastation everywhere. The poorer you are, the harder you are hit. And (...) AIDS is changing everything. We are facing a new type of disaster in which AIDS, vulnerability, hunger and chronic poverty create a vicious circle”.

These messages are stark reminders of a grim reality. A reminder, as we are about to embark on our important work, that we must bring the reality from the field into our deliberations.

The Red Cross and Red Crescent work with and for people. Our purpose is to care, to take care of the victims of wars, disasters and disease. A purpose we share with our external partners. To enhance our performance and live up to the expectations of the victims we dare to go that extra mile.

When preparing for the Conference, we asked National Societies and governments for their advice regarding the issues that should be on the agenda. There were many. There was wide agreement to have international humanitarian law high on the agenda. Clearly this was sparked by recent developments and numerous tragic events.

The Declaration addresses topical humanitarian concerns. In the draft Agenda for Humanitarian Action, four main issues stand out: missing persons, weapons, disasters and diseases.

To start with, the question of *missing persons*. The immense suffering of not knowing what happened to your loved ones is beyond words. The continuing uncertainty and the feelings of injustice and resentment keep the emotional wounds of war open and shatter hopes of reconciliation. What can we do about this?

The Movement has a traditional role in tracing. The ICRC, with the help of National Societies, plays an essential role in tracing. We need to overcome the sometimes quite evident lack of political will to resolve this deeply humanitarian concern.

We will also discuss weapons. We will reflect on the human costs of the availability, use and misuse of weapons. While in the past 90 per cent of the victims of conflicts were military servicemen, nowadays 90 per cent of the victims are civilians – innocent children,

men and women. How can we better protect civilians from the indiscriminate effects and use of weapons? We just heard that in many parts of the world it is easier to arm yourself than to feed yourself. Together with governments, significant progress has been made, although much work remains.

The third area of focus is *disasters*. How can we minimize the impact of disasters, reduce risks and improve our preparedness and response? How can we empower the people in disaster-prone regions? We can build on the strength of victims and beneficiaries. Our Movement has a history of demonstrating the power of humanity.

Emergency response goes hand in hand with efforts to help the victims recover from crises and to be better prepared for unexpected vulnerability. An integrated approach to disaster risk reduction is necessary to effectively minimize the impact of disasters on vulnerable populations.

Disease is the fourth and last key issue.

How can we reduce vulnerability to disease arising from stigma and discrimination? AIDS represents a tragedy of unprecedented proportions, affecting millions across the globe. AIDS, vulnerability, hunger and chronic poverty form a vicious circle which is further widened by discrimination and stigma. We have to analyse our own attitudes in order credibly to promote tolerance and respect for diversity in all its richness. Change begins at home.

We must remember the nameless, faceless and voiceless in our deliberations. How?

By reinforcing respect for humanitarian law and by developing sustainable solutions to humanitarian challenges. Through dialogue, listening to one another, and respecting diversity. By putting our words into action. To this end I encourage you to make a pledge, individually or together with others. This is one way of translating the goodwill of Conference members into concrete commitments.

National Societies are auxiliaries to the public authorities. They are also independent humanitarian actors, bound by the Fundamental Principles defined in our Statutes.

Governments are our partners in both our national and international work. Partnership is key to greater results, at home and in the field.

Immediately when a disaster strikes, the National Red Cross or Red Crescent Society *is there*, on the ground, with its staff and volunteers and partners. It remains there when all others have left. No matter how efficient we are internationally, it is the role of those on the spot to be in charge during those first crucial hours. It is therefore essential that National Societies have the capacity to act and to deliver, and that there are clear agreements on who does what in such situations. Only then can we empower vulnerable populations.

We are present – everywhere. We are a global network reaching out to all corners of the earth. We form a chain of humanity. We deliver impartial help. We don't take sides. We side with the victims. Our everyday work is evidence of how we implement our mission, which is to alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Our staff and volunteers the world over act and live our Fundamental Principles.

There is wide public awareness of the Movement's presence and involvement in conflicts, crises and emergencies. We also hope for better awareness of and adherence to the provisions of international humanitarian law.

With attention comes expectation, and threats – as we have recently and very painfully experienced. The emblems symbolizing neutral protection and assistance have become vulnerable themselves. How can our humanitarian workers carry out their mission in a security environment in which our most basic operations are under threat?

This is a challenge to our primary mission: to be there where the victims are. We must somehow face this challenge. If we fail, access to humanitarian assistance will be at risk, and the victims and the beneficiaries will lose out. We cannot allow this to happen. Nelson Mandela once said that “the Red Cross was a beacon of humanity within the dark inhumane world of political imprisonment”.

I feel confident that this Conference will add its significant mark towards building our collective future. There is hope. Suffering and misery are not unavoidable. Solutions do exist.

This Conference can send a strong message to the world on the protection of human dignity. Together we can make a difference to the lives of people affected by armed conflicts, disasters and disease. We owe this to the victims. But our commitment must go beyond a message, beyond documents, and lead to immediate action. We must be bold, creative and decisive. The expectations are high.

In the days ahead, let the voices of the victims and the voices of hope echo in our minds. Let their voices echo here and around the world.

(Applause)

Ms Caroline Wyatt, BBC Paris correspondent

(Original English)

The work of the Red Cross and Red Crescent was and is guided by seven Fundamental Principles. They are: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality.

To begin with these were not written down. It was not until 1921 that they were added to the Statutes, and only in 1965 that the present seven principles were finally defined.

All of the Movement's components are committed to them and required to promote them, so we shall do so here today.

Screening of the video: *The Fundamental Principles*

It is unlikely that the five Swiss citizens who in 1863 met and conceived the idea of the Red Cross could have imagined it would become the network of global organizations represented here today.

The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has always valued its Swiss origins, from which it has drawn inspiration as a neutral and independent Movement for the past 140 years. Its very first emblem mirrored the Swiss flag, and the Swiss Government was the natural depository for the Geneva Conventions – which I have seen operating successfully in practice, helping to protect both vulnerable civilians in war zones and prisoners of war.

I would like to warmly welcome Federal Councillor Micheline Calmy-Rey, Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, representing that same Swiss Government.

**Address by Ms Micheline Calmy-Rey,
Federal Councillor, Head of the Federal
Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland**

(Original French)

Your Royal Highness, Your Excellencies, Mr President of the International Committee of the Red Cross and Mr President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Mr President of the Council of State of the Republic and Canton of Geneva, Mr Mayor, Distinguished delegates from the National Societies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to speak at the opening ceremony of the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

Because of their humanitarian tradition, Switzerland and in particular Geneva feel they have close ties with the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

It is in Geneva that the first in a long series of treaties was signed, in 1864. The aim was to guarantee the protection of the wounded, prisoners of war and the civilian population.

Switzerland is one of the High Contracting Parties to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols of 1977, of which it is also the depository, and as such it is fully aware of its duties under those instruments.

Let us think back to the Battle of Solferino in 1859, and to the founding fathers of the ICRC and the International Movement: what Henry Dunant, Gustave Moynier, Henri Dufour, Louis Appia and

Théodore Maunoir did then remains as topical and powerful today.

More than ever, attention must focus on the most vulnerable. Since the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, this has unfortunately been demonstrated in countless armed conflicts and natural disasters.

The Conference has an important and difficult task : to lay the common humanitarian groundwork enabling the Movement to continue its work.

The principle of universality is one of the Movement's founding principles; it must be guaranteed and even strengthened. In this respect, I should in particular like to reaffirm the determination of Switzerland, as the depositary of the Geneva Conventions, to continue, as soon as circumstances permit, the process leading to the adoption of a third protocol to those Conventions. It goes without saying that Switzerland will stay in close contact with the Movement in order to decide when the time is right to resume the diplomatic process and the negotiations.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Conference has an ambitious programme. We expect it to have tangible and lasting results for stronger and universal protection of human dignity. Switzerland would like to see the Conference produce a concrete agenda for humanitarian action and a courageous final declaration. My country will make pledges, in some cases in partnership with others, in relevant fields such as the struggle against anti-personnel landmines and small arms, the dissemination of international humanitarian law, disaster prevention and preparedness and emergency relief operations.

What is more, it will be our duty to place the needs of human beings at the heart of our reflections and work, given the growing importance in recent years of human security. We will thus find new means of forging a tangible link between security, development, peace policy, human rights and humanitarianism.

The International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent is evidence of the Movement's traditions and universality as much as of its modernity: it is the oldest international conference, and gives the floor, on an equal footing, to the States party to the Geneva Conventions and to the Movement's different components. It is a channel through which the voice of civil society can be heard.

The Movement's seven principles – humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality – have lost none of their strength. At present, however, independence, neutrality and impartiality no longer constitute an absolute guarantee of security for humanitarian players.

It is vital to find solutions untouched by any ideology, able to ensure the inviolability of protected persons, in particular civilians caught up in armed conflicts, and

humanitarian workers. The international community must be resolutely committed on this point.

In the midst of crisis and suffering, humanitarian action makes room for tolerance and humanity. That action is increasingly laid open to doubt and threatened. The very security of humanitarian workers is compromised, their activities rejected and the protection of the civilian population seriously undermined.

Allow me to take this opportunity to thank all the staff of the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, of the ICRC and of the International Federation, and all those working in the field for other organizations. I should like to express the deep respect I feel for their courage and conviction.

Let us not forget that these people often work in the most hostile conditions, at risk of their lives; we pay homage to those who, in recent years, have lost their lives in the course of their duties.

Ladies and gentlemen, Switzerland attaches special importance to three points on the Conference agenda: the reaffirmation and the strengthening of international humanitarian law, the fight to prevent the spread of communicable diseases and disaster prevention.

We are witnesses to numerous armed conflicts. Some have lasted for decades and oppose government troops against non-State armed movements. In the wake of the 11 September attacks, the validity and scope of international humanitarian law have been laid open to question.

Do new forms of conflict call for new norms? Perhaps, but in any event, the first thing to do is to apply international humanitarian law to all armed conflicts, because the protection of people depends on faithful and systematic compliance with the law of Geneva and the law of The Hague.

In this respect, enhanced application of international humanitarian law poses no small challenge. The recent entry into force of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court is without doubt a major step in the right direction. At the same time, other application mechanisms should be put into operation between States: the International Fact-Finding Commission established under Article 90 of 1977 Protocol I additional to the Geneva Conventions was conceived for that purpose. It is ready to become operational. About 60 States have accepted its competence. That figure is growing constantly, and I invite all the parties to Protocol I to accept the Commission's competence.

Another challenge is to ensure respect for international humanitarian law and its concrete implementation by non-State armed actors. In this respect, I should like to salute the role and the constructive and hopeful initiatives of civil society.

When it comes to the second point, the spread of HIV/AIDS is not limited to developing countries or countries in transition: the entire world is paying a

heavy toll. For this reason, we have drawn up a national HIV/AIDS programme for 2004-2008, in accordance with the strategies for action of the United Nations, WHO and UNAIDS, in order to redouble our efforts, not just in the world but also in Switzerland, to fight the pandemic.

For the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the fight to halt the spread of communicable diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis and AIDS is a daily battle. The Agenda for Humanitarian Action provides for concrete steps to be taken in this respect. The Movement's action, and in particular that of the National Societies, will benefit from and be strengthened thereby. Their proximity to those affected enables them to play what is undeniably a major role in the fight against this scourge, and I thank them.

Moreover, in order to promote coordination and coherence between the States, the Movement and civil society, we are pleased to be able to host, here in Geneva, the three institutions playing a decisive role in this context, namely, WHO, UNAIDS and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. What is more, the Swiss Government has decided in principle to grant the Global Fund international organization status.

The third internal and international theme is disaster prevention. The governments and the National Societies, the International Federation and the ICRC are all directly concerned. It is crucial to encourage the emergence of a culture of prevention, both in the industrialized world and among developing countries and countries in transition. When natural disasters strike, Switzerland, within the limits of its means, is always ready to act in the framework of international cooperation and humanitarian aid. In the face of such disasters, solidarity knows no borders.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish you great courage and tenacity in the important task you have before you. The success of the Conference depends on you. I am confident that the outcome of the 28th International Conference will lead to tangible measures. Tonight, people in distress watch us with hope; let us do everything in our power not to disappoint them.

(Applause)

Ms Caroline Wyatt, BBC Paris correspondent

(Original English)

The 28th International Conference will focus on a number of issues which are key to protecting human dignity – people missing in conflict, weapons of war, reducing risk from disasters and dealing with the stigma of HIV/AIDS.

The Red Cross and Red Crescent do not have a monopoly on action in tackling these issues. They work with many others, in government, in the UN system, in NGOs, or in grassroots organizations set up by people who have directly experienced a threat to their own human dignity.

Two such organizations are represented here today. First, I would like to welcome Visaka Dharmadasa, President of the Parents of Servicemen Missing in Action in Sri Lanka.

**Address by Ms Visaka Dharmadasa,
President, Parents of Servicemen Missing
in Action (Sri Lanka)**

(Original English)

Your Royal Highness, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all I wish to thank the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Standing Commission for giving me the opportunity to share my ideas with you today.

At this moment I wish to draw your attention to the very serious issue of missing persons. All of us know that thousands are reported missing because of armed conflicts and internal violence every year.

It is important to understand that, when a family member's very existence is in doubt, the trauma that the family has to undergo cannot be described in words. As we all know, the death of a family member, however painful, can be accepted, but not knowing the fate of that person is very different from any other experience one may have in a lifetime.

All families who have next-of-kin who are unaccounted for suffer from isolation, and they may have to spend several years, maybe even decades, in that situation, with serious social repercussions.

Most often it is the family breadwinner who is unaccounted for, and this situation creates very serious economic problems for the family.

As Parents of Servicemen Missing in Action in Sri Lanka, we have understood that several major factors increase the risk of persons becoming missing. One of them is failing to identify the dead. The number of missing can be significantly reduced if parties to conflicts respect the Geneva Conventions, specifically the sections on wearing and respecting identity disks and on the treatment of the wounded and dead, and use accepted methods to identify dead bodies.

We wish to request from all powers, no matter what their situation, whether they have ratified the Geneva Conventions or not, to respect and act in accordance with these basic humanitarian requirements and to comply with international humanitarian law at all times.

The time has come for governments and other authorities to recognize the role of associations of families of those who are unaccounted for, and to give them the necessary support, as they play a very crucial part in resolving the issue of missing persons and reducing the impact on the families. These associations also have the capacity and

the ability to build bridges across the divide, which helps tremendously in the healing and reconciliation processes.

On behalf of all those families who are undergoing severe mental anguish because they do not even know if their loved ones are alive, I wish to thank the International Committee of the Red Cross for its commendable efforts to bring the issue of missing persons to the top of the global agenda and for upholding the right to know as a basic humanitarian requirement.

In conclusion, I have a request of all of you who are present here today: please cooperate in every possible way to bring an end to this grave violation of basic human rights, which hurts not just individuals but entire families and thus society at large.

(Applause)

Ms Caroline Wyatt, BBC Paris correspondent

(Original English)

HIV/AIDS is one of the major health challenges of today's world. It has a devastating impact on the developing world – killing those whose health and strength is vital to further developing their countries; it leaves behind huge numbers of orphans, forced to cope with the loss of their parents and often facing the reality of living with HIV/AIDS themselves. Those affected by the disease not only have to confront the medical realities but often the serious stigma attached to their condition. I would like to welcome Julian Hows, European Representative of GNP+, the Global Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS, who will speak to you today.

Address by Mr Julian Hows, European Representative Global Network of People living with HIV/AIDS

(Original English)

As someone living with HIV, I am privileged to have the opportunity to speak to you here today. My body has been fighting this virus for nearly fifteen years – and without the access that I have to anti-HIV drugs (which is denied to so many of my brothers and sisters) that battle would have already ended in death. I, like many of my brothers and sisters, have also had to fight against the stigma and discrimination that still exist against those of us with or suspected of having HIV. Even in the UK, I have faced discrimination at work, and been treated with disdain and contempt by some of my health care providers.

So I stand here as a member of the Global Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS. As such, I have to remind everybody in this hall that six million of my brothers and sisters need antiretroviral medication now. Not tomorrow, not next year, now. Having said that, we welcome the efforts of some governments and our Red Cross and Red Crescent partners to provide access to treatment.

However, we must remember that whatever efforts we all make in providing such therapy we continue to run the danger of doing too little, too late, unless new infections are also prevented.

So how do we do this? HIV/AIDS is a global pandemic, and I stand here as a European with a particular history. Europe is a region where the HIV/AIDS epidemic is growing fast, very fast, largely driven now by the sharing of injecting drug equipment – an entirely preventable disaster. So I plead for all Conference participants to support, or at least not to hinder, the work of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in responding to the humanitarian needs of all people living with HIV/AIDS, including marginalized groups such as drug users, men who have sex with men, sex workers. For without the space for such responses, without approaches that reach out and include these vulnerable groups, not only will this epidemic remain undefeated, it will flourish. I say this as a former sex worker and intravenous drug user, and so I have experience of this at first hand. Please listen.

Partnership with us, people living with the virus – empowered through truly being accorded dignity and respect – offers the best strategy to reach out to those groups.

I believe that these approaches express the Fundamental Principles in a way that is fitting for the 21st century: working in partnership with us, not merely as beneficiaries.

So let us all, Conference participants, be inspired and guided by the public health evidence and the directness of the Fundamental Principles – for they truly provide hope as well as assistance to so many.

(Applause)

Ms Caroline Wyatt, BBC Paris correspondent

(Original English)

The canton of Geneva has been home to the ICRC for almost 140 years and to the International Federation for more than 60 years. Both institutions have become part of the landscape. Joined more recently by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Museum, Geneva is now associated with the Red Cross and Red Crescent across the globe. The Conference is very happy to welcome the President of the Council of State of the Republic and Canton of Geneva, Laurent Moutinot.

Address by Mr Laurent Moutinot, President of the Council of State of the Republic and Canton of Geneva

(Original French)

Your Royal Highness, Madam Federal Councillor, Mr Mayor, Mr President of the ICRC and Mr President of the International Federation, Distinguished Representatives of the federal, cantonal and municipal authorities, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

When one considers the effort required to organize even the most modest humanitarian project today and the obstacles to be overcome, one realizes the full scope of the work accomplished by the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

There are many obstacles on the road to peace, and it is up to us to work constantly to overcome them.

We know that peace is much more than the absence of war: it is, it must be the ideal situation in which all the fundamental rights proclaimed in all international humanitarian law and human rights instruments are implemented and respected.

Peace is the right to life, to liberty, to express oneself, to dignity. It is also the right to work, to housing, to care and education. All these rights must be defended by means other than weapons.

The numerous organizations established in Geneva and working on the fundamental task of constructing peace are therefore so many signs of hope for the world's most destitute men and women.

Among these organizations, the ICRC and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have a special role because of the scope of their mission and the recognized universal character of their protective emblems.

The deliberations of the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent will focus on essential matters, as reflected in the subject of Commission A1: protecting human dignity by enhancing respect for international humanitarian law. You have before you an ambitious and admirable programme, one that has the resolute support of the Government of Geneva – to reaffirm human dignity, to reaffirm the primacy of the law, to reaffirm that the aim of the law is to protect human dignity.

The Geneva Council of State wishes you every success in your deliberations, because, as Federal Councillor Calmy-Rey has just pointed out, whether or not international law and civil society are strengthened in the face of the new challenges facing us today – as they must be – depends on the steps you take.

(Applause)

Ms Caroline Wyatt, BBC Paris correspondent

(Original English)

The city of Geneva has become the humanitarian capital of the world. Year after year, decade after decade, it has welcomed Red Cross and Red Crescent representatives from National Societies around the globe. Today that Red and Cross Red Crescent family numbers 181 member Societies.

The warmth of the city's welcome has cemented the link between it and this global network. And of course Geneva has its own local Red Cross, whose volunteers are here with us today to help make the Conference a

success. It is with great pleasure that I ask the mayor of Geneva, Christian Ferrazino, to address the Conference.

Address by Mr Christian Ferrazino, on behalf of the authorities of the City of Geneva

(Original French)

Your Royal Highness, Madam Federal Councillor, Mr President of the Council of State, Distinguished Delegates of the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Distinguished Representatives of the political and diplomatic world, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the authorities of the city of Geneva, I should like to start by bidding you a cordial welcome to this city of peace. As we demonstrated yesterday, Geneva has, I believe, upheld its reputation. I should also like to take the opportunity thus offered to thank Micheline Calmy-Rey for having given renewed impetus to the spirit of Geneva.

You know how close the ties binding Geneva and the humanitarian organizations are.

Indeed, the Red Cross came into being almost 150 years ago after a citizen of Geneva, Henry Dunant, painted a horrifying picture of a battlefield in Italy in his book, *A Memory of Solferino*. That book was subsequently sent to all the sovereigns and governments of Europe, to encourage nations to consider the plight of the victims of war.

They did so a few years later, in 1864, when they signed the initial Geneva Convention.

In a way, that date sealed Geneva's international destiny as a town of peace and a city of integration, dialogue and negotiation which hosted all the initial efforts made in the late 19th century to establish a responsible international community bound by the ties of fellowship.

In the mid-20th century, the changing nature of conflicts, tragically symbolized by the disaster of two utterly devastating world wars that traumatized people, prompted the Red Cross to review the Conventions.

Adopted in 1949, the four Geneva Conventions are intended to protect the victims of war, as we have just been reminded.

The 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions in 1999 provided an opportunity to recall to the world the existence of an aid organization, the International Committee of the Red Cross, that was born in Geneva, acts on behalf of all the victims of war and internal violence and endeavours to ensure respect for the rules of humanity limiting the use of armed violence.

The road since taken highlights the pivotal role played by the Red Cross and Red Crescent worldwide to ensure respect for the Conventions. Today we look on that remarkable work with admiration and gratitude.

Admiration and gratitude for the determination, courage and generosity of all those men and women who have spared no effort throughout the world to ensure respect for the law and provide assistance and protection to the population, sometimes at the risk of their lives. The city of Geneva would like to pay them the homage they deserve.

The special ties between Geneva and humanitarian action which I mentioned a moment ago naturally prompts our city to remind the countries of the world of their commitment to alleviate the suffering of the victims of war.

Geneva is sometimes – even all too often – criticized for doing this. But Geneva would not be true to itself were it to act otherwise. It is, moreover, in this spirit that this afternoon the city temporarily renamed the well-known *Pont du Mont-Blanc* the Geneva Conventions Bridge.

We have set flags flying in the heart of the city; they recall the relatively unknown purport of the Geneva Conventions. Our city thus wishes to reaffirm its peaceful and international character and the importance of the Conventions that bear its name.

For in the present circumstance, it is unfortunately necessary constantly to call for respect for the fundamental humanitarian principles whose purpose is to protect the human being as such.

This “humanitarian emergency” obliges the Red Cross and Red Crescent to be present wherever necessary. It prompts them to work with their teams in what are sometimes very harsh and often difficult conditions.

We, the public authorities, always follow developments in the difficult situations you face very closely and with a great deal of concern. We are always eager to back the efforts of humanitarian organizations, in all circumstances, to make their skills and their special capacities even more effective in the field.

The main theme of this Conference, we have said, is the protection of human dignity and respect for the law.

It is indeed crucial, in the face of the violation of the most basic of principles, that the international community be able to mobilize, to act and to impose respect for fundamental freedoms wherever they are flouted.

It is just as crucial to ensure respect for the law, in order to prevent violence and war from spiralling out of control.

It is our heartfelt hope that your deliberations during the next few days in Geneva will meet the objectives you have set. Your presence in our city reminds us, in any case, of the need constantly to fight all infringements of the rights of the person.

That struggle must remain our primary objective.
(Applause)

Ms Caroline Wyatt, BBC Paris correspondent

(Original English)

I would like to thank all the speakers here today: Princess Margriet of the Netherlands, Micheline Calmy-Rey, Visaka Dharmadasa, Julian Hows, Laurent Moutinot and Christian Ferrazino.

I would also like to thank the organizers for all their months of hard work in making the Conference possible today.

I would further like to take this opportunity to allow all those here to say a heartfelt thank you to Her Royal Highness Princess Margriet of the Netherlands for her inspirational work in chairing the Standing Commission for the past eight years, and would therefore like to invite Baron Kraijenhoff to the podium.

Address by Baron Kraijenhoff, former Chairman, Honorary Member, of the Netherlands Red Cross

(Original English)

Your Royal Highness, Dear Princess Margriet,

To chair the Standing Commission seems to be the *contradictio in terminis*. It is not an easy chair either, but the way you have held it for eight years with utmost devotion puts you on an equal footing with the unforgettable Lady Angela Limerick.

The Standing Commission stands for unity of the Movement, and in some parts of today's world, as you already said, our emblems are being targeted and the Conventions ignored. That unity is therefore more important than ever. We can only hope that all States will be united in their resolve to respect and protect the Geneva Conventions.

You have shown that tolerance, compassion and strict adherence to principles can go together. Your friends wanted to express their respect in a *liber amicorum*. Having served for years on the *barème* Commission, I used to be considered a bookkeeper. Today I am happy to be a book donor. I would like to conclude by saying thank you for being who you are.

(Applause)

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

I am speechless. Those who know me well will realize that that is something quite special. I am at a loss for words. I am very moved and very thankful. I would like to thank from the bottom of my heart all those who have contributed to this book, which I will treasure and which will provide a lasting memory of my eight years on the Standing Commission.

(Applause)

Ms Caroline Wyatt, BBC Paris correspondent*(Original English)*

I hope that the theme of the 28th International Conference, "Protecting human dignity", will inspire you in the coming days in the debates and workshops, as government delegations and National Societies enjoy the opportunity to come together here in Geneva. In an age of increasing uncertainty, rarely has the task of protecting human dignity been of such vital importance.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action makes a difference to the lives of millions of people around the world each year. I am pleased to close this opening ceremony with a message from someone who has had direct experience of that action and who has dedicated his own life to the protection of human dignity. He needs no further introduction.

Screening of the video:**Mr Nelson Mandela's message****Mr Nelson Mandela, Video message***(Original English)*

We wish to convey to all present at the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent our sincere apologies for not being able to attend in person. We do, however, want you to know that we are with you in spirit.

The work that you do has inspired generations of human beings committed to building a world of compassionate caring for each other across hostile divides, and in a world that remains divided and in conflict, your work continues to hold aloft a flame of hope.

We wish that we could have been there with you to pay our tribute and to assure you of our unstinting support for the message you send out into the world.

The theme of this year's Conference revolves around the protection of human dignity. That you chose to make that theme the focus of this year's Conference speaks of the consistency of your commitment. The beginning of the 21st century has brought, unfortunately, more portents of dehumanizing strife and division.

New divides are appearing in the post-Cold War era. We are faced with the threat of global division and ten-

sion that could be as deep and even deeper than those of the Cold War, and those global divisions always undermine respect for human dignity.

In a world still so grossly unequal and divided both in material terms and in terms of power and influence, our hope for orderly co-existence and for the protection of human dignity lies in global cooperation and an uncompromising multilateral approach to dealing with our problems, conflicts, differences and challenges. For almost one and half centuries the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has stood as such an organ of international and multilateral cooperation.

To speak with you today is a profound affirmation of the values of global cooperation and respect for the basic human rights of all, irrespective of all social or national differences. As always in these circumstances, I cannot conclude without referring to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, without doubt the greatest threat faced by humankind today.

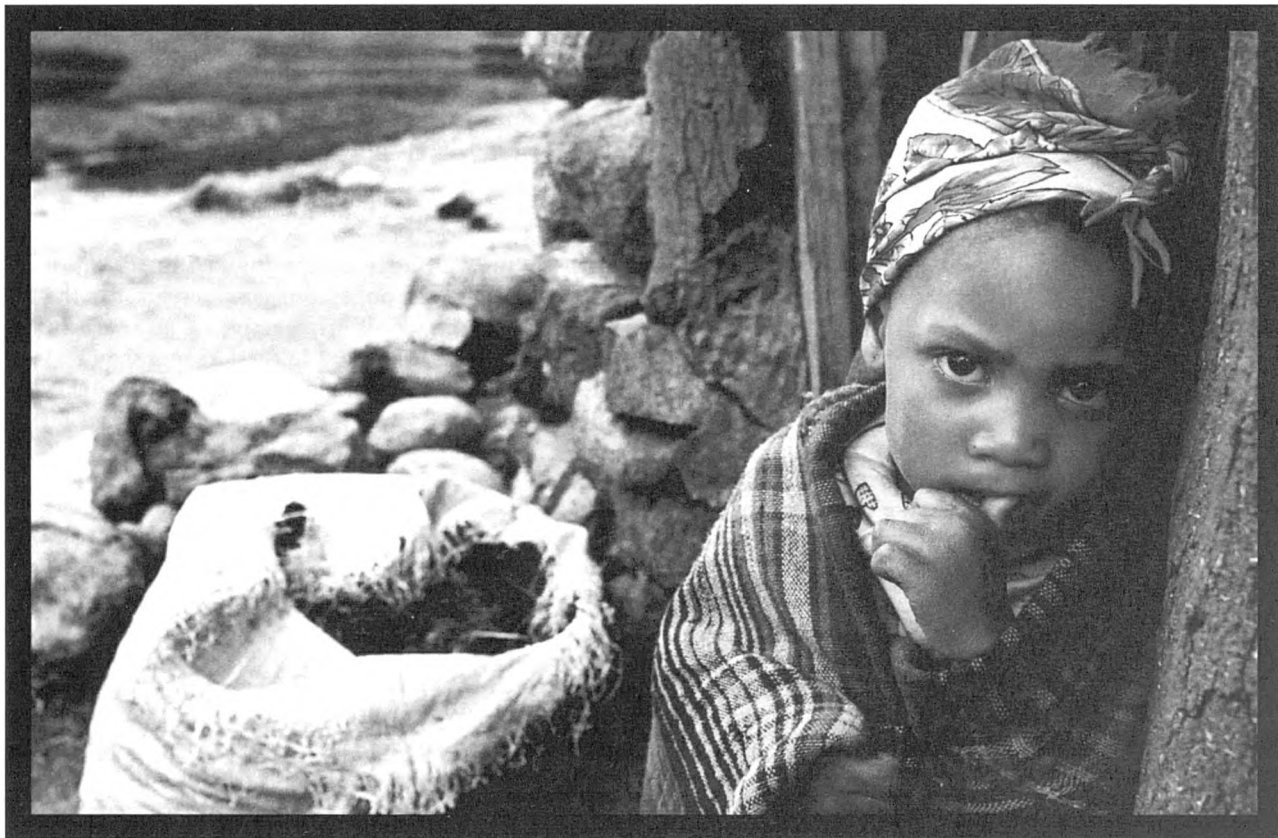
The most basic dignity, "the right to live and to live healthily", is being undercut by this destructive pandemic. You have a crucial role to play in this regard as well. We salute you and join with you in this quest for human solidarity and caring.

May your deliberations be fruitful and may your noble work continue to be a flame of hope and inspiration, as it has been to me and others in circumstances of great adversity, and may the quest for a world of human dignity never be defeated. May there always be such as you in the world, who believe in the basic dignity of all human beings.

*(Applause)***Ms Caroline Wyatt, BBC Paris correspondent***(Original English)*

I have been asked to remind you that the nominations for the elections to the Standing Commission close on Wednesday morning at 8.30.

Finally, I would like to thank you for your patience, and as a reward for that patience, I would like to invite you all to attend a reception in the room to your right, hosted by the Swiss authorities. I would be very grateful if you could allow those in the front two rows to exit first.



The aim is to protect human dignity from the devastating consequences of HIV/AIDS and other diseases faced, in particular, by groups that are stigmatized, discriminated against or socially marginalized...and often lack access to comprehensive prevention, treatment, care and support.

Agenda for Humanitarian Action, General objective 4

Marko Kokic / International Federation / Lesotho, 2000

4.5 FIRST PLENARY MEETING

3 December 2003

9 a.m.

1. Opening of the First Plenary Meeting by H.R.H Princess Margriet of the Netherlands

**H.R.H. Princess Margriet, Chairman of the
Standing Commission**

(Original English)

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Representatives of governments, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement and international organizations, Dear Colleagues and Friends,

It is my privilege and honour to welcome all the delegations, on behalf of the Standing Commission, to the First Plenary Meeting of the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

The International Conference is a unique forum. While it is common these days to distinguish between the role of States and the role of NGOs in international fora, I wish to highlight once again that the International Conference brings together States – in their capacity as parties to the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols – and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement with the aim of acting upon the concerns and challenges that arise in the humanitarian field. This is indeed a special partnership.

While the Red Cross and Red Crescent engage the States in their concern for humanity, the States in turn are called upon to continue to respect their humanitarian obligations and commitments. We are very happy that there is a high level of participation by governments and National Societies.

In 1999 we focussed on “The power of humanity”. This year’s theme is “Protecting human dignity” – a challenge we must meet in the coming three and a half days, as we build a consensus on the Declaration and the Agenda for Humanitarian Action. To protect the human dignity of the victims of the life-shattering events arising from conflicts, disasters and disease requires sacrifice and concessions from those who have the power to help.

Our strong commitment to achieving human dignity for all through the outcomes of this Conference reminds us of the importance of implementing our previous and ongoing undertakings in the humanitarian field as well. Later this morning we will hear a report on how we have carried out the obligations and commitments contained in the 1999 Plan of Action.

I am confident that this Conference will work in the spirit of humanity and of respect for the Fundamental Principles of our Movement, as defined in our Statutes. Humanity is at the core of the Red Cross/Red Crescent. Humanity is the first of our seven Fundamental Principles.

These principles guide us in bringing protection and assistance to people in need.

With these words I hereby declare the First Plenary Meeting of the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent open.

(Applause)

Before we commence our important work, I would like to suggest that we commemorate here the devoted delegates, staff and volunteers of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement who have lost their lives in the line of duty while serving the victims and people in need. It is difficult to accept that this year an unprecedented number of humanitarian workers have lost their lives. May their sacrifice, their courage and their audacity never be forgotten. Let them strengthen our resolve to protect human dignity.

Would you please rise for a minute of silence.

(Minute of silence)

Thank you.

I propose that we now proceed with the agenda for this plenary meeting, which was adopted by the Council of Delegates in accordance with Article 14, paragraph 2 (b) of the Movement’s Statutes. Pursuant to Rule 15, paragraph 3 of the Movement’s Rules of Procedure, the second item on the agenda is the election of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary General, Assistant Secretaries General and other officers of the Conference on the proposal of the Council of Delegates. It is my great pleasure to call on the Chairman of the Council of Delegates, Dr Jakob Kellenberger, to introduce the Council’s proposals for the Conference officers.

2. Election of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary General, Assistant Secretaries General and other officers of the Conference

3. Establishment of the Conference’s subsidiary bodies, adoption of their agendas and election of their presiding officers

**Mr Jakob Kellenberger, Chairman of the
Council of Delegates**

(Original English)

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Council of Delegates has decided to propose to the Conference the following persons to fill posts at the Conference: as Chairman of the Conference, Mr Jaime Ricardo Fernández Urriola of the Red Cross Society of Panama; as Vice-Chairs, Ambassador Yolande Biké of Gabon, Mr Abdelkader Boukhroufa of

the Algerian Red Crescent, Mr Hisham Harun Hashim of the Malaysian Red Crescent Society and Mr René Rhinow of the Swiss Red Cross; as Chairman of the Drafting Committee, Ambassador Johan Molander of Sweden; as Vice-Chairs of the Drafting Committee, Ms Norma Nascimbene de Dumont of Argentina, Ambassador Valentina Rugwabiza of Rwanda and Ms Heike Spieker of the German Red Cross; as Chairman of Commission A, Ambassador Amina Chawahir Mohamed of Kenya; as Vice-Chairs of Commission A, Ambassador Pablo Macedo of Mexico and Ms Elzbieta Mikos-Skuza of the Polish Red Cross; as Chairman of Commission B, Ms Martine Letts of the Australian Red Cross; as Vice-Chairs of Commission B, Ambassador Love Mtesa of Zambia and Mr Abdul Rahman Attar of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent; as Rapporteur of the Conference, Ms Marie Gervais-Vidricaire of Canada; as Rapporteurs of Commissions A and B, Ambassador Holger Rotkirch of the Finnish Red Cross and Ms Jelma de la Peña of the Philippine National Red Cross, of Commission A2, Ms Jacqueline Boga of the Papua New Guinea Red Cross, of Commission A3, Ms Carole Powell of the Jamaica Red Cross, of Commission B2, Ms Lucy Brown of the American Red Cross, and of Commission B3, Ambassador Tibor Tóth of Hungary; as Secretary General of the Conference, Ambassador Thomas Kupfer of Switzerland; as Assistant Secretaries General, Ms Angela Gussing-Sapina of the ICRC and Mr Frank Mohrhauer of the International Federation. Do you agree with these proposals?

(Applause)

4. Information on the procedures for electing the members of the Standing Commission, adopting the Conference Declaration and Agenda for Humanitarian Action and recording pledges

**Mr Jaime Ricardo Fernández Urriola,
Chairman of the Conference**

(Original Spanish)

Your Royal Highness, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Dear Friends from the Red Cross and Red Crescent,

I am honoured and deeply moved to take the chair of this International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, to belong to this great Movement in which so many cultures speak as one, bringing hope and succour to those who for one reason or another need a helping hand. This is only possible when the most exemplary feelings of love for one's fellow man are gathered together.

We rejoice in the honour thus conferred, and in that of hailing from the Americas and from a Spanish-speaking country. Like many of the regions present today, it has suffered disasters, disease and armed conflicts. We have been present in those situations in one way or another in order to alleviate human suffering.

For this reason, I propose to conduct the Conference deliberations in the spirit of the Movement's Fundamental Principles. I hope the Conference will be beneficial and strengthen our response capacity and the Movement's unity. Allow me to express my deepest thanks.

(Applause)

I think we can consider the Bureau of the Conference to have been constituted in accordance with Article 16 of the Rules of Procedure of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It will be a pleasure for me to work during the Conference with such eminent and well-known people.

As the Chairman, it is my duty to comment on some of the organizational aspects of the Conference. Drawing on the experience of four years ago at the 27th International Conference, the Standing Commission proposes that this Conference adopt, in respect of the documents it will produce, a working method similar to that agreed at the last Conference. The Conference will therefore be asked to consider a declaration and an agenda for humanitarian action (the latter was called the Plan of Action in 1999). These two important Conference documents will be adopted when we approve Resolution 1.

The Declaration will reflect the position of the States and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement on the main contemporary humanitarian concerns and challenges, and will propose general and long-term orientations.

The Agenda for Humanitarian Action will provide a framework for specific action, establishing a series of objectives and action-oriented mechanisms.

The agenda includes four key humanitarian concerns or topics, the aim being to enhance protection during armed conflicts and reduce the effects of disasters and disease on vulnerable groups.

Allow me to remind you that the Conference must try to approve documents and resolutions by consensus, in keeping with the Movement's Rules of Procedure and with long-standing Conference tradition.

Structure of the Conference

The plenary, the commissions and the Drafting Committee are the three main fora in which the delegates can discuss the items on the Conference agenda and programme. Eleven workshops will be held in tandem with the Conference, enabling the participants to discuss other, related topics and humanitarian issues.

Plenary meetings

During the First Plenary Meeting there will be two speakers: the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Dr Kellenberger, and the President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Mr Juan Manuel Suárez del Toro Rivero. Their statements will be followed by a general debate on contemporary humanitarian challenges and

protecting human dignity. The morning session will end at lunchtime with the presentation of a report on women and war, after which Her Majesty Queen Rania al-Abdullah of Jordan will inaugurate an exhibition on the same subject. This afternoon's programme has been slightly modified, with the plenary meeting continuing with the presentation of the Conference Declaration. We will then resume the general debate on contemporary humanitarian challenges and protecting human dignity, both of which are covered in the Declaration.

We have unexpectedly received so many requests for the floor during this first day of general debate that we have had to replace Commissions A1 and B1 with a plenary session. You will find detailed information on the change in the second version of the Conference agenda and programme.

The Second Plenary Meeting will take place on Friday, 5 December and will last all day. It will elect the new members of the Standing Commission and will hear presentations on the special reports on the auxiliary role of the National Societies and on customary international humanitarian law, and the report on the question of the emblem. A special session will be devoted to voluntary service, to coincide with the celebration of International Volunteer Day. The general debate started today in the First Plenary Meeting will be continued.

The Third and Final Plenary Meeting will be held on Saturday. We will be given an overview of the pledges made, and will hear reports from the workshops, the commissions and the Drafting Committee. It is at that point that the Conference is to adopt the Declaration and Agenda for Humanitarian Action, approving Resolution 1, and the other resolutions drawn up by the Drafting Committee.

I respectfully ask you to note that during the plenary each speaker will have the floor for a maximum five minutes. For today the list of speakers is already full, but you can still sign up for Friday's plenary or take the floor in the commission meetings.

Tomorrow the two commissions, Commission A and Commission B, will meet in tandem. They are open to all Conference participants. Each commission will hold two sessions, one in the morning (Commissions A2 and B2) and one in the afternoon (Commissions A3 and B3).

Commission A, which is chaired by Ambassador Amina Mohamed, will consider how to enhance protection in armed conflicts. Commission B, which is chaired by Ms Martine Letts, will discuss how to reduce the risk and effects of disasters and disease.

The main themes will be presented before they are debated by the commissions. It is not necessary to sign up beforehand to speak during the commission sessions. Statements have been limited to three minutes in order to facilitate the flow of the debate. The commis-

sion rapporteurs will inform the Drafting Committee orally about the main points covered.

The Drafting Committee will finalize the documents that are subsequently to be adopted by the Conference. The Declaration, the Agenda for Humanitarian Action, Resolution 1 and the other resolutions will therefore be discussed in that committee, which is chaired by Ambassador Johan Molander. The Drafting Committee is open-ended and will start its deliberations today at 2 p.m. in rooms 3 and 4. It will meet every day until Friday. How long the sessions last and whether any night sessions are held will depend on how quickly a consensus is reached on the documents. The Committee will start its work today with a general reading of the Declaration, the Agenda for Humanitarian Action and Resolution 1. It will then study those documents in greater detail. The Chairman of the Drafting Committee will decide on the Committee's working method for each document (the Declaration, the Agenda for Humanitarian Action, Resolution 1 and the other resolutions).

If necessary, Ambassador Molander will launch a process of informal consultations or will set up a subgroup or groups on specific topics. Once the Drafting Committee has reached a consensus on the documents, they will be submitted for approval to the Conference at its Third and Final Plenary Meeting, on Saturday.

I would also like to inform the Conference that I have received from the Council of Delegates the text of Resolution 5, on the emblem, and have forwarded it to the Conference Bureau.

The workshops

Eleven workshops will be held at the same time as the Conference. The workshop themes and methods have been determined by various Conference members. The workshops will take place every day between 5 and 6 p.m. They are informal meetings that offer the participants an additional opportunity to analyse and exchange views on a number of issues related to the themes of the Conference and other matters of humanitarian concern.

The workshops are not an official part of the Conference, but rather fora for debate. They do not need to take decisions or reach a consensus. During the Final Plenary Meeting the Conference will hear a brief report on the workshops.

Lastly, I would like to draw your attention to Rule 2 of the Movement's Rules of Procedure, which grants the persons tasked with chairing the commissions and the Drafting Committee the same rights and obligations as the Conference Chairman. This means in particular that they must ensure strict compliance with Article 11, paragraph 4 of the Statutes, which stipulates: "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". We are firmly committed to those Principles and urge you to respect them.

We shall now move to item 4 of the agenda and programme. I ask the Secretary General, Ambassador Kupfer, to introduce item 4 of the agenda.

Ambassador Thomas Kupfer, Secretary General of the Conference

(Original French)

All delegations today received an explanatory note on the procedure, terms and conditions for the election of the five members of the Standing Commission. I will therefore be brief. The election procedure is governed by Rules 20 and 21 of the Rules of Procedure of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Those texts were distributed with the other Conference documents. The deadline for submitting nominations has run out. The Rules of Procedure indicate that the nominations must have been submitted 48 hours before the opening of the meeting in which the election will take place. The candidates must be National Society members. When you vote, please bear in mind Rule 21 of the Rules of Procedure, which requires that special attention be paid to the candidates' personal qualities and to the principle of fair geographical distribution. You will find the names and résumés of the candidates in your pigeonholes tomorrow. Detailed information on many of the candidates has already been placed on the Movement website. The election will be held during the Second Plenary Meeting, on Friday, 5 December. We therefore ask all delegations to be present on Friday at 8.30 a.m. on the dot, for the roll call of members and the start of voting. If fewer than five candidates obtain an absolute majority in the first round of voting, additional rounds will be organized until five members have been elected. The plenary will continue its deliberations while the election is conducted.

Pledges

The Conference participants are encouraged, as they were four years ago, to make voluntary pledges for the 2004-2007 period, either individually or in partnership. A stand with the pledge forms will be open during the Conference working hours. Duly completed forms will be filed in the Honour Book, which one member of the pledging delegation should sign.

Working languages and interpretation

Simultaneous interpretation services will be provided throughout the Conference in the three working languages, English, French and Spanish, and in Arabic for the meetings of the plenary, the commissions and the Drafting Committee. Interpretation into Russian will also be provided, but only for the plenary meetings and the commissions, and not for the Drafting Committee.

All documents mentioned on the Conference agenda and programme will be distributed in the three working languages of the Conference only.

The media

The media are invited to attend the plenary meetings and the commission sessions. The secretariat will take care of all the practical arrangements. The workshops are also open to the media.

5. Contemporary humanitarian challenges and protecting human dignity

Mr Jaime Ricardo Fernández Urriola, Chairman of the Conference

(Original Spanish)

We will now move to item 5 of the agenda, "Contemporary humanitarian challenges and protecting human dignity". We shall start by hearing from the Presidents of the International Committee of the Red Cross and of the International Federation, who will give us their views on the matter. The first speaker is Mr Kellenberger, President of the ICRC.

5.1 Keynote address by Mr Jakob Kellenberger, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross

(Original English)

Mr Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Protecting human dignity is a simple objective and at the same time a staggering challenge. The objective is simple because it lies at the very heart of humanitarian law and humanitarian action. The challenge is staggering because of the many threats hanging over every human being and, indeed, all humanity, in particular the nature of contemporary armed conflicts.

This morning, I would like to offer an ICRC perspective on our world, working as we do in the midst of armed conflict. I would like to relate to you the view of ICRC delegates working on the ground, reporting on the basis of their daily contact with victims of armed conflicts who suffer, but who also have incredible resources of their own for confronting their ordeals.

The story from the ICRC's delegates is sadly all too familiar – the suffering engendered by armed conflict remains immense and is often lasting. Although the fundamental nature of war and its consequences is unchanging, wars are taking on new forms and displaying new features that expose already vulnerable people to even greater danger. Many non-international armed conflicts, the dominant form of conflict, are marked by recurring attacks on civilians and their property, not only as an indirect effect of combat, but as its very objective. There are many causes for these conflicts, personal struggle for power and wealth remaining one of the most important ones. Increasing polarization in reality is unfortunately also accompanied by increasing

polarization in terms of the words and notions being used. "Others" – whether they are individuals or an entire people – are no longer perceived as partners and as a source of enrichment, but as adversaries, threatening in their strangeness. The lack of dialogue manifests itself not only between countries and between continents, but also within countries and local communities. The readiness to listen to "others" does not reflect the declared will to promote dialogue "between cultures".

Even when conflicts wind down in military terms, they continue to take the lives of people who step on mines, and of people who no longer have access to drinking water or medical care as a result of the fighting. Thousands of families remain without news of relatives who have gone missing. Arbitrary measures, indiscriminate violence and a tit-for-tat mentality continue to dominate too many conflicts.

The end of an armed conflict does not, as we all know, necessarily mean the end of the suffering for many populations that remain marginalized and are forgotten. Their countries' natural resources often attract more interest than their health or education. The humanitarian organizations that went there in response to the emergency provoked by armed conflict must therefore stay on almost indefinitely, throughout the "transition" period, which in fact leads to nothing but further misery and, frequently, the resumption of fighting. The discussion on exit strategies for humanitarian organizations has to be accompanied by a more systematic discussion on entry strategies for development agencies.

There are means of alleviating the suffering caused by armed conflicts and some progress has been made, it being clear that measures aimed at preventing armed conflicts remain by far the most important task to carry out.

International humanitarian law, provided it is respected on the ground, helps prevent suffering. It is gratifying to note that during the four years since the 27th International Conference, many States have become bound by the relevant instruments of humanitarian law. Today, 191 States are party to the Geneva Conventions, 141 are party to the Ottawa Convention banning anti-personnel landmines and 92 have ratified the Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court. These instruments, in order to become fully effective in humanitarian terms, have to be incorporated into national legislation and internal military directives and to be effectively complied with on the ground, by States and armed groups.

The ICRC has kept the promise it made in 1999 to attend to the special needs of women and girls affected by armed conflict, and to endeavour to draw the attention of warring parties to the prohibition of all forms of sexual violence. It did this by publishing a detailed study on the subject in 2001. By integrating the study's conclusions into its own operational prac-

tice through guidelines issued to its delegations, the ICRC has been able to take better account of women's special needs.

In February 2003, an international conference of experts was held here in Geneva to examine how best to address the issue of missing persons and to help their families. The conference results were important and encouraging, and will contribute to our discussions here over the coming days.

The ICRC also continues to draw attention to the risks from small arms proliferation and the development of new technologies liable to be used for hostile purposes. Never before have the means of warfare been available to such a broad range of groups. The lack of effective controls on the availability of arms and on the development of new weapons constitutes a genuine menace for humanity.

These positive points, and there would be some others worth mentioning, cannot, however, mask the scale and the persistence of the suffering caused by far too many conflicts. The agony and the abandonment to their misery of thousands of persons continue to be of major concern to the ICRC, as do the contempt shown for people's physical and psychological integrity and their dignity in so many places, and the criminal blindness of those who commit acts intended to spread terror among civilians. I am also concerned that attempts may again be made to justify torture. We are all outraged by the murders of ICRC staff, of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Society volunteers and of the members of any other humanitarian organization, and by the other criminal attacks directed against them.

Much has been said and written about the changes that have occurred in the world these past years, especially since the terrorist attacks in the United States on 11 September 2001. It is undeniable that these attacks had an impact on international relations, but they also highlighted pre-existing tensions that continue to characterize the geopolitical landscape. These events came in addition to other human tragedies, some of which, sadly, disappeared from the media spotlight as a result.

Acts intended to spread terror among the civilian population have taken on a new dimension since 11 September; consequently the fight against terrorist activities has also taken a new dimension. The struggle against terrorist activities, necessary and legitimate as it is, must not undermine the values on which society must be founded – in particular the preservation of human dignity according to international law. To strike the right balance between State security and human dignity has always been a challenge. It is a particular challenge now and we have to meet it. Nor does the fact that terrorism has to be condemned without reservation discharge us from reflecting upon the reasons for which whole communities tolerate terrorist activities or even support them.

It is an unfortunate tradition at International Conferences for the ICRC to voice its concern at the lack of respect for international humanitarian law. I would have loved to deviate from that tradition. I cannot do so, now less than ever, not least because the law's adequacy is sometimes questioned for reasons that are not always clear to me. My concern extends to respect for international law in its entirety, especially the law devised to protect the wounded, prisoners of war, the families of missing persons, internally displaced persons, refugees and the defeated, the law meant to form a shield against violence and abuse of power, but also against neglect and abandonment.

The ICRC is convinced that international humanitarian law, in its current form, is, on the whole, adequate as a legal basis for responding to the challenges of contemporary international armed conflicts. Its application depends to a large extent on the positive and determined political will of States fully to meet their responsibility to respect and ensure respect for this body of law in all circumstances. The States have an obligation to take all possible measures, to put an end to violations of humanitarian law by interceding with those who have committed them or with those who may have it in their power to stop them. It is not the rules that are lacking, it is too often the will to apply them.

To defend the authority of the law, or to reaffirm the relevance of international humanitarian law in today's world, is not to assert that this law is perfect or immutable. This statement applies to international humanitarian law as well. Key notions of humanitarian law, interpreted in different ways, have to be clarified and there may be justified claims for updating and developing them. I am not sure, either, that the last word has been said on the relevance of international humanitarian law with regard to the struggle between States and armed groups that act transnationally.

In the course of the year now drawing to a close, the ICRC has devoted a great deal of energy to the reaffirmation of international humanitarian law. It has consulted many governmental and other experts at various meetings in every region of the world. It has issued a report on "International humanitarian law and the challenges of contemporary armed conflict", which you have received and had a chance to look over. Its contents will be the subject of our discussions beginning today. My hope is that some of the convictions that inspire the ICRC will be taken up by the Declaration and the Agenda for Humanitarian Action that the Conference will adopt. The ICRC intends to continue its work, in the legal domain in particular, to identify and promote the most effective means – whether new or already existing – of ensuring better compliance with the rules of international humanitarian law. This work will also be inspired by the study on customary international humanitarian law, which summarizes broad legal research and analysis of State practice. The study, to which many experts have contributed, will be published in 2004. It will be an important input for the debate with States.

Fostering human dignity is the ultimate purpose of humanitarian law and humanitarian action. This goal does not reflect political naïveté. Humanitarian organizations are fully aware of the need to strike a balance between legitimate security requirements and the equally legitimate need to preserve people's physical and psychological integrity and ultimately their dignity. That balance is fundamental to international humanitarian law itself. To keep this balance requires a real effort. I am convinced that it is possible to ensure the security of a State without violating the basic norms of humanitarian law, that one can control a territory while respecting its population and that one can detain people who threaten public order while respecting their physical and psychological integrity and without undermining their dignity. No doubt we all agree. We no doubt also agree that terrorist acts are the very negation of fundamental humanitarian principles and we are unanimous in condemning the massacre of civilians by such criminal acts. I am sure we also agree that we must avoid being drawn involuntarily or through excessive measures of repression into a process of disregard for the law, humanitarian law in particular.

I consider this a good time to say a few words about the conduct of humanitarian action. Humanitarian action is often poorly understood and increasingly the object of threats and even attacks. It is exposed to additional risks when States seek to use it as a tool to further particular political interests. When this happens, the distinction between the realm of military action and that of humanitarian endeavour becomes blurred in people's minds, especially those of civilians affected by the fighting.

I am not here to advocate a divorce between humanitarian and political endeavour, or between humanitarian and military action. It is even fair to add that military action can have a humanitarian dimension by ensuring a secure environment in which humanitarian organizations can work. All the ICRC asks is that the States, which, as High Contracting Parties to the Geneva Conventions, have given the ICRC a mandate for independent and neutral humanitarian action, support the ICRC in fulfilling this mandate. In operational terms, there is a need to maintain the distinction between political and military activities on the one hand, and humanitarian activities on the other. Space must be left for neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian action. Our insistence on preserving this space reflects concern that we do not become dependent on an ideology, a country or a group of countries. The ICRC's independence, and the neutrality so closely linked to it, are a means to an end – they are the prerequisites for taking action anywhere and with complete impartiality.

The ICRC's humanitarian action will remain determined by its will to stay close to the people in need of protection and assistance, especially when the fighting is at its worst, as in Baghdad or Monrovia this year. But to stay at the victims' side the ICRC and other humanitarian organizations must first have access to them, and

that means access to the authorities, to the warlords or to the other groups on whom their fate depends. Gaining access is a complex task, and often a risky one. Credible independence is crucial.

Before speaking of the ICRC's priorities in the year ahead, I mention, in view of the Conference's agenda, two major challenges which we must face both individually and collectively.

The first is the question of what we must do to reduce the scale of the suffering caused by war. That is, how can we better protect civilians against the indiscriminate use of weapons and combatants against excessively cruel means of killing and injuring? How can we more effectively limit the development of such means, their availability and their use, especially when it comes to new types of weapons? That is one challenge to which we are going to devote much of our time this week.

The other challenge is to find a way to facilitate the work of humanitarian organizations, such as the ICRC, so that they can do their work without having to sacrifice the lives of the people who actually come to the aid of the victims of war. How can these organizations take effective and rapid action while enjoying acceptable security conditions. And once a way has been found to do this, by what mode of communication or negotiation should we seek more flexible and immediate access to the people who need our help?

What can you expect from the ICRC in the years ahead? Over the past few years the ICRC has, in spite of increasing security constraints, succeeded in conducting humanitarian operations in just about all conflict areas around the world. Building on this, the ICRC will spare no effort to reach all victims of armed conflicts and situations of violence. The ICRC is determined to do so as a truly independent humanitarian actor. It is convinced that credible independence offers it the best chance of fulfilling its mandate, especially in a more polarized world.

The ICRC will pursue both its protection and assistance activities with equal importance. The close relationship between the two activities is obvious. Assistance activities often determine the extent to which the ICRC can carry out its protection activities. The definition of an ICRC policy with regard to transition periods has proven to be helpful in this respect. We are just now having a closer look at our assistance policy.

The ICRC, aware of its responsibilities with regard to international humanitarian law, will continue to contribute to the interpretation, clarification and, where proved necessary, the development of international humanitarian law. Measures aimed at improving respect for existing rules of international humanitarian law are, given the daily distressing experiences of its delegates in the field, closest to the ICRC's heart. I ask States and armed groups to help us in this respect. Compliance, as we all know, is an issue not only in situations that make the headlines. Compliance with

humanitarian law is an issue in most armed conflicts worldwide. The ICRC will not forget this and will pay equal attention to situations in and out of the headlines. Coherence being an integral part of credibility, the ICRC will also address similar situations in the same way. We have to speak out and keep silent in a coherent way.

The ICRC sees the most urgent needs for the development of international humanitarian law in the rules applicable in non-international armed conflicts. It is fully aware of how sensitive this issue is, and consults the States on it on the basis of the findings contained in the report presented to this Conference. The study on customary humanitarian law will no doubt be a major input to the dialogue with the States.

The ICRC will, as reflected in the Agenda for Humanitarian Action, pay particular attention to two areas of activity in the coming years. It will pay particular attention to the tragedy of missing persons and the families they leave behind. A particular pledge will be made at this Conference. It will also pay particular attention to the faithful application of existing rules on the use and development of weapons and encourage the development of new rules aimed at preventing unnecessary suffering and superfluous injuries. Last week's adoption of a new protocol to the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, on the Explosive Remnants of War, was encouraging indeed. The ICRC is grateful to the States for having reacted in such a responsible way to its appeals to take action in order to bring to an end the suffering caused by explosive remnants of war.

The ICRC remains on board for cooperation and coordination with other humanitarian organizations inside and outside the Movement that share its strong commitment to protect and assist the victims of armed conflicts and situations of violence. The Movement remains the privileged framework of cooperation for the ICRC. Its value as a network for cooperation will, as is the case for all networks, depend on the operational capabilities and the spirit of cooperation of each of its components.

The ICRC strongly wishes to see the universality of the Movement achieved as early as possible. As soon as external conditions permit, the process aimed at adopting the third protocol additional to the Geneva Conventions has to be resumed with determination.

My message is clear: a properly functioning Movement network matters to the ICRC. The ICRC will continue to invest in this network, mainly by helping to strengthen the operational capacity of National Societies.

The ICRC will also continue to take words seriously. Strong words, aimed at reducing the complexity and richness of the real world to some basic, too basic notions, are shaping the consciousness of human beings as strongly as the facts. They sometimes provide guidance, more often they provoke blindness. They are,

however, part of reality because they have a bearing on the attitude and behaviour of human beings. General concepts like “dialogue between cultures” and “clash of civilizations” are misleading. There are dialogues between human beings of different cultures and there are clashes between human beings of different civilizations and within civilizations. This unspectacular statement is in fact a message of hope. We are not confronted with anonymous entities; we are dealing with individual human beings. The more we listen to each human being and are sensitive to human aspirations and the need for dignity, the better we can influence developments in the direction of a more human and respectful world.

**Mr Jaime Ricardo Fernández Urriola,
Chairman of the Conference**

(Original Spanish)

Thank you, Mr Kellenberger, for your interesting discussion of international humanitarian law and the issues relating to the protection of the life and dignity of the victims of armed conflicts.

Our next speaker is the President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Mr Juan Manuel Suárez del Toro Rivero.

5.2 Keynote address by Mr Juan Manuel Suárez del Toro, President, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

(Original Spanish)

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Representatives, Friends from the Red Cross and Red Crescent, Guests and Observers,

Today, I speak on behalf of the 181 National Societies around the world that make up the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. I also speak on behalf of the millions of volunteers and members who every day work selflessly to protect the lives, livelihoods and dignity of vulnerable people everywhere. They are indispensable in our efforts to build a better world. I therefore consider it an honour and a responsibility to be here before you today. I hope I can convey clearly the strong sense of solidarity and unity among the members of the International Federation in our collective commitment to the theme of this Conference, “Protecting human dignity”.

Protecting human dignity means safeguarding the capacities of all individuals, thus making it possible for all people not only to use their capacities but also to develop to their fullest potential. Protecting human dignity thus implies ensuring respect for the dignity of all human beings and enabling each person to develop to the fullest extent possible.

This in turn implies that no individual is more or less important than another and that we are all entitled to equal respect for our dignity. Protecting human dignity must not be achieved for some by leaving others

behind, condemning them to a life of indignity and dependence. Moreover, it is not enough to protect human dignity, we must actively promote it.

(Original English)

At our recent General Assembly, we had the pleasure to welcome three new National Societies to the Federation: the Cook Islands Red Cross Society, the Kazakh Red Crescent Society and the Red Cross Society of Micronesia. We were also pleased to have among us those National Societies that have not yet been recognized and we look forward to the day when we can welcome them as full-fledged members of the Federation.

(Original Spanish)

The International Federation and its member Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, together with the ICRC, are on the front lines when dealing with threats to human dignity. In every corner of the globe, wherever there is pain and suffering, we provide relief. Where there is grief and desperation, we restore hope. We speak out against inequity, discrimination, intolerance and hate, and advocate on behalf of the vulnerable, the marginalized, and the forgotten. Our humanitarian voice and our actions benefit millions of people each year.

It is precisely these people, the vulnerable, the marginalized, the hurt, the forgotten, the missing – all those whose human dignity is at risk – who bring us here today. And it is their voices that need to be heard in a conference like this one. So when we speak about protecting human dignity, let us never forget that we are speaking about people, not abstract concepts.

There can be no doubt that the humanitarian landscape has been radically altered in the last few years. We have all have been shaken by the recent events and attacks that have taken place in various parts of the world. For those of us in the Red Cross and Red Crescent, we have been particularly alarmed by the erosion of respect for our neutral and impartial work to alleviate human suffering, as well as the growing insecurity faced by humanitarian workers, especially those working as volunteers, with little else to protect them except the emblem.

One of the most disturbing trends we have seen in recent years has been the politicization of humanitarian assistance. Too often, the flow of humanitarian assistance is determined by media attention and political concerns, rather than on the basis of who is most vulnerable or most in need. We need to refocus attention on the humanitarian imperative to provide assistance to those who need it most, in a neutral and impartial manner, and without discrimination. This must take precedence over all other concerns.

We must not ignore the other, more hidden threats to human dignity – the ones that do not capture the attention of the media or governments. I refer here not only to forgotten conflicts, but also to the day-to-day

situations that threaten the lives, livelihood and dignity of millions of people. These are the daily forgotten disasters such as the poverty and inequity faced by millions, or the intolerance and discrimination directed against many groups and individuals, that contribute to increased vulnerability and threaten human dignity.

Among the most serious and pervasive threats to human dignity today are disasters and disease, which claim millions of lives each year. Disasters and disease not only destroy lives but also increase the vulnerability of entire populations by undermining development gains, unravelling social structures and reducing the ability of communities to cope with crises. These are areas in which the International Federation and its member National Societies have shown their commitment to action, and which we want to highlight during this International Conference.

The burden of disasters and disease falls disproportionately on those who are least able to cope with it: the poor and those who are marginalized and excluded from society, such as minorities, migrants and refugees. Discriminatory policies and practices that deny vulnerable populations equal access to the services, information and decision-making mechanisms that could protect their lives, livelihoods and dignity further exacerbate the situation.

Just a few days ago, World Aids Day took place, reminding us again that HIV/AIDS is certainly one of the most serious humanitarian challenges we face today. We all know by now that the escalating impact of the global HIV/AIDS pandemic is tearing apart communities, families and individuals. We know that the complex interaction between HIV/AIDS and other problems makes the impact of the pandemic even greater. And we know that access to compassionate care and treatment are fundamental to allowing people living with HIV/AIDS to preserve their dignity and contribute to their communities.

Yet, despite all we know, our response is still lagging too far behind. Funding for the fight against HIV/AIDS is woefully inadequate. Access to affordable antiretroviral treatment is still far from a reality for the millions of people who require it. Proven methods of reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS are being questioned. And ignorance, stigma and discrimination and societal attitudes continue to hamper our efforts to reach those who need our help most.

Within the Red Cross and Red Crescent, we have had to grapple with the reality of HIV/AIDS and the impact it is having on our staff and volunteers. We have learned to confront our own attitudes and fears to make the Red Cross and Red Crescent a more welcoming home for those living with HIV/AIDS. And we have scaled up our efforts to combat the stigma and discrimination faced by people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS and to support prevention and care programmes. Furthermore, we are actively looking into ways to improve access to treatment.

Our programmes reach millions of people, but all these efforts are not enough. We need to do more. And we need to work with governments, civil society, groups representing people living with HIV/AIDS and others to ensure that our efforts have the maximum impact.

Similarly, we cannot ignore the impact of disasters and the threat they represent to human dignity. In recent decades, the number of people affected by disasters has risen dramatically. Disasters break down the resilience and coping mechanisms of communities and individuals, and undermine efforts to reduce poverty and improve quality of life. The causes of disasters are many, including the effects of climate change and extreme weather conditions, but reducing the impact of disasters depends largely on how well we – governments, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and communities – can work together in preparing for and responding to situations of disaster.

Too often, the impact of disasters is made worse because of poor planning, environmental degradation and inadequate response mechanisms. That is why disaster risk reduction is critical to preventing and avoiding situations that make communities vulnerable. Just as importantly, while we focus on reducing risks, we need to be able to respond effectively when disaster strikes. In the wake of disaster, we need to ensure that our efforts contribute to longer-term development which incorporates risk reduction into planning. These are areas where National Societies and the International Federation can also bring valuable experience and knowledge to the discussion.

One key area that we believe requires more attention is policies, laws and procedures relating to disaster response. We have long known that a rapid and effective response at the local level is critical to saving lives. But when a disaster exceeds local response capacity, resources often have to be mobilized from the international community.

At times, laws, policies and procedures act as a barrier and impediment to effective and coordinated disaster response. This is why we believe that governments and the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies need to work together at examining the laws related to international disaster response, in order to identify gaps and weaknesses, and look for appropriate solutions. Our focus here is to identify, publicize and apply existing legal frameworks more effectively in order to save lives and minimize the effects and impact of disasters, particularly on those who have few resources and coping mechanisms to recover.

Mr Chairman,

These threats to human dignity are not new. We know about the vulnerability caused by disaster, disease and conflicts, and we know that investments, even on a small scale, can pay big dividends in terms of protecting human dignity. How, therefore, should we respond to these threats? What does protecting human dignity mean in practical terms? Again, the answers are not based on theory, they come from experience.

Building the capacity of individuals, families and communities to respond to and cope with situations of vulnerability is the first step. We need to work more closely with vulnerable communities and support them in finding long-term solutions, in a manner that respects their culture, hopes and aspirations.

Capacity-building of civil society organizations is also critical. The scale of the humanitarian challenges presented by conflicts, disasters and disease are well beyond the ability of governments alone to handle. Governments need to work in partnership with civil society organizations and with communities to strengthen capacity and reduce vulnerability.

In this sense, I want to highlight the need for governments to support more actively the work of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. The unique nature and status of the partnership between National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and governments, along with the global reach and far-reaching perspectives offered by the International Federation and the ICRC, makes this a powerful alliance, with enormous potential to engage with the key humanitarian challenges we have before us.

We need governments to better understand the work we do, and the Fundamental Principles that we adhere to as a Movement. This means understanding that, while we work as willing partners with governments in efforts to confront contemporary humanitarian challenges, we must at all times maintain our independence, neutrality and autonomy. I would like to draw your attention to the report "National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies as auxiliaries to public authorities in the humanitarian field", which the International Federation prepared for the Conference. It highlights several aspects of maintaining a relationship of mutual respect between governments and National Societies that need further attention, and I hope that we can discuss them during and following the Conference.

I would like to especially mention the important role of volunteers in our efforts to protect human dignity. Voluntary service is one of our Movement's core principles and values. As I said, the humanitarian challenges we face are too great to face alone. That is why we need to continue to promote and encourage voluntary service. Without volunteers, we will not be able to perform the tasks before us, and we need to acknowledge that without them, we will not be able to make an impact on the huge task of protecting human dignity.

We rely on volunteers to carry out our activities; we must learn to appreciate them and be grateful for their selfless work. We need to invest in training and resources to support volunteers. Governments can help by supporting National Societies and creating an environment that encourages voluntary service. They can also help by recognizing and supporting the valuable contributions made by National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and voluntary organizations in general.

Finally, our efforts to protect human dignity depend not only on action, but also on advocacy. The basis of human dignity begins with respect for the individual, and empathy and compassion for those whose dignity is compromised. It requires efforts to raise awareness of the threats to human dignity and generate a commitment by all to promote tolerance, respect for diversity, mutual understanding and a culture of peace.

(Original French)

Mr Chairman,

Protecting human dignity means taking action to allow communities, families and individuals to grow stronger, to enjoy fuller and more productive lives, and become less vulnerable. It means taking action to empower vulnerable populations to reduce their risk and vulnerability to disasters and disease, and to strengthen their capacity to cope with and respond to situations that threaten their lives, livelihoods and dignity. It means allowing vulnerable people to have a voice and to participate in decisions that affect them and their dignity.

(Original Spanish)

It also requires governments to demonstrate their commitment to human dignity by establishing and strengthening policies, laws and practices that protect the integrity of the individual, and ensure fair, equitable access to programmes and support services for all those who need them, regardless of their status or circumstances.

And it requires governments and the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to mobilize civil society, businesses and others to work in partnerships with vulnerable communities, and to listen to their voices and concerns and look for lasting solutions to the humanitarian challenges we face.

The challenges we face in protecting human dignity are enormous, even overwhelming. But they are not insurmountable. Together, we can build a better world and move forward towards that goal. We can take our inspiration from the founder of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, Henry Dunant, who mobilized support from the community and from the States, in order to attain noble humanitarian aims. This is the example that we should follow.

Mr. Chairman,

We must also never forget that the human face of despair can also be the human face of hope and dignity. We can make a difference if the will, determination and commitment are there. That is the challenge before us in this International Conference – to take meaningful action to protect human dignity, and to make a real and lasting difference in the lives of vulnerable people everywhere.

**Mr Jaime Ricardo Fernández Urriola,
Chairman of the Conference**

(Original Spanish)

Thank you, Mr Suárez del Toro, for discussing the challenges to human dignity posed by disasters and disease and for presenting the need to continue building capacities and to establish partnerships to reduce human vulnerability.

6. General debate on contemporary humanitarian challenges and protecting human dignity

**Mr Jaime Ricardo Fernández Urriola,
Chairman of the Conference**

(Original Spanish)

We shall now move on to item 6 of the agenda. Today we launch a general debate on contemporary humanitarian challenges and protecting human dignity. Please remember that each delegation may take the floor for five minutes; all delegations were informed of this sufficiently in advance. I would ask speakers scrupulously to observe the time limit out of respect for all those wishing to make statements this morning. Today's programme is a heavy one. The clock on the video screen will show how much time has passed. If you wish, you may distribute a more extensive, complete version of your statement to the Conference participants. The general debate will continue this afternoon.

H.E. Mr Bill Graham, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Canada

(Original English)

Ministers and Distinguished Guests and Colleagues,

For some 150 years now the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has provided vital support for the world's most vulnerable. The staff of National Societies, the International Federation and the ICRC have time and time again demonstrated compassion and courage, and the government of Canada is proud to partner with the Movement both at home and abroad.

Recent attacks against humanitarian workers in Baghdad and elsewhere have shown that respect for longstanding humanitarian principles can no longer be taken for granted. The world's most honoured symbols of neutrality and human dignity are now deliberate targets of combat, and humanitarian workers, including three Canadians this past year alone, have become the victims of these attacks. The international community must be unequivocal in its condemnation of such attacks.

Furthermore, we must send a message that there will be consequences. Perpetrators must be brought to justice; this requires that appropriate legislation be put in place. It also requires that we draw on the international instruments we have all worked so hard to create. In this regard, as President Kellenberger said this morning, the

International Criminal Court is an important tool and we must do all we can to build its capacity.

The international community must also step up its efforts to insist that there is no justification for denying full, safe and unhindered access by humanitarian workers to those in need. A clear distinction between political, humanitarian and other objectives should also be maintained. States must continue to respect the principles of impartiality and neutrality in their interaction with the Movement. Support for the Movement's efforts to promote these principles in aid delivery has never been more critical, particularly in the context of clarifying the different roles and responsibilities of civilian and military actors.

Colleagues, clearly we are facing new challenges today. Intra-State conflict, the necessity of dealing with non-State actors and terrorism have caused some to question the relevance of international humanitarian law. We are not convinced by these arguments, quite the contrary: respect for international humanitarian law is often the only protection that civilians in armed conflicts have.

We therefore agree with the point made by President Kellenberger, that we should be investing our efforts in improving the implementation of humanitarian law through measures that include support for the Red Cross Movement. This is essential in a world where armed conflicts continue to proliferate and take on more insidious forms. In facing today's challenges, humanitarian law should remain the bedrock upon which these new approaches are built.

To be sure, we cannot expect humanitarian law to provide all the answers to problems such as terrorism. In dealing with situations outside armed conflicts, we can and should draw on other legal frameworks, such as domestic criminal law, international human rights law and counter-terrorism instruments.

(Original French)

Mr Chairman, Dear Colleagues,

In conclusion, I believe that in spite of the differences we have faced in the past two years, and the heavy pressure they gave rise to, we must not forget that we are taking huge steps towards achieving our Movement's noble goals. My country, Canada, is working with the Movement to protect civilians in armed conflicts, to fight impunity and to improve humanitarian work in practice. We hope that the Conference workshops, in particular those on human security and small arms and on children in armed conflicts, will further the efforts being made.

Humanitarian action is not just a responsibility, it is a major investment in our common future. More than ever before, we are bound to honour our commitment to those who need us. Together we must show them that we are determined to rise to the challenge.

(Applause)

Mr Jean-François Giovannini, Council member of the Swiss Red Cross

(Original French)

Mr Chairman,

The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is going through a period of great upheaval brought about by rapid and complex changes in the political and social environment in which it works. The Swiss Red Cross is concerned by this and has implemented a strategy in an attempt to meet, to the extent that it can, the challenges posed by the rising numbers of vulnerable people. The Swiss Red Cross must cope with the problems raised by the arrival of refugees, asylum seekers, victims of human trafficking and migrants. Switzerland, like other industrialized countries, is beset by economic and social difficulties that foster the emergence of nationalistic and xenophobic movements working to undermine the international laws protecting refugees and asylum seekers or to limit the space for humanitarian protection that must be granted to certain groups of migrants, in particular those without papers.

The Swiss Red Cross is striving to fight the discriminatory and inhumane measures that could affect these vulnerable groups of people. It is preoccupied by the fact that many governments are trying to make development aid contingent on the beneficiary States re-accepting those of their citizens who have been turned away by others. It is aware that this is a complex problem affecting State policies for political and social unity. Countries accepting immigrants have a duty to provide the political and social conditions required to integrate their own citizens. They must promote the return and integration of those of their nationals who did not receive authorization to settle abroad. The National Red Cross Societies will lose all credibility if they prove to be incapable, within their own borders, of standing up for respect for humanitarian standards on migration.

It is for these reasons that the Swiss Red Cross invites the International Conference to act. The National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies should make a political pledge with a view to protecting refugees and migrants.

First, to work for respect for the fundamental principles of international public law and humanitarian values. Secondly, to defend and promote the protection of the human rights of asylum seekers and migrants. Thirdly, to keep a wary eye on their governments' policies on foreigners and migrants. Lastly, to act, when necessary, for respect for humanitarian values in relation to asylum seekers and migrants.

The National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies must take specific steps with respect to the migrants on the territory of their country. They must defend the migrants' rights and help ease their distress, in order to offer them a life worth living. They must facilitate

access to health care and education, and help foster understanding between the indigenous population and foreign policy.

The Swiss Red Cross is also deeply concerned by the current erosion in respect for the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law. In its report, *International humanitarian law and the challenges of contemporary armed conflicts*, the ICRC emphasizes that the new or aggravated characteristics of contemporary violence pose a daunting challenge in terms of protection of civilians and the application of international humanitarian law. The growing number of armed players and criminal activities carried out in the context of contemporary civil wars constitutes an obvious problem for humanitarian organizations, whose relief activities risk becoming tools of military or political expediency.

In view of this risk, the humanitarian organizations must never at any cost waver from the Movement's Fundamental Principles, in particular the principles of impartiality and neutrality. They must also redouble their efforts to spread knowledge of the principles and rules of international humanitarian law. Let us be under no illusion, however. In situations of chaos and anarchy, the basic conditions for respect for international humanitarian law are usually absent, even if the combatants know the rules they must observe under the law.

The answers to the problems facing humanitarian organizations today are not always to be found in international humanitarian law, which is why those organizations must reflect in depth on the nature of their commitments. If they fail to do so they may find themselves confronted with unmanageable security situations or obliged to accept undertakings that give a strategic advantage to one or the other party to the conflict. They must do all in their power not to be coupled in the minds of armed groups with the political order or strategy of their adversaries. The entire humanitarian movement stands to lose by the current confusion between relief activities and armed coercion. It is very important for the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to conduct a thorough analysis and develop strategies enabling it to be better able to cope with the challenges posed by contemporary forms of armed violence, in particular in civil wars and asymmetrical conflicts.

H.E. Ms Margherita Boniver, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Italy

(Original English)

I have the pleasure to take the floor on behalf of the European Union. The acceding countries (Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) and the associated countries (Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey) have aligned themselves with this statement.

Due to time constraints, I will pronounce a shortened version of our statement. The complete version will be made available to all delegations.

The 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent takes place at a time when the whole international community faces serious challenges in the humanitarian context. Lack of compliance with international humanitarian law is commonplace and deliberate attacks on humanitarian personnel have become a recurrent event in several conflict situations. The European Union reaffirms the continued relevance of international humanitarian law, recalls the obligation incumbent on all parties, including peacekeeping forces, to respect and ensure respect for this body of law in all international and internal armed conflicts, and calls on the International Conference to provide clear reaffirmation of this.

Mr Chairman,

Today terrorism represents one of the most serious threats to international peace and is a negation of both humanitarian principles and human dignity. It must be unequivocally condemned and relentlessly fought. At the same time, the fight against terrorism must be undertaken in full respect for the applicable provisions of both international humanitarian law and human rights law.

Human dignity is menaced not only by conflicts. Diseases and disasters represent a parallel threat. In particular, the challenges posed by the HIV/AIDS epidemic remain as daunting as ever. Stigma and discrimination together continue to hamstring any effective response, making the suffering of those affected so much worse. We therefore warmly welcome and commend the strengthening of the Red Cross Movement's commitment against HIV/AIDS. The European Union will continue to support national and international efforts to combat HIV/AIDS and will cooperate closely with the Movement on this very important challenge.

Mr Chairman,

We welcome the 28th Conference as a unique opportunity to address the issue of respect for human dignity. In this context, we reaffirm our strong political and also financial support for the activities carried out by the components of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

Mr Chairman,

The European Union is gravely concerned by the lack of security for humanitarian personnel and welcomes United Nations Security Council resolution 1502 (2003) on the protection of humanitarian workers. We also express our full commitment to all the applicable rules and principles of international humanitarian law that allow unimpeded access by humanitarian personnel to populations in need of assistance. We believe that the International Criminal Court can play a very important role in deterring intentional attacks on humanitarian personnel.

The European Union welcomes the fact that the International Criminal Court is now operational and

reiterates its full support for the Court's integrity, independence and effectiveness. The Court is not only a traditional institution designed to prevent and put an end to the impunity enjoyed by the perpetrators of the most serious crimes, it is also an essential means of promoting respect for international humanitarian law and human rights law.

Mr Chairman,

We would like to express our appreciation for the renewed efforts of the international community for more coordinated preventive action and responses to both complex emergencies and natural disasters. We further take note with interest of the proposals on international disaster response law which have been put forward by the International Federation and are to be presented at this Conference as a further improvement in this coordinating endeavour.

We appreciate the extensive efforts of the International Conference organized by the ICRC on missing persons in February 2003. We pledge to follow up the recommendations made throughout the Conference for the full acknowledgement of the "right to know".

Similarly, the European Union welcomes the ICRC's study on Women and War and the implementation of the related pledges undertaken at the time of the 27th International Conference. We also support the ICRC's efforts to conduct the study on customary international humanitarian law and look forward to its early publication.

In recent years, international and internal armed conflicts have claimed the lives of more than two million children and physically maimed six million more. The European Union is committed to strengthening the protection of children affected by armed conflict. I would like to mention in this context that the European Union will shortly be issuing guidelines on children and armed conflict.

Mr Chairman,

The European Union looks forward to the wide-ranging success of this Conference, which we believe can revitalize the joint efforts of all governments, National Societies and other organizations towards enhanced protection of human dignity. In this endeavour, Mr Chairman, you can rely on our unwavering support.

H.E. Mr. Minoru Endo, Ambassador, Special Assistant to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Japan

(Original English)

I would like to commend the Standing Commission for the tremendous work done in preparation for this Conference.

It is quite distressing to start my statement on a gloomy note. During the four years since the last meeting, violent conflicts, massive natural disasters and grave infectious

diseases have raged around the globe. The number of victims has skyrocketed and human suffering has been aggravated. It is therefore appropriate for this Conference to dedicate itself to the theme of protecting human dignity. For some time Japan has been promoting a broad concept of human security. When faced with an emergency situation, whether man-made or natural, we make no difference in our approach between the protection of human dignity and the protection of human security.

Mr Chairman,

Japan fully supports the activities carried out by the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and is deeply respectful of the humanitarian personnel who often risk their own lives. We understand the situation where the ICRC was obliged to temporarily close its offices in Baghdad and Basra. The security of humanitarian personnel has become a focus of international concern. They are the ones who are deeply committed to the noble cause of helping others who are suffering and vulnerable, and no attack on them should ever be tolerated.

We welcome United Nations Security Council resolution 1502 (2003) as an important step for the protection of United Nations and associated personnel. We think further consideration should be given, however, to expanding the global protection afforded by the existing Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel.

Mr Chairman,

Japan fully recognizes the role of international humanitarian law in reducing damage and alleviating the suffering caused by armed conflicts and in protecting the victims. In this context, I wish to inform you that the Japanese Government is engaged in intensive work with a view to acceding at an early stage to the 1977 Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949.

Mr Chairman,

I now turn to natural disasters. Japan is actively promoting international cooperation on disaster reduction. Natural disasters have claimed countless lives and caused enormous damage throughout history and all over the world. Today, human lives and livelihoods continue to be threatened by the ferocity of storms, floods, earthquakes, tsunamis and violent volcanic eruptions. The total control of natural phenomena is beyond human capability. However, the scale and magnitude of the damages can vary depending on structures such as early warning systems and the existence of community preparedness. If timely and appropriate measures are taken, damages from natural disasters can be prevented or at least reduced.

The issue of natural disasters must be tackled on a global scale beyond national borders and encompass all of humanity. This year Japan submitted to the 58th United Nations General Assembly a draft resolution on holding the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe in January 2005. We hope this

Conference will provide an important opportunity for the international community to cooperate in reducing the risk and impact of natural disasters.

Mr Chairman,

This Conference, which is held once every four years, gives us a valuable opportunity to confirm the direction and determination of the international community towards enhanced protection of human dignity. Japan will continue its endeavours to promote human security while further strengthening its cooperative relationship with the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

H.E. M. Mohamed-Salah Dembri, Ambassador, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Algeria, Geneva

(Original French)

Mr Chairman,

The gradual disappearance of classic conflicts and the growing prevalence of non-international conflicts and internal violence that may be internationalized raises a series of questions for the humanitarian movement. We must respond calmly and as one, for the protection of civilians in the event of war is the only matter of concern to us. Common Article 1 to the four Geneva Conventions stipulates that the High Contracting Parties must respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law. The wording is clear, yet apparently bewildering to those who no longer make the distinction between civilians and combatants. Whether the attacks are the work of men or of weapons, some of which are said to be intelligent, civilians and civilian facilities have become targets of choice. By launching indiscriminate attacks against civilians, humanitarian workers, medical personnel, religious personnel and information professionals, belligerents around the world in fact disregard the law they never fail to proclaim whenever the opportunity arises.

My delegation believes there is no category of people that cannot benefit from international protection. This means there is no category that can be left to the mercy of arbitrary treatment by the belligerents or the occupying forces. Respect for human dignity, the main theme of our Conference, must be observed everywhere and at all times. The Algerian delegation therefore rejects any blurring of the distinction between civilians and combatants and any speculative and unilateral definition of what a combatant is. Any attempt to create an area of intermediate law is unacceptable because it renders existing international law more fragile, discredits customary practices and allows the rules to be bent in ways that undermine protection.

My delegation wishes to underscore the absolute need to review Article 90 of Additional Protocol I establishing the International Fact-finding Commission, with a view to making it easier to bring cases before the Commission, which is at present to all intents and purposes inoperable.

Mr Chairman,

Although the right to resist foreign occupation is legitimate under international custom, terrorism, which is one of the visible manifestations of the new forms of violence, has taken control of diplomatic agendas and placed international law in a new light, in that it opposes State security against individual freedom.

Terrorism is not covered by the concept of armed conflict. It is akin to criminal activity. It has a devastating effect because it works to undermine the applicable law and creates situations unlike any others. It is so barbaric that it cannot be justified or excused by extenuating circumstances, and it therefore falls within the purview of national and international penal law. The transnational nature of terrorist networks means the problem must be tackled globally in an approach that combines prevention and repression and is based on tolerance, respect for others, and police and judicial cooperation.

Mr Chairman,

Human dignity is given a particularly hard time in armed conflicts and singularly tested in natural disasters; it has become a priority concern as economic uncertainty – the consequence of which is abject poverty – has risen.

The documents before us show that economic insecurity is a form of violence and that access to education, basic health care, jobs, water, decent housing and food promote human emancipation, foster a balanced society and strengthen the peaceful regulation of international relations. Access to medicines in the face of spreading pandemics, in particular in the countries of the south, is more than a matter of urgency. Humanity cannot shrug in the face of this form of attack on life, on the pretext that health is a market commodity whose aim is to generate profits: it would be an intolerable affront to human dignity to do so. The Algerian delegation therefore welcomes WHO's 3 by 5 Initiative and invites all the Movement's components to work to bring down the barriers that perpetuate injustice and defer the enjoyment of the right to human dignity for all.

Mr James T. Morris, Executive Director, World Food Programme

(Original English)

It would be impossible adequately to recognize the extraordinary work of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. The World Food Programme, and in fact all United Nations humanitarian agencies, highly value our partnership, our work together. We touch so many and in the process make all the difference in the world in their lives.

No organization in history has worked harder than the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to maintain the neutrality so essential to the delivery of humanitarian aid. I can tell you that those of us who work in United Nations emergency operations have long seen the Red

Cross and Red Crescent Movement as a model to emulate. Wherever I have gone to meet the staff from the World Food Programme, the admiration for what you do is the same. One of the first questions we ask in planning any emergency operation or assessing any security threat is what is the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement doing? You have been in the business of humanitarian aid longer and better than anyone in the field.

The age of intolerance we now live in has put your work and ours in jeopardy, your staff and ours at a level of risk we have never known before. Religious and ethnic hatred have found new weapons in modern technology and new targets to create a much higher level of fear. You and I and all the colleagues we cherish are some of those targets.

The demand for food aid in political emergencies has skyrocketed because of the wars in Kosovo, Afghanistan and now Iraq. The World Food Programme is now by far the world's largest humanitarian agency and, I can assure you, among the most stressed. The bombing of United Nations headquarters in Baghdad on 19 August and dozens of violent incidents over the past decade have claimed the lives of 60 WFP staff, prompting us sharply to increase the priority we give to security. We have conducted security training worldwide and just committed an additional USD20 million in funding to help make all of our offices and staff more secure. Lessons learned the hard way need to be taken seriously. As a result of the direct targeting of United Nations staff and premises, we shall install blast-resistant film on the windows of all WFP offices worldwide. Every employee will wear a chain or bracelet indicating his or her blood type. Visitors and their vehicles will be screened more closely and all staff will be better equipped, better prepared to minimize risks.

As you know, the United Nations is taking a hard look at how it handles staff security in the wake of the Canal Hotel bombing and the Ahtisaari Report. I will not comment on the investigation or prejudge where we will come out on the fundamental policy issues. But we are considering the fact that the ICRC takes a very bottom-up approach to security (your head of delegation in the country decides when to evacuate, when to re-enter and on all phases in between). The United Nations, on the other hand, has taken a more top-down approach, with headquarters in New York deciding such things. You have also maintained more of a local presence in some of the tougher situations in recent years, including Iraq, Afghanistan and Liberia. Neither one of us has adopted a totally consistent approach on the degree to which we accept help with security from the military. I don't know that we could ever succeed in being that consistent on that point, but it is an issue we need to revisit together.

Our relationships run the gamut from assessment, beneficiary targeting and operational planning, to joint programming and logistics operations. Steps are being taken to further strengthen and deepen the cooperation between the World Food Programme and the Red

Cross and Red Crescent Movement. In the next month, the ICRC and WFP will be finalizing an improved, streamlined, important, amplified version of our current Exchange of Letters, formalizing additional areas where our colleagues in the field work together closely. In 2004, a similar process will begin with the International Federation.

On a recent visit to Liberia I was very impressed by the remarkable work you are doing in tracing and reuniting families. For its own part, the World Food Programme is using food aid to help those families re-establish themselves and get back to some level of normalcy. The situation there is devastating given the fact that 70–80 per cent of the combatants are children.

May I call your attention to the special impact of HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa? I know you have discussed this matter frequently during this Conference, but the fact of the matter is that this is a human catastrophe of historic and unknown magnitude. In sub-Saharan Africa today 14 million children have been orphaned because Mom and/or Dad has died of HIV/AIDS. In seven years that number will go up to 20 million.

In some ways there is a war going on within the humanitarian community as well. A war between those who believe we should take sides and those who do not. Those who seek to politicize aid and those who do not. Nothing is more dangerous to humanitarian workers than yielding to politics. When the Taliban were in power, WFP was pressed to cut off emergency food aid as a protest over their treatment of women. We resisted. In North Korea, NGOs have pulled out to protest the government's human rights record. We stayed. People have condemned the Coalition for being in Iraq. We have quietly moved a thousand tonnes of food an hour, 24 hours a day, 760,000 tonnes in the month of June alone.

Tempting as it may be to do so, the minute we pass judgment on a State, a religion, a political movement, we make ourselves a target. Worse yet, we undermine our ability to reach those who so desperately need our help. If we, in the humanitarian community, are not inclusive, neutral and tolerant, who will be?

Ms Mandisa Kalako-Williams, President of the South African Red Cross

(Original English)

Excellencies, Royal Highnesses, Colleagues from the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, Government Representatives,

We, the National Societies of the southern African region, continue to play an integral role in contributing to the future of our people, even within the constraints of limited resources, political strife, abject poverty, food shortages and the challenges attached to dealing with HIV/AIDS.

We recognize our role and mandate, in particular in dealing with the effects of HIV/AIDS. We are con-

cerned about and wish to speak up against the rampant discrimination and stigmatization levelled at people living with HIV/AIDS.

We further recognize the need to build partnerships with a wide variety of stakeholders, including communities, the business world, and individuals and groupings affected by and living with HIV/AIDS. We are also appreciative of the support we receive from our governments, from the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation, and from our individual partner National Societies.

We, the southern African Red Cross Societies of Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe, wish to declare that we will confront the HIV/AIDS crisis on three basic fronts: awareness and prevention, care and access to treatment, and advocacy to promote the dignity of those affected by and living with the disease, with particular emphasis on orphans and vulnerable children.

However, we call on all our governments in the southern African Region to reinforce and increase their partnerships with the National Societies as auxiliaries to the public authorities. To our governments we wish to offer our National Societies as willing partners to implement, monitor and spread their goodwill to communities. As Red Cross Societies we have the human capital; as our governments, you have the political strength. Together we can make a difference. Let us walk our talk and become true partners in service to our people – the vulnerable communities.

In conclusion, we wish to reiterate our pledge of commitment to community service, our passion for protecting human dignity and our pride in our people, our most vulnerable people and our most valuable result.

Ms Nancy Kassebaum Baker, Former Senator, United States of America

(Original English)

I would like to thank the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies for their considerable efforts in preparing this Conference.

I am particularly proud to head the United States Government Delegation today because I have long been an admirer of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. I personally have witnessed how the help of the Red Cross has made such a difference when tornados devastated areas of my home state of Kansas in the United States. I have personally witnessed the dedication and care of the ICRC and the National Societies in the tragedies affecting Somalia and Rwanda. But the work of the Movement extends in many directions, from the ICRC's negotiations across battle lines to provide humanitarian assistance to civilian populations, to the Federation's efforts in partnership with National Societies to prevent the spread of measles.

Like my fellow delegates, I have been an alarmed observer of recent incidents of blatant disrespect for the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law, including the intentional targeting of humanitarian workers and civilian populations. At this unique time in history, we all face the same serious challenge of devising strategies to ensure the safety and security of innocent civilians in the fight against terrorism, while remaining true to our other core values. This year's Conference theme, "Protecting human dignity", is a succinct way to sum up those values. It is not as easy as it sounds, but if we remain truly focused on the goal of protecting human dignity, in all its facets, we will surely find ways to balance the diverging challenges of today's world.

The recent attacks in Baghdad on the offices of the ICRC and the United Nations were especially painful and tragic reminders of the threats humanitarian workers face on a regular basis. As President Bush has said, "Those who target relief workers for death have set themselves against all humanity". It will take the united effort of governments and international and non-governmental organizations to ensure that those providing humanitarian assistance are not themselves placed at undue risk.

The United States Government shares the concerns of the other delegations for the plight of those living with HIV/AIDS. In January of this year, President Bush announced the Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, a five-year, USD 15 billion initiative to turn the tide in combating the global HIV/AIDS pandemic. Specifically, the initiative is intended to prevent seven million new infections, to treat two million HIV-infected people, and to care for ten million HIV-infected individuals and AIDS orphans.

Only by working together on prevention and treatment, by securing safe blood supplies, can we make progress on addressing this severe and urgent health crisis. The Conference's focus on the stigma and discrimination faced by people living with HIV/AIDS is key to protecting human dignity, at the same time as we treat the disease.

The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement offers us perhaps the best statement on the common values that underpin all humanitarian work: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality. We call on the Conference participants to ensure that the Movement remains true to its principles and continues its vigorous work towards making the emblem an absolutely universal symbol of protection by adopting a third protocol additional to the Geneva Conventions. Only then will the Movement be truly universal.

One of the greatest strengths of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is its universality. The Movement is working everywhere that people are needy. We applaud the Movement's focus on the needs of families whose members are missing as a result of international or internal conflict. Many years after the

fighting has ended, many families still do not know the fate or whereabouts of their loved ones. Therefore we vigorously support the registration of vulnerable populations and family reunification efforts.

The United States Government strongly supports the Conference goal of minimizing the impact of natural disasters by improving disaster preparedness, prevention and response. We have demonstrated our dedication to improving disaster prevention and response worldwide not only by committing significant financial resources, but also by committing our people on the ground. In particular, we are working to enhance early warning systems and to build local and global response capabilities. We look forward to continued partnership.

Finally, I would like to pay personal tribute to the people who make up the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the staff and the approximately 100 million volunteers working in more than 180 countries around the world. Their dedication to serving others, often at great personal risk, deserves our highest praise and deepest respect.

Mr Chairman,

Since 1863 the National Societies have offered hope, care and trust. This is a legacy that we must continue to uphold and pass on to the generations that follow us.

H.E. Mr Vidar Helgesen, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway

(Original English)

Mr Chairman,

Humanitarian action is about alleviating the suffering caused not least by armed conflict. As governments, while we support independent humanitarian action, we cannot allow ourselves to escape the responsibility for preventing such suffering in the first place.

To this end, States must renew their commitment to respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law. Governments should not interpret these binding rules as relative norms that can be set aside as new patterns of conflict develop. International humanitarian law is a set of binding rules which are applicable also in present-day conflict.

As governments, we also need to do more to prevent conflict in the first place. We need to think in new ways when it comes to dealing with sources of conflict. We must not put ourselves in a situation in which we identify military means as the primary way of addressing security threats. Instead, we need to make a more concerted multilateral political effort to avoid conflict, contain conflict, limit conflict and end conflict.

The peaceful resolution of conflict reduces humanitarian suffering. It also has the added advantage of providing improved access for humanitarian assistance. We have seen that in the efforts to end the conflicts in Sri Lanka and Sudan.

This Conference is one of the most important humanitarian fora in the world. It is an expression of the unique, global mandate of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, as well as of the strength and local presence of the National Society. It is increasingly important for the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to build and make use of this wealth of local capacity. The Norwegian Government expects the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to make a systematic and unified effort over the coming years to strengthen and utilize its global web of local roots.

Mr Chairman,

My Government is outraged to see that humanitarian workers are now deliberately targeted. Some terrorists groups have claimed that humanitarian assistance is part of a Western campaign against Islam. As governments, we must take care to meet our responsibility not to do anything and not to say anything that could actually give rise to such misconceptions.

While we shall definitely not take those perpetrating such acts lightly, we should not limit the issue to providing physical security to humanitarian agencies. We need to engage in a broader, political dialogue in order to strengthen the legitimacy, integrity and security of humanitarian action. Several difficult questions must be dealt with.

Firstly, international agencies should take a closer look at how they operate on the ground in order to ensure legitimacy and local support. We must make sure that security arrangements for humanitarian personnel do not widen the gap between the aid workers and the local population.

Secondly, the international humanitarian dialogue must be revitalized and broadened. As donor governments we must open up for consultation and coordination that cut across traditional divisions. Norway proposes that major host countries of refugees from countries in regions riddled by conflict and traditional and new donor countries alike should be more closely involved in cooperation on how to prevent humanitarian suffering as well as how to ensure access and space to alleviate human suffering.

Thirdly, as part of this dialogue, we need a more thorough analysis and discussion of how humanitarian agencies and military peacekeeping forces can best interact to increase security and access to vulnerable groups without compromising the integrity of the humanitarian agencies.

Mr Chairman,

These problems should take centre stage, not only in fora like this, but in the political dialogue between governments, because today these issues are of unprecedented importance to the wider aim of ensuring international peace and security.

**H.E. Mr Gunnar Snorri Gunnarsson,
Permanent Secretary of State, Ministry for
Foreign Affairs, Iceland**

(Original English)

Mr Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,

This Conference takes place at a time when the whole international community faces both the threat of terrorism and serious humanitarian challenges. The threats that face us are real and the response has to be firm, but this can never be at the expense of the rules and principles of international humanitarian law, in particular the letter and spirit of the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols.

As the representative of the European Union so eloquently put it, today terrorism represents one of the most serious threats to international peace and is a negation of both humanitarian principles and human dignity. What is more, the indiscriminate killing and maiming of civilians is compounded by attacks on those trying to alleviate their suffering. We are deeply concerned by the lack of security for humanitarian personnel and welcome United Nations Security Council resolution 1502 (2003) on the subject. The Government of Iceland welcomes the fact that the International Criminal Court is now operational and reiterates its full support for the Court. The establishment of the Court represents a major breakthrough for the protection of human dignity.

We would also like to salute the work of the ICRC on both customary international humanitarian law and women and war. The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's national and international work has earned it the support and respect of the Icelandic people. The relationship between the Government of Iceland and the Icelandic Red Cross is and always has been excellent. The Government of Iceland is particularly pleased to have the International Federation participate actively as an observer in the Arctic Council, which is currently chaired by Iceland. One of the main objectives of the Icelandic Chairmanship of the Council is to enhance cooperation in order to improve the living conditions of the people in the Arctic. This emphasis could become the foundation for increased cooperation between the Arctic Council and the International Federation in the region.

At this Conference, the Government of Iceland and the Icelandic Red Cross will make a common pledge for the years 2004-2007, namely to continue cooperating for the effective implementation, dissemination and application of international humanitarian law by taking several steps, including the establishment of a humanitarian law committee.

Turning to HIV/AIDS, the Government of Iceland commends the strengthened commitment of the Red Cross Movement in this field. The Government and the Icelandic Red Cross have made a joint pledge to increase their cooperation and consultation on their

humanitarian activities both at home and abroad. We stand ready to support programmes implemented by Red Cross Societies in southern Africa whose goals are prevention, the care and treatment of people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS and to work against stigma and discrimination.

Furthermore, the Government of Iceland and the Icelandic Red Cross have pledged to assess together the provision of health services to vulnerable sectors of Icelandic society.

On behalf of the Government of Iceland, I would like to pay tribute to the International Committee of the Red Cross and to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies for their untiring, devoted work and noble mission.

Dr Ahmad Ali Noorbala, President, Red Crescent Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran

(Original English)

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, the theme of which is "Protecting human dignity", is a great opportunity to reaffirm human dignity and values and to strengthen the practical measures taken to respect human dignity and promote peace and friendship.

This Conference is being held at a time when war and violence are spreading at a growing rate worldwide and new threats have been made against the staff of humanitarian organizations.

Mr Chairman,

At the last International Conference, the Iranian Red Crescent submitted the idea that the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement could play an important and effective role in preventing war and violence, promoting peace and friendship and preventing and preparing for natural disasters by using its enormous resources, including youth, volunteers and humanitarian values. Today the need for the Movement to take such an initiative is stronger than ever.

According to the statistics available, 188 million civilians and soldiers were killed in war in the 20th century, three times the number of people who were killed in natural disasters. Moreover, a study of the global disease burden conducted jointly by WHO, the World Bank and Harvard University projected that war would move from 16th place in 1999 to 8th place in 2020. In the same period, violence would move from 19th to 12th place. The study was conducted before the despicable terrorist attack of 11 September 2001, which unfortunately was followed by more and more violence and fear.

Mr Chairman,

In view of what I have just said, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has a responsibility to do its utmost to prevent war and violence.

It is a great pleasure to note that in recent years the international humanitarian community, particularly the Red Cross and Red Crescent, has been more involved in this area and that concepts such as tolerance and non-discrimination have been put on the international humanitarian agenda.

But the International Red Cross and Red Crescent should do much more to prevent war and violence and promote peace and friendship.

The Iranian Red Crescent has been making efforts in recent years to promote peace and friendship on the basis of the Movement's Fundamental Principles and by involving those invaluable assets, youth and volunteers.

In September 2003 the Iranian Red Crescent hosted the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Youth Coalition for Peace and Friendship, in Shiraz. The Conference participants, young members of 23 National Societies from around the world, discussed the role of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in this regard and concluded with a Declaration comprising practical measures for the promotion of peace and friendship. The Conference also requested the Iranian Red Crescent and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to bring the Conference Declaration and decisions on the prevention of war and violence and the promotion of peace and friendship to the attention of the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

Mr Chairman, dear colleagues,

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, by drawing on its network of 181 National Societies and working on the basis of its Fundamental Principles and shared humanitarian values, is able to play a major role in calling on the world for peace and friendship.

Let us take the message of peace, tolerance and friendship to our world, which is suffering from violence and conflict.

Let us disseminate the idea that despite the spread of war and violence, strong humanitarian feelings and ideas exist and we can build a world of peace, friendship and tolerance together.

This is the most valuable service that our Movement can perform for humanity; it is based on Fundamental Principles such as neutrality and independence.

Mr Tej Bunnag, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand

(Original English)

To millions in their darkest hours, the emblems of the Red Cross and Red Crescent kindle hope which serves to uplift their spirits and preserve their dignity.

The nature of conflicts in the world today has become more complex as a result of new security threats such as international terrorism, disasters and infectious diseases.

The new complexities of conflicts have not spared the ICRC, whose Baghdad headquarters were attacked. Such senseless acts of terror, which target humanitarian aid workers, go against the most basic principles of humanity as well as international law.

The spate of terrorist acts since the events of 9/11 brings freshly to mind a passage from Henry Dunant's book *A Memory of Solferino*: "If the new and frightful weapons of destruction, which are now at the disposal of the nations, seemed destined to abridge the duration of future wars, it appears likely, on the other hand, that future battles will only become more and more murderous". The only difference today is that not only nations but also individuals and marginalized and socially excluded groups have access to weapons of destruction.

Mr Chairman,

The present global situation requires us to be more responsive to emerging realities. There is a greater need than ever for States, the ICRC and non-governmental organizations to redouble their efforts to provide effective and timely responses to humanitarian crises. Not only must expeditious access to the victims be ensured, but the safety and security of humanitarian personnel must be guaranteed.

It is crucial that we promote greater understanding of and respect for international humanitarian law and reduce the vulnerability of populations to the consequences of armed conflicts, disasters and diseases, as we pledge in the Declaration and Agenda for Humanitarian Action we will later adopt. In line with the call for renewed partnership between States and components of the Movement, the Thai government will continue to work closely in partnership with the Thai Red Cross Society to improve the well being of vulnerable people and promote sustained human security.

The Thai government is, as always, committed to the spirit of the Geneva Conventions. We moved a step closer to becoming a party to 1977 Protocol I additional to the 1949 Geneva Conventions when the matter was approved by the cabinet last month. It is now in the process of being submitted to the Thai National Assembly for approval.

Mr Chairman,

Thailand is guided by humanitarian considerations and dedicated to sustained human security; it is committed to pursuing its efforts to implement its obligations under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction, and to promote the Convention's universalization. We successfully completed the destruction of our last stockpile of anti-personnel landmines on 24 April this year. I wish to take this opportunity to express appreciation to all the delegations that contributed to the success of the Fifth Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention, which was held in Bangkok in September of this year.

Mr Chairman,

Infectious diseases present another dimension of fear. However, HIV/AIDS is a global epidemic, which transcends "freedom from fear" and "freedom from want". The psychological impact of HIV/AIDS is far-reaching. The stigma and discrimination faced by those affected is a direct threat to human dignity and human security. Although Thailand has a successful track record in combating HIV/AIDS, much more needs to be done. Thailand will host the 15th International AIDS Conference in July next year under the theme of "Access for all".

Mr Chairman,

In closing, I wish to reaffirm Thailand's commitment to carrying out its humanitarian work in line with the Declaration and the Agenda for Humanitarian Action. We pay tribute to all humanitarian workers, who have shown tireless commitment and in some cases have paid with their lives. We all share the responsibility for protecting the dignity and sanctity of human life as our highest duty to our fellow human beings.

Mr Volodymyr Yel'chenko, First Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ukraine

(Original English)

Mr Chairman,

Protecting human dignity and addressing the humanitarian challenges posed by today's world occupy a central place in the wide range of activities of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

In our view, this Conference should focus its attention on a set of activities concerning a very important aspect of the protection of human dignity worldwide. I refer to the problem of ensuring respect for the dignity of the people in our world who, because of their weaknesses or disabilities, are most vulnerable. I also refer to the human rights defenders whose vulnerability stems from their unwavering commitment.

This need is even more critical in time of war or armed conflict, when the dignity of civilians and combatants is affected and international humanitarian law must be applied under all circumstances. The rights of civilians and combatants are enshrined in the Geneva Conventions of 1949, which have been strengthened and supplemented by two additional protocols. If these instruments are applied, international humanitarian law can respond effectively to the challenges posed by the changing nature of armed conflicts. We therefore reiterate that the parties to an armed conflict, wherever they are, must never ignore the universal binding rules enshrined in those important international agreements.

In this connection, I can but commend the International Committee of the Red Cross for its efforts aimed at enhancing respect for these rules.

Today the four Geneva Conventions, which have achieved almost universal ratification, and their Protocols are supplemented with a range of other treaties prohibiting or restricting the use of certain weapons and, most recently, defining the international criminal responsibility of those who violate the law of war. I refer here to the establishment of the International Criminal Court. Ukraine also reiterates its support for the activities of the three international tribunals aimed at prosecuting those responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights.

Mr Chairman,

Ukraine attaches the utmost importance to the implementation of international humanitarian law. I would therefore like to inform you that among its pledges for the years 2004-2007, the Government of Ukraine undertakes to consider the possibility of lifting Ukraine's reservations to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and of incorporating courses on international humanitarian law into the Ukrainian education system.

We greatly appreciate the level of cooperation between Ukraine and the International Committee of the Red Cross in the field of humanitarian law. Since 1992, the ICRC has continuously offered its advisory, technical and financial support to the Ukrainian Red Cross Society. We also pledge to consider completing the ratification procedure for the agreement between the Government of Ukraine and the ICRC on the ICRC regional delegation in Ukraine and for the agreement between the Government of Ukraine and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies concerning the legal status of the International Federation and its delegation in the city of Kyiv.

Ukraine is taking every step necessary to incorporate international humanitarian law into its national legislation. The Interdepartmental Committee for Implementation of International Humanitarian Law in Ukraine began its activities in 2000. Active partners in this process are the Ukrainian Red Cross Society and all other ministries concerned.

Recently, the President of Ukraine signed the Ukrainian Red Cross Society Act. This law provides for shared responsibilities between the Government of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Red Cross Society and for cooperation between them as concerns humanitarian activities.

Mr Chairman,

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is based on active international cooperation among the States and their National Societies. I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and to the National Societies of other countries for their support in the implementation of programmes in a number of areas in Ukraine, such as humanitarian aid for vulnerable sectors, curbing the spread of HIV/AIDS, disaster risk reduction, and the minimization of the impact of the Chernobyl disaster.

Mr Chairman,

In the past few hundred years, humankind has witnessed a great number of terrible disasters, both natural and artificial. My own country, Ukraine, is no exception. We are presently commemorating the 70th anniversary of the great famine of 1932-1933, which was organized by the Soviet totalitarian regime in order to bring the Ukrainian nation to its knees. More than 7 million Ukrainians vanished in that tragedy, having been starved to death. Even today we do not know all the truth about those events. But one thing we know for sure: the ICRC and National Societies from the countries of Europe would have been ready and able to lend a hand of help if they had known. Unfortunately, they did not, because the Soviet authorities never let the information about the famine come out. Let us remember that tragedy so that it will never again happen anywhere in the world.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to express special thanks to all those who work as members of the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and to ICRC and International Federation staff whose work is devoted to the most noble aim – serving people whose lives are in danger, to alleviate their suffering.

Mr Thorvald Stoltenberg, President, Norwegian Red Cross

(Original English)

(text missing)

I think it is also highly important that governments and other institutions realize that their decisions can have a contagious effect. I think it is highly important for international law and the work of the Red Cross that the law is respected, and not just in dramatic situations. We had a Norwegian ship in a territory where the host country did not allow the Red Cross to board the ship to help 438 asylum-seekers. I think this sets a negative example for the rest of the world that could have much more dramatic effects.

My second remark pertains to the security of humanitarian workers. I will give only one example, in order to be short. I had the privilege of working in Bosnia during the Balkan Wars and I remember that the Red Cross stopped their transports to the people that needed food and medicines. They did not accept the protection of United Nations peacekeeping forces. We all know that peacekeeping forces are dependent on the consent of all the parties concerned. In the end it was actually the people we wanted to help who suffered. They did not get food and medicines because we lived up to our principles. I question whether it is a good principle not to accept a United Nations escort in order to guarantee the security of humanitarian workers.

My last remark concerns health. I have been hesitant about the health issue because I do not think we should go into development aid. We should be an organization for disaster aid. I must admit, however,

that I am convinced that the HIV/AIDS situation and the malaria vaccination project could be disasters if we do not go into them. I therefore strongly support the health programme built on two pillars, one dealing with HIV/AIDS, the other with immunization and preventive action.

Ms Claudia Roth, Commissioner for Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid, Ministry of Foreign affairs, Germany

(Original French)

Unfortunately, the world has not become a more peaceful place since our last Conference. New international armed conflicts and a growing number of internal armed conflicts have broken out or continue to be waged. The brutal attacks of 11 September 2001 and, a few short days ago, the bombings in Istanbul have brought home to the entire world the new challenges this century has introduced. The Red Cross and Red Crescent have themselves become the targets of deadly attacks, and I wish to pay homage, here, to the memory of all those who have paid with their lives, horribly, for their commitment to a better world. The fight against terrorism has become a priority for all countries. We can only win that fight if we are united. But we will only emerge victorious if we fight the battle with due respect for the law, in particular international humanitarian law, human rights law and international refugee law. In that connection I wholeheartedly endorse President Kellenberger's comments.

There must be no grey areas of non-law in the general mechanism for protection under international public law. This applies to prisoners of war, to suspects and to war criminals quite rightly held to account for their crimes. They too, however, have the right to humane treatment and to a fair trial based on the principle of the rule of law. We must remain true to our humanitarian standards, even in the fight against terrorism and, I wish to emphasize, in particular in terms of the prisoners in Guantanamo.

Mr Chairman,

My Government supports the protection of the civilian population. This does not apply only to the aim of banning anti-personnel landmines worldwide. The very recent adoption of Protocol V to the 1980 United Nations Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons enabled us to take a huge step forward towards solving the urgent problem of the explosive remnants of war. Regarding cluster bombs, the aim for the time being must be strictly to limit their use, the objective being to eliminate this horrible weapon.

Mr Chairman,

Human dignity is also threatened when military action causes lasting damage to the natural environment. Kofi Annan has urged all countries to establish mechanisms to enhance environmental protection during armed conflicts. The International Conference should join in that appeal.

Not all humanitarian emergencies, however, are brought about by armed conflicts; they can also be caused by natural disasters. The number of humanitarian disasters is rising constantly, notably as a result of global climate change. This is why, in addition to a sustainable environmental policy, a more effective early warning system is gaining in importance as a means of limiting the effects of disasters at the outset.

Two days ago we marked World AIDS Day. Given that this terrible disease is spreading ever more quickly in many parts of the world, we cannot relax our joint efforts; measures must also absolutely be taken to put an end to the discrimination and social exclusion of those who are sick.

Mr Chairman,

The task of the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent is to develop common strategies with a view to strengthening and ensuring respect for international humanitarian law and to alleviating human suffering worldwide. All the participants must show, especially this year, that they are united and determined to meet that aim. I should like to conclude by expressing my deep respect and profound gratitude to the National Society staff who participate every day, in extremely difficult conditions, in humanitarian missions. For me, they are the true heroes of the day.

Mr Osvaldo Ferrero, President, Argentine Red Cross

(Original Spanish)

We have closely examined the Conference's draft Declaration, "Protecting human dignity". This is certainly the main theme, and no minor one at that. It is almost an obsession for our Movement and, we feel sure, for the States as well.

The Argentine Red Cross fully supports the Declaration. We should like to make a few comments that have more to do with our experience in Argentina than anything else.

It is our view that the concept of poverty as a cause of vulnerability is discussed in very tepid terms in the Declaration.

Armed conflicts, disasters and disease are, it is true, increasing the vulnerability of communities and the people who live in them. But the stigma of poverty clearly overrides all other causes of vulnerability.

Even if there were no conflicts, no disasters or disease, a man, a woman, a family, a community, a country that goes hungry, that has no education, no access to health care and housing, no security, no work and no future loses its dignity.

And a man without dignity loses part of his human condition: he loses his freedom, which is much worse than losing his life.

This is what we are talking about, about poverty and its relationship to human dignity. We must protect that human dignity.

Every day the number of poor people in the world increases. It seems like a process that cannot be stopped. We cannot, we must not – neither the Movement nor the States – resign ourselves to this state of affairs.

We know we cannot change it today. But we are convinced that our peoples have within them the strength to start the process of change. We have to find that strength.

Our National Societies and our States must work from the grassroots up, from the communities where they will find capacities and resources, drawing on their history, their culture, their individuality.

We must use our Movement's incredible power for change to make those who suffer the main actors of their own development. So that they can feel they are a dignified part of the solution, and not the problem.

We can be the catalysts for the process of change. That process does not belong to us, it lies in the hands of the main players, the poorest and of course the most vulnerable. We must help them build their capacities.

We are the oldest and biggest humanitarian movement in the world, an incredible worldwide network. But all that is not enough, we cannot do anything on our own. We must work together, form partnerships that strengthen us and our associates, work with other organizations, the largest and the smallest, whether State or civil society. Above all, we must find partners among community organizations and help them build their capacities.

We can channel the "power of humanity". With that incomparable power we can plead our cause, we can influence policies and decision-making. With other organizations we have the strength to do so, with the governments and with other organizations, but let us do it already. This is the role we have to play to change the future.

Mr Chairman,

Let us not forget that time is running short. During the three days of this Conference there will doubtless be many more victims of conflict and disaster, AIDS will kill many more people and many thousands of people will cross the line into poverty around the world. Isn't enough enough?

**Dr David Nabarro, Representative of the
Director General for Health Action in Crises,
World Health Organization**

(Original English)

Mr Chairman,

My name is David Nabarro and I am speaking on behalf of the Director General of the World Health Organization.

We are, in his words, committed supporters of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. We work for the same principles and ideals and we frequently work together.

Crises may result from natural disaster, economic collapse, unmanaged conflict or slowly evolving calamities like the AIDS pandemic or arsenic poisoning in the Ganges delta.

Whatever the cause of crisis, the main causes of people's suffering are diseases exacerbated by the lack of food, water and shelter. This is because in times of crisis the systems which we take for granted are overwhelmed.

The millions within the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and the multi-million strong global network of health personnel face the same realities as they work every hour for human dignity.

What have we learnt from our shared experience?

From the WHO point of view, the last five years have shown that we must work with societies not only to respond to crisis, but to repair and rebuild damaged systems, the systems that are essential for human dignity and survival: health, water, power and food systems. Systems that enable women, children and men to access what they need without fear of violence, harassment and sexual abuse.

We have learnt to highlight the need to respect the requirements of civilians in conflict, whether they are health or other basic needs or else there is lasting damage to the fabric of society.

We have learnt to confirm that violence must be addressed as a major public health problem and to be ready to speak out without hesitation on systematic violence against women and children.

And we have learnt to be activists for AIDS prevention and treatment as the key to the survival of humanity as we know it, particularly of women and children.

We have learnt to be properly prepared for accidents or deliberate harm caused by biological and chemical agents.

Our Director, Dr Lee, would like to foster a strong partnership between WHO and the Red Cross Movement, whether in southern Africa on HIV or, as I saw myself yesterday in Damascus, preparing for better crisis response in the Middle East, North Africa and Asia.

Together we can make a real difference where it matters – to the lives of people in need, wherever they live.

**Mr Jaime Ricardo Fernández Urriola,
Chairman of the Conference**

(Original Spanish)

This brings us to the end of item 6. We shall now move to item 7 of the agenda and listen to a report on the

implementation of the Plan of Action for the years 2000-2003 adopted by the previous International Conference. The report will be presented by Ms Marion Harroff-Tavel from the International Committee of the Red Cross and by Dr Gabr, Vice-President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and Chairman of the 27th International Conference.

7. Information on the implementation of the Plan of Action for the years 2000-2003 adopted by the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

Dr Mamdouh Gabr, Vice-President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and Chairman of the 27th International Conference

(Original English)

Mr Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Together with Ms Harroff-Tavel, I have the honour to present to the 28th International Conference the Follow-up Report on the Implementation of the Plan of Action for the Years 2000-2003.

The report provides an overview of the steps taken by the members of the 27th International Conference to implement the Plan of Action, highlighting best practices and a number of overall trends based on the results of a questionnaire. To date, 101 replies have been received to the questionnaire. However, the discussions on follow-up have revealed that a great deal more has been done to implement the Plan of Action than has yet been formally reported. Conference members are encouraged to consult the database on the follow-up to the 27th Conference that is available on the ICRC's website.

There is no doubt that the adoption of the Plan of Action by consensus constituted a major success for the 27th Conference in the endeavour to promote the humanitarian cause. However, the follow-up given to the Plan of Action proved difficult to assess. Constraints included the relatively unspecific, legalistic and non-user-friendly nature of the language. The questionnaire transmitted after the 27th International Conference was cumbersome, requiring too high a level of resources and follow-up capacity.

Taking into account the foregoing constraints, the 28th International Conference is called upon to adopt a new plan in the form of a single, action-oriented document entitled Agenda for Humanitarian Action. An effort was made to narrow down the areas of concern targeted by the Agenda. The aim is to have each and every action proposed correspond to clear and measurable objectives that members are expected to achieve by the next Conference.

The International Federation, the ICRC, the National Societies and the State representatives are encouraged to offer more assistance to Conference participants in implementing the Agenda for Humanitarian Action, in particular in devising an appropriate working plan and assessing its results. Additionally, greater synergy should be established between follow-up measures taken subsequent to the Conference and other mechanisms that already exist or are being developed in relation to operational, legal or academic projects with a direct link to the Agenda.

With regard to the actual implementation of the Plan of Action, I would like now to give the floor to my dear friend from the ICRC, Ms Harroff-Tavel.

Ms Marion Harroff-Tavel, International Committee of the Red Cross

(Original English)

Indeed, numerous States and National Societies reported on concrete steps they had taken to implement the 1999 Plan of Action.

With regard to actions related to armed conflict, the universal character of international humanitarian law was strengthened by the adherence, in the past four years, of many States to recent treaties such as the 2000 Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, on the involvement of children affected by armed conflict, the 1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, or the 1997 Ottawa Convention. As a more specific example, many indicated a strong commitment of both National Society tracing services and the ICRC Central Tracing Agency to collecting tracing requests and delivering Red Cross Messages with a view to restoring and maintaining family links in many contexts. The theme of missing persons in situations of conflict and internal strife was already touched upon in the 1999 Plan of Action and further discussed at the recent International Conference of Governmental and Non-Governmental Experts that was held in Geneva on 19-21 February 2003 and hosted by the ICRC. The 28th International Conference can maintain the momentum in this area by taking action in order to ensure respect for and restore the dignity of missing persons and their families in armed conflicts and internal strife.

By way of another example, a great number of States and National Societies reported on their activities regarding anti-personnel landmines, ranging from the financial and material assistance they provided for mine-clearance and mine-awareness activities to cooperative efforts and assistance benefiting mine victims in countries affected by landmines. The success of recent efforts to prohibit anti-personnel landmines, ban blinding weapons and begin negotiations on the explosive remnants of war show that international humanitarian law can provide a "common ground" for progress even in times of turmoil. International commitments must be renewed through the Agenda for Humanitarian Action and extended to address the human costs of the

availability, use and misuse of weapons in armed conflicts. It is with the hope of encouraging this trend that the sensitive, but crucial, issue of weapons has been chosen as one of the central themes of the 28th International Conference. Human dignity depends on humanity being the master of the weapons and technologies it creates and not their victim.

Concerning the establishment of national disaster plans, most States and National Societies reported that they had adopted a preventive approach to disasters and risk situations, setting up national disaster management bodies and/or preparing disaster preparedness plans. The increased importance of disaster reduction for National Societies was reflected in the growing interest in community awareness-raising, small-scale mitigation projects and disaster-preparedness activities on a community level. In order to strengthen National Society capacities, governments subsidized their National Societies, enabling them to respond immediately to disaster situations. However, more can be done to minimize the impact of disasters by implementing disaster risk reduction measures and improving preparedness and response mechanisms. The Agenda for Humanitarian Action offers concrete measures for integrating disaster risk reduction into national and international development planning and policy instruments, for implementing appropriate legal, policy and operational measures to facilitate and expedite effective response to disasters, and for reducing the risks and effects of disasters on marginalized and vulnerable populations. Such measures are a continuum of efforts to reduce vulnerability and protect lives and livelihoods from the devastating impact of natural disasters.

The launch of various educational, preventive and training programmes to fight the spread and consequences of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases by all States and National Societies that reported on the issue is also illustrative of a growing awareness of the social and economic impact of such diseases. Nonetheless, much remains to be done to improve legislation and policy that hinder effective response to these epidemics and contribute to the spread of disease by stigmatizing particular groups and discriminating against them in terms of access to adequate care, prevention and treatment programmes. It is against this background that the Agenda for Humanitarian Action is also intended to reinforce and complement, not duplicate, the efforts to which the international community has committed itself. The Agenda will build on the efforts made by many Conference members towards strengthening the capacity of National Societies and maintaining a dialogue between political, military and humanitarian players, thereby enhancing mutual understanding and increasing effective partnership between National Societies and States and cooperation with relevant humanitarian organizations.

We are convinced that the experience acquired during the implementation period of the 1999 Plan of Action has already benefited the 2003 Agenda for Humanitarian Action, and should allow the

29th International Conference to assess not only the relevance and success of the measures undertaken to date but also the soundness of the adjustments made in 2003.

8. Special report *Women and War*

**Mr Jaime Ricardo Fernández Urriola,
Chairman of the Conference**

(Original Spanish)

I now have the honour to welcome Her Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah of Jordan. Her Majesty has graciously agreed to inaugurate the ICRC exhibition, *Women and War*, at the end of this morning's session. Her Majesty is well known for her determination to improve the plight of women in war. First, however, we will hear from Mr Kellenberger, who will present the ICRC report, *Women facing war*.

**Mr Jakob Kellenberger, President, International
Committee of the Red Cross**

(Original English)

Your Royal Highness, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I quote: "War often forces women to become the sole provider for the family, and to secure the basic necessities of life while confronting all the risks that a woman may encounter under such circumstances. She may find herself a target, either by being taken captive, raped, kidnapped, killed or displaced in the midst of conflict".

These words, from Her Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah of Jordan, provide insight into the perils women face in times of war. We have the honour to be joined on the podium by Her Majesty today and I take this opportunity to express my gratitude for her valuable and continuing contribution to the work of the ICRC on women and war. Your Majesty, thank you.

Four years ago, the ICRC announced to the 27th International Conference its grave concern about the plight of women in situations of armed conflict. It affirmed the importance of listening to the voices of the victims, such as the words of one woman bemoaning the loss of her missing husband. The ICRC pledged to take action to improve protection and assistance for women affected by armed conflict whether in relation to programmes providing protection or assistance. Special emphasis was placed on promoting the respect that must be accorded to women and girls, with a focus on the prohibition of all forms of sexual violence.

Today, it is as crucial as ever to ensure protection and assistance for women in wartime. Humanitarian organizations are facing unprecedented dangers and difficulties in securing access to those affected by armed conflict – yet it is vital to do so. I would like to outline some of the ways the ICRC has and continues to fulfil this pledge.

One of the major accomplishments during this period of the pledge has been the publication of *Women facing war*, an in-depth study on the impact of armed conflict on women. Although it had been initiated as part of an internal review process, the study acquired added significance as a result of the pledge, and its findings were made public in October 2001.

Women facing war served four main purposes. Firstly, to assess the impact of armed conflict on women and identify their needs; secondly to review the extent to which international law affords protection to women; thirdly, to give a realistic and comprehensive picture of the activities undertaken by the ICRC on behalf of women affected by armed conflict; and finally, to compile a list of key recommendations.

I would now like to share with you two significant findings of this research.

Turning firstly to the impact of armed conflict on women, the study found that women's experience of armed conflict is multifaceted. In wartime, women may face grave risks to their security, they may lose loved ones, they may suffer from reduced access to the means of survival, they may face increased risk of sexual violence and injury, they may be forcibly displaced from their homes. Yet women should not be classified solely as vulnerable. They demonstrate resilience in countless ways, such as holding their families together and supporting dependents. They are often actively engaged as politicians, leaders of non-governmental organizations and campaigners for peace. They may take up arms, voluntarily or involuntarily, or participate in logistical support roles in the armed forces or armed groups. Thus, the *Women facing war* study demonstrates that the words "victim" and "vulnerable" are not synonymous with "women".

This research confirms that if women continue to suffer in situations of armed conflict, it is not from any shortcomings in the legal regime protecting them, but rather because these laws are not implemented and respected. The study shows that international law adequately affords protection to women in situations of armed conflict. The challenge lies in ensuring respect for and implementation of the existing obligations. All those present today must take up this challenge.

It is important that the ICRC communicate these messages to key audiences such as the armed forces, armed groups and the general public. This is an important condition for ensuring respect for the law and thereby preventing violations and contributing to the spread of humanitarian ideals. The ICRC has widely distributed a series of fact sheets projecting core messages relating to the impact of war on women and their protection under international humanitarian law, as well as a series of short films depicting different facets of women's experience in wartime, such as displacement, loss of loved ones, acts and threats against personal security, including sexual violence, and limited access to food and health care. Each film also conveys a strong mes-

sage on the legal protection accorded to women in situations of armed conflict. The films were broadcast by a number of television companies in 2002, reaching a vast audience, and they have been shown in a range of other fora.

The ICRC has also participated, often as a keynote speaker, in over 80 conferences and meetings organized by donors, governments, academic institutions and regional, international and non-governmental organizations, to foster a greater understanding of the ways that women are affected by armed conflict and to call for better respect for and implementation of international humanitarian law. This message has also been conveyed through events to launch the *Women facing war* study. For example, the launches of the Arabic language version of the study were held under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah of Jordan in Amman and Beirut, enabling a wide audience to be reached throughout the region.

The effect of this research on ICRC operations is important to note. Heightened awareness of the impact of armed conflict on women has been reflected in a marked strengthening in the quality and quantity of programmes with and on behalf of women since the advent of the pledge. The majority of ICRC delegations now conduct activities that take better account of the needs of women and include women as a specific target group in annual planning.

Those coordinating this work within the ICRC have visited over 30 countries to speak with women for the purpose of strengthening the ICRC's operational responses to their needs and in order to share best practices and lessons learned amongst our field staff. This has enabled the ICRC to be even closer to the victims of armed conflict and to better understand and respond to their needs. In fulfilling its pledge, the ICRC has reinforced its response through a better understanding of the specific risks, vulnerabilities and needs of women.

Paying increased attention to the plight of women has also enabled the ICRC to have a more in-depth understanding of the issue of the missing. The needs of the families who are left behind to bear the emotional and economic burden of having a missing relative have been brought to the fore. Psychological, social, legal and economic support have been provided to such families, the majority of which consist of women with dependants.

More systematic attention is also being given to the conditions and treatment of women deprived of their liberty in relation to an armed conflict, to ensure that such conditions comply with international standards. There is a greater awareness of the value of having mixed teams of male and female delegates and translators, in order to make the ICRC more approachable for women and to foster dialogue. Wherever possible, the ICRC endeavours to provide women with the option of speaking with female staff.

I have described some of what has been undertaken so far. There is still work to be done. Building on the study and the pledge, and pursuant to Resolution 1 of the 27th International Conference, the ICRC has drawn up a "Guidance Document" on protection and assistance for women adversely affected by armed conflict. It is hoped that this document, to be published in the coming months, will provide a useful operational tool for ICRC personnel working with women facing war, and for others who work in situations of armed conflict.

The pledge adopted in 1999, and the steps taken to fulfil this commitment, have not only improved the ICRC's understanding of women's plight in situations of armed conflict, they have also deepened the institutional approach to issues such as the missing, sexual violence, the link between protection and assistance and the very notion of vulnerability. Thus the commitment to women has and will continue to enrich the work of the organization. As such, the protection of women against the effects of armed conflicts remains a strong focus for the ICRC, despite the fact that technically the period of the pledge is completed. The ICRC's enhanced understanding of the plight of women enables the pledge on the missing, being made at the present Conference, to fully and naturally integrate the needs of affected family members, the majority of whom are women. This affirms that the ICRC views its work to improve the protection and assistance of women as a continuing commitment.

The ICRC endeavours to prevent violations against women by making representations to the parties to conflicts and the perpetrators of violence, be they States or other entities, urging them to comply with international humanitarian law. While the ICRC must – and will – do its utmost to improve the situation of women adversely affected by armed conflict, the responsibility to protect those who do not or who no longer take an active part in hostilities rests with the parties to an armed conflict. The protection of women in wartime is an obligation, not an aspiration. It is an obligation that is binding on the international community as a whole. All States and all parties to armed conflicts must do more to prevent violations of international humanitarian law against women, in short to respect and ensure respect for the law. I take this opportunity to call for greater respect for international humanitarian law by all. I call on all those present to do their utmost to achieve real protection for the lives and human dignity of women facing war.

**Mr Jaime Ricardo Fernández Urriola,
Chairman of the Conference**

(Original Spanish)

This brings to a close this morning's session of the First Plenary Meeting. Before I give the floor to Queen Rania Al-Abdullah of Jordan, allow me to remind you that the First Plenary Meeting will reconvene at two this afternoon, with Ambassador Yolande Biké in the chair. The Drafting Committee chaired by Ambassador

Johan Molander will meet at two p.m. I now have the honour and privilege to give the floor to Her Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah of Jordan.

**Inauguration of the exhibition,
"Women and War"**

Her Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah, Jordan

(Original English)

In the Name of God the Merciful *(in Arabic)*,
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am deeply honoured to be part of the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. In wars and famines, outbreaks of disease and earthquakes, the Red Cross and Red Crescent are always there, putting lives on the line for others, replacing horror with hope.

It is noble work. It is dangerous work. And now, more than ever, it is necessary work, in a world crying out for compassion.

Nearly half a century ago, the photographer Edward Steichen put together an exhibition called "The Family of Man". Its 503 photos from 68 countries captured the sweetness and struggles of life, reminding a world still scarred by war that we are sisters and brothers at heart. We all feel passion. We all feel pain. We all strive and hope and dream. As Steichen said, "Photography records the gamut of feelings written on the human face, the beauty of the earth and skies that man has inherited and the wealth and confusion man has created. Photography is a major force in explaining man to man".

The photographs you will see today will evoke more questions than explanations.

Why, in an age of progress, do we see so much brutality?

Why, in a world of plenty, do so many people still suffer such deprivation?

And how are we to comprehend the strength of the human spirit? For in the faces of the women in these photos, and in the words alongside their images, we witness their struggles, their sorrow, but also their will to carry on. From female amputees in Angola awaiting medical care, to Bosnian women praying at a memorial for missing relatives, they seem to be saying, "We will not give up... so don't give up on us".

These women have found loyal champions in the Red Cross and Red Crescent, which understand that a woman's well-being is more than just a marginal concern. An unsettled woman means shrinking levels of health and education for her family. And troubled families mean a troubled future for social and economic development. But by the same token, if we can uphold the safety and rights of women – if we can protect their human dignity, even in times of upheaval – we can lift the horizons for humanity as a whole.

The goal of protecting human dignity is what brought us here to Geneva today. Every day, in every country, we witness violations of this right.

Those who perpetrate such abuses are never at a loss for “why”. Security, order, even workplace efficiency are offered as explanations.

But a company’s rise in profit margin does not justify lesser treatment of its workers. A government’s obligation to preserve security does not override people’s right to self-respect. Men, women and children should never have to trade in their dignity for survival – to abandon their homes, suffer persecution or endure any kind of abuse.

Let’s make no mistake about it: the right to human dignity is not negotiable.

International law is a powerful tool for confronting and addressing these problems. But we do not have to be legal scholars to understand what feels right. The world’s great faiths and philosophies all draw strength from the same core belief: dignity is intrinsic to humankind. It is a universal birthright.

Human dignity matters deeply to us as individuals who seek self-improvement. It matters to us as parents who want the very best for the children we love. And it has to matter to us as citizens of a globalizing world. In an age when borders no longer define the limits of culture and commerce, neither can they contain the enormous costs of human suffering.

Today, we find our global and moral conscience lagging behind our global markets. The sophisticated international networks that have been employed to facilitate and enhance our everyday lives should also serve as the delivery system of a universal code of human values and ethics.

Human dignity should never be viewed as an expensive commodity, one that is least attainable in our hierarchy of needs. None of us can truly get ahead if most of us are left behind. Closing this “moral lag” will require a common conviction that access to human dignity and respect is just as important as access to medicine, education or technology.

And access to all is what the Red Cross and Red Crescent are about. Your efforts are guided by the fundamental impulse of human empathy. Neutrality and impartiality are the currency of your realm. You are defenders of human dignity, wherever it is at risk.

But you cannot protect others if you are vulnerable yourselves. And in recent years, we have seen an alarming erosion of humanitarian space. Encroachments on your neutrality have made it harder for you to do your jobs. Violence against aid workers, such as the bombing of the Red Cross offices in Baghdad, has shocked and saddened the civilized world.

If we do not address these problems, we will pay the price. We have to safeguard humanitarian space – in both physical and moral terms.

And more than that, we have to make room for humanitarian space in our hearts – and awaken the part of ourselves that aches at the sight of another in pain. We cannot afford to ration compassion, reject the unfamiliar or save our sympathy only for people who look or sound like us.

I believe this exhibit is an excellent place to begin. For here, we will gaze, not at strangers, but at mothers and sisters and daughters we know. Perhaps it is the way she smiles, or frowns. Perhaps it is her quiet resilience. Perhaps it is the way she holds her baby tenderly to her chest.

It has been said, “The camera is an instrument that teaches people how to see without a camera”. Let us offer the women in these photos our promise: we see you. And we care.

**Mr Jaime Ricardo Fernández Urriola,
Chairman of the Conference**

(Original Spanish)

Her Majesty will now symbolically inaugurate the exhibition, “Women and War”. I invite the Presidents of the ICRC and the International Federation to accompany Her Majesty; and encourage all delegates to visit the exhibition in the coming days. I would ask the delegates in this part of the room to make way for Her Majesty to exit.

9. Introduction of the Declaration

**H.E. Ms Yolande Biké, Vice-Chairman of the
Conference**

(Original French)

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Dear Friends,

It is truly a pleasure for me to open this afternoon’s session. The First Plenary Meeting that started this morning will continue this afternoon with a presentation on the Declaration. The presentation will cover the two basic aspects of the Declaration, namely protecting human dignity by enhancing respect for international humanitarian law and protecting human dignity by mobilizing humanity with a view to reducing violence, discrimination and vulnerability. The general debate on contemporary humanitarian challenges and protecting human dignity will then be continued bearing in mind the Declaration.

I would now like to give the floor to Ms Anne Petitpierre, Vice-President of the ICRC, and subsequently to Dr Kak-Soo Shin, Director-General at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Korea. Their presentations will focus on the Declaration and the need to enhance respect for international humanitarian law.

9.1 Protecting human dignity by enhancing respect for international humanitarian law

Ms Anne Petitpierre, Vice-President of the International Committee of the Red Cross

(Original English)

Madam Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The draft Declaration highlights a number of crucial humanitarian concerns and challenges facing the world today. It proposes general long-term priorities relating to the main theme and overall goal of the International Conference, namely, I remind you, "Protecting human dignity". Allow me to present the ICRC view on some of them, starting with some general points and then moving to more specific ones.

As concerns first the general points: in this time of increasingly serious violations of the law which affect the most vulnerable and cause enormous human suffering, we should reaffirm our commitment to the principles and rules of international humanitarian law and show the firm resolve of the members of this Conference to ensure the effectiveness of the law and to take all necessary action against those who violate it. A special emphasis should be placed on the universality of protection. Since humanitarian law aims to alleviate the suffering of individuals affected by armed conflict, it does not distinguish between just or unjust wars or discriminate between the aggressor and the aggrieved. The victims of murder, torture and rape deserve protection, and those who perpetrate crimes deserve punishment, no matter which side they happen to belong to.

Now the specific points: first, the adequacy of the law. Those who observe the changing nature of conflict have asked whether international humanitarian law adequately addresses the challenges posed by terrorists. It is a firm belief of the ICRC that international humanitarian law is adequate to deal with the armed conflicts of today. The needs of the victims of contemporary conflict remain unchanged. Attempts to significantly alter the content of international humanitarian law in response to the perceived novelties of new conflict would only upset the balance that international humanitarian law strikes. This balance takes into account military interests on the one hand, including ensuring the security of States and their citizens, and the dictates of humanity on the other, whose aim is to protect the lives, health and dignity of human beings.

The struggle against terrorism can take various forms: judicial cooperation and punishment of those responsible for acts of terrorism, the freezing of assets used to finance terrorism, and, in the wake of the attacks of 11 September, armed conflict. Accordingly, different bodies of law, including national and international rules of criminal law, are relevant. When the fight against terrorism takes the form of armed conflict, the position is uncontroversial. International humanitarian law does apply.

Secondly, the protection afforded by the law. International humanitarian law unambiguously prohibits acts or threats of violence aimed at spreading terror among the civilian population. Its more general prohibition of direct attacks against civilians or civilian objects and of indiscriminate attacks also covers other forms of terrorist activities. It cannot be emphasized enough that the protection afforded to individuals by international humanitarian law is not an obstacle to justice. It does not amount to impunity either in respect of crimes committed before the hostilities or in respect of violations of international humanitarian law committed during the conflict. It only requires that due process of law be applied in dealing with alleged offenders.

Third point: humane treatment. International humanitarian law requires that persons in the hands of the adversary in an armed conflict be treated with humanity and respect for their inherent dignity. Torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and punishment are prohibited and are considered as crimes. The comprehensive protection of persons in situations of armed conflict requires the complementary application of several bodies of law. Determining the exact interplay of these various legal regimes in situations of violence is a very challenging task, both on a legal and on a practical level. It is the ICRC's view that while international humanitarian law is a *lex specialis* applicable to situations of armed conflict, it by no means displaces the operation of other bodies of law, including human rights and domestic law.

Then the fate of civilians. Civilians are often found at the very heart of armed conflict. They are in danger because of their proximity to the fighting, or increasingly because they are a target of military operations or used as human shields. Additional efforts are therefore required to give full effect to the principles of distinction and proportionality in the conduct of military operations. The plight of the civilian population in occupied territory is also of concern. Strict adherence to the applicable provisions of international law, in particular of the Fourth Geneva Convention, is a precondition to protecting human dignity.

Cultural property. The preservation of cultural heritage is of great importance for all people of the world. It is part of the dignity of persons and of communities. All possible steps must therefore be taken to protect such property.

Assistance to the victims. Meeting the basic needs of victims of armed conflict is a substantial challenge in contemporary armed conflicts. The role of impartial, neutral and independent humanitarian organizations is therefore crucial. Direct attacks on such organizations, aimed at keeping them out of the conflict area, are not only a vicious crime but also a denial of the rights of the victim.

Finally, a few words about internal armed conflict. The world of today is marked by a significant number of internal armed conflicts often fuelled by religious and

ethnic differences and characterized by shocking brutality. The ICRC has learned from grim experience in the field that these are the conflicts that present the greatest challenge for international humanitarian law. Existing rules are very poorly implemented and very poorly respected indeed by practically all parties, including armed opposition groups. In addition, the norms applicable in non-international armed conflicts are much less elaborate than those applicable in international armed conflicts. This is for us the main area for improvement in the law, for example concerning the conduct of activities.

To conclude, I would like to emphasize the greatest challenge with which both humanitarian organizations and governments are confronted, namely to ensure greater respect for existing rules. This does not preclude improvements in the law aimed at increasing the protection it affords. But we should remember that there can be no progress in this field without the political will and a commitment to implement the law to its full extent. I expect that our next speaker, Dr Shin, will provide us with some insight into the challenges linked to improving compliance. Personally, I would just like to invite you to read the report entitled "International Humanitarian Law and the Challenges of Contemporary Armed Conflict", which the ICRC has submitted to this Conference. It further develops the issue that I have addressed in this presentation.

Dr Kak-Soo Shin, Director-General, Treaties Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Republic of Korea

(Original English)

Madam Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very honoured to be making a presentation this afternoon on how to protect human dignity by enhancing respect for international humanitarian law. In this presentation, I will identify the key challenges in the area of compliance with international humanitarian law and suggest some solutions to these challenges.

In the post-Cold War era, the number of intra-State armed conflicts, between the State and armed groups or between armed groups, has increased dramatically as ethnic, religious and racial hatreds that lay dormant during the Cold War have flared. These violent armed conflicts have claimed tremendous numbers of casualties, particularly among innocent civilians, and caused formidable loss of property. Moreover, as was seen in the events of 11 September, the emergence of large-scale, systematic international terrorism and the ensuing war on terrorism have brought about a new type of armed conflict which requires us to bring existing international humanitarian law into this new context.

The civilian casualties of armed conflicts have increased at an alarming pace in recent conflicts, with the belligerents tending to launch indiscriminate attacks. Since 1990, almost five million civilians have perished in armed conflicts, accounting for up to 90%

of all casualties during that period. It is particularly lamentable that most of those victims have been women and children. Against this backdrop, it is all the more important and urgent to improve compliance with international humanitarian law.

Under common Article 1 of the Geneva Conventions, States, whether engaged in an armed conflict or not, and whether the armed conflict is international or not, are under not only a negative obligation neither to encourage a party to an armed conflict to violate the law nor to take action that would assist such violations, but also a positive obligation to take action, unilaterally or collectively, against States that violate the law. However, the implementation in armed conflicts of international humanitarian law currently faces numerous obstacles.

The lack of political will and poor awareness of the law among authorities, decision-makers, and opinion leaders are major causes of non-compliance with international humanitarian law. The issue, therefore, is how to translate these obligations into State practice and policies. The key is to foster the political will of States and armed groups to respect the law. Broadly speaking, it is important to foster a greater culture of respect for international humanitarian law among all sectors of society at the local, national and international levels. To this end, civil society and public opinion must be fully mobilized to disseminate and implement the law. The four Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocol I contain, useful built-in mechanisms for ensuring respect for the law.

These are the inquiry procedure, the International Fact-Finding Commission, the designation of Protecting Powers, Meetings of High Contracting Parties and cooperation with the United Nations. Most of the above-mentioned mechanisms are dependent upon the trigger regime of consent or agreement by the State party concerned, effectively hamstringing their implementation or effective operation. The State party to the armed conflict may fear that international public opinion will turn against it if the findings prove to be unfavourable to it.

Belligerents also want to avoid the burdens of offering protection and helping facilitate the functioning of such mechanisms. Furthermore, no existing mechanism envisages penal sanctions for serious violations of international humanitarian law, despite findings to that effect.

Additional Protocol I provides for the convening of a Meeting of High Contracting Parties and cooperation with the United Nations to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law, by calling on the belligerents to comply with the applicable rules, offering good offices, sending observer missions, making denunciations or imposing sanctions. In this respect, the role of the Security Council in promoting international humanitarian law and ensuring compliance with it must be further strengthened. Other interesting proposals to improve the existing mechanisms deserve

serious consideration by the international community. These include the simplification of the process of inquiry and supervision, the introduction of the automatic and mandatory designation of a Protecting Power, and the empowerment of the United Nations or the ICRC with the designation of a Protecting Power. In time, consideration could be given to the creation of new supervision mechanisms and a new international humanitarian law body, such as an international humanitarian law commission or office of a high commissioner of international humanitarian law, an individual complaint mechanism, a committee of States or a group of experts on the law with quasi-judicial powers, the deployment of monitors on the ground, and national committees for the implementation of international humanitarian law with a fact-finding component in their terms of reference.

Now I will address the issue of making full use of existing humanitarian law mechanisms. During the pre-war period, raising awareness of and disseminating the law to the public, especially politicians, opinion makers, academics, military personnel, youth, civil society and the media, are the most crucial initial steps. This is a basic duty of the States, but the important role played by civil society, NGOs, national committees on humanitarian law and National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies cannot be overemphasized. During the armed conflict, measures taken by third States to induce the belligerents to comply with humanitarian law assume great importance. All sales of armaments to violators of the law should be prohibited. Trade in small arms, drugs or natural resources to finance the continuation of an armed conflict could also be included in this category.

Vigorous action should be taken to seek and fully utilize a variety of means of discouraging and preventing violations of international humanitarian law, because such action does not constitute intervention in the domestic affairs of a State. Negotiations, diplomatic pressure, public denunciation, lawful reprisals or sanctions are some of the means at hand. Cooperation with the United Nations, regional organizations, States, the ICRC and the International Court of Justice are other effective means of enhancing compliance with the law.

Once the conflict has ended, measures aimed at bringing the perpetrators of violations to justice should be strengthened. In an effort to create a seamless web of enforcement, the States should enact national criminal legislation to implement humanitarian law instruments. Increased use of various international criminal courts, including the newly created International Criminal Court, is an effective way of bridging the impunity gap that might arise out of the failure or unwillingness of domestic courts to prosecute.

I now come to the issue of improving compliance with international humanitarian law in non-international armed conflicts. Unfortunately, the existing mechanisms are not expressly mandated to address situations of internal armed conflicts. The international commu-

nity should therefore tackle the issue of how better to hold armed groups accountable for compliance with the law and seek mechanisms for increasing respect for the law by States and armed groups alike.

States tend to be reluctant to recognize a situation of violence as an internal armed conflict for fear of giving legitimacy to armed groups. At the same time, armed groups have little incentive to abide by humanitarian law. The asymmetrical nature of the relationship and the methods of warfare employed between State armed forces and armed groups also make matters worse. A special agreement or unilateral declaration granting armed groups the opportunity to express their consent to abide by the rules of humanitarian law would enhance their accountability under the law. In return, the States need to give armed groups tangible incentives by, for example, granting them immunity from prosecution for their mere participation in the hostilities. In addition, the existing oversight mechanisms could be made available on an ad hoc basis in internal armed conflicts. A new mechanism or body, such as an international humanitarian law commission, a high commissioner for international humanitarian law, an ombudsman or a pool of respected statesmen could be also considered to enhance the application of the law in internal armed conflicts. Needless to say, increased dissemination of and education about international humanitarian law and advocacy to demonstrate to armed groups the strategic advantage of abiding by the law are effective means of enhancing those groups' compliance with international humanitarian law.

I would like to conclude my presentation by once again stressing that it is vital for the international community to do all in its power to cope with the tragic consequences of violations of international humanitarian law and to employ all available means to ensure compliance with the law by all the parties during an armed conflict.

9.2 Protecting human dignity by mobilizing humanity to reduce violence, discrimination and vulnerability

H.E. Ms Yolande Biké, Vice-Chairman of the Conference

(Original French)

I remind you that Ms Petitpierre and Dr Shin presented the first aspect of the Declaration, namely protecting human dignity by enhancing respect for international humanitarian law. We shall now move on to the second part of the presentation. We shall hear first from Mr Jan Egeland, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and coordinator of emergency operations, followed by Mr Tom Buruku, who is President of the Ugandan Red Cross Society. They will discuss the second aspect, protecting human dignity by mobilizing humanity to reduce violence, discrimination and vulnerability.

Mr Jan Egeland, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs

(Original English)

Madam Chairperson, Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I am delighted to be able to address this Red Cross and Red Crescent Conference on behalf of the United Nations. I carry a message of sincere greetings from our Secretary-General, Kofi Annan. I have myself attended all the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Conferences since 1986 on behalf of what was then my National Society, the Norwegian Red Cross, my government or the International Red Cross.

Now, on behalf of the United Nations, I am happy to reconfirm that the United Nations regards the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement as a key partner in a common quest to defend and promote humanitarian principles and human rights at a time when such principles are being threatened, undermined and attacked. We at the United Nations unequivocally endorse the call of the ICRC President to rally around the existing rules of international humanitarian law in these times of new conflicts, new conflict actors, new conflict entrepreneurs and new conflict lines.

This Conference is the most representative humanitarian meeting in the world. In this room are gathered representatives of virtually all the world's nations, along with a large part of the world's humanitarian actors. Together we can make a real difference to the future of humanitarian action. We can now choose to face up to and solve the enormous challenges ahead of us, or we can choose to ignore them and see the problems and the suffering grow.

I am particularly pleased to be able to speak just before my friend and colleague Tom Buruku, of the Uganda Red Cross Society. When I moved from the Norwegian Red Cross to the United Nations, I saw that I was moving from a truly international voluntary movement that embodied the spirit of people's commitment to assist each other, to a United Nations that is striving to put people at the centre of a multi-lateral approach and that has a shared commitment to respect human dignity. It is all too easy to forget that human dignity is at the very heart of our humanitarian work. It is the central pillar of humanitarian endeavour. Yet we live in a world where humanitarian assistance is frequently seen as part of a humanitarian enterprise. All too often, when the constant mass media images of distress are no longer capable of shocking us, we see humanitarian action only as the movement of goods and commodities. This is why we risk dehumanizing our understanding of the very nature of distress.

What then are the practical ways in which we can mobilize humanity? I believe we must forge a stronger common humanitarian agenda, which places the restoration of human dignity at its heart. In this we need to work even more closely together as partners within the United Nations, within the Red Cross and

Red Crescent Movement, with all the non-governmental organizations, the United Nations Member States and the States party to the Geneva Conventions.

There are a number of policy issues on which such an agenda could be based. First, access and protection. It is totally unacceptable that we are still today, for various reasons, prevented from having access to affected populations in the majority of crises in which we are deployed. Together we must work with governments and where necessary with armed groups to address access systematically. Vulnerable communities have the right to receive humanitarian assistance, as we have the right and the obligation to provide it. We must pledge to stay in conflict zones where there are humanitarian needs, taking all possible measures to prevent any danger to our staff. We must collectively hold the parties to conflicts accountable for their responsibilities under international law.

Second, security for humanitarian workers. These are times of crisis for the security and safety of humanitarian staff. As the deliberate attacks against our humanitarian colleagues in Iraq and Afghanistan have demonstrated, the threats to humanitarian workers are unprecedented. We in the United Nations lost 22 colleagues on 19 August in Baghdad. That is more than in any other instance in our history. The protection that we rely on, the understanding and acceptance of our humanitarian mission, as symbolized in our emblems, is being challenged. We should, however, not forget that the greater part of all humanitarian assistance is provided through national humanitarian societies and through national staff who face greater challenges and often take greater risks when they express our common humanitarian principles. Our international responsibility is to provide solidarity through our presence and establish measures for a common security as humanitarian organizations. This means that humanitarian agencies will need to be better at risk management. We need to improve our analysis of the risks and threats that we face and we must work jointly to develop measures that improve the security of all our national and international representatives. Foremost among these is the need to restore respect for our humanitarian mission and address the way in which we are perceived. As we sit here together, in Geneva, the humanitarian capital of the world, we should, as operative agencies, reflect on the image we present in certain areas in which we are active of a group dominated by the North.

The stakes are high as we try to globalize our presence and also to de-westernize our response. As emergency relief coordinator within the United Nations system, I often cite the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement as a positive example of representativity. The Red Crescent Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Ethiopian Red Cross Society, the Colombian Red Cross Society, are all among the foremost operative non-governmental organizations in the world, and we should learn how to use their expertise as we frame

our international response to crisis. Basic responsibility for our workers' security lies, of course, with the governments. They can and should do more to provide a secure environment for humanitarian work locally, nationally and internationally. Governments must realize what is at stake when humanitarian access is denied and impartial humanitarian workers are attacked; they must do more to prevent attacks on their territory and elsewhere.

My third point is to focus greater attention on forgotten emergencies. The year is 2003, but there are still countless forgotten victims of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, forgotten victims of all the natural disasters that strike in particular the poorest of countries. Every year seven times more people are affected by natural disasters than by conflict worldwide. The neglected communities that require aid are neglected for lack of interest and lack of resources. We cannot ignore the financial consequences of restoring dignity. Is it really possible to restore dignity and people's hope for the future with USD 18 per person per year in some African countries? And can we expect people to understand that our mission is truly impartial when at the same time we can find billions of dollars for conflicts in the media spotlight? We must not only ensure that we have enough resources to restore dignity but also that we are perceived to manage these resources fairly. Humanitarian assistance should be provided strictly on the basis of needs. It hurts as much to be displaced in Congo as it does in Kosovo. It hurts as much to be wounded in northern Uganda as it does in northern Iraq. We must reaffirm the universality of our humanitarian principles, and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, as a truly international voluntary movement, should also inspire States to recognize that multilateralism must be the foundation for humanitarian action.

My fourth point is that we must broaden humanitarian partnerships. We must mobilize more resources and we must be more imaginative in their deployment. If we are to build a truly international base for humanitarian action, we must engage and encourage new and non-traditional donors in non-traditional ways. The growing economies of Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe should take responsibility for providing the cash, the kind and the personnel for humanitarian solidarity in proportion to their growing share of the global economy. In the new millennium, the top ten donors cannot continue to include certain very small countries whose share in the world's economy is shrinking. Other, bigger countries must be added to those providing effective assistance to those in greatest need. And as humanitarian agencies we should be more effective in enlisting these new partner countries as contributors of the personnel, commodities and financial resources we need.

Finally, a word of conclusion: humanitarian action has taken great steps forwards in terms of effectiveness and efficiency in the last generation. I was nine years old when I first joined my local Red Cross Youth Chapter

and I was head of the Norwegian Red Cross International Department 15 years ago; I studied humanitarian law here 22 years ago. In this period we have made progress like never before in being operational and providing relief expertise and operational leadership to disaster-stricken areas within hours anywhere in the world. We now have the tools, the logistical capabilities and the early-warning procedures like never before in human history. What we sorely lack is the ability to have our humanitarian principles become a reality for the political, military and economic leaders and players in the many conflict and disaster-stricken areas around the world. What good do our impressive tools do if suffering civilians continue to be neglected in forgotten countries? What good can our courageous national and international humanitarian workers do if they are deliberately targeted by political actors or terrorists? What good does it do to have stand-by arrangements for relief goods and personnel if the right to obtain humanitarian access and establish a humanitarian space is not respected? We have had our revolution in humanitarian technical capabilities. We now need to see a moral and ethical revolution in international relations and domestic politics and power struggles, ensuring that we, as humanitarians, can act always and everywhere in accordance with our humanitarian principles. In this future struggle for just, equitable humanitarian access for all, we in the United Nations, I as an emergency relief coordinator, and my Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs look forward to the closest possible partnership with this great Movement, with the National Societies, the ICRC, the International Federation and the States party to international humanitarian law.

Mr Tom Buruku, President of the Ugandan Red Cross Society

(Original English)

Madam Chair, Your Excellencies, Dear Friends,

Thank you, Madam Chair, for giving me the floor at the outset of the debate on this very important Commission. The contribution to the debate from both governments and National Societies will be the real evidence of the partnership we must all build in the years ahead if we are truly and effectively to challenge the humanitarian crisis confronting the world today. In that sense, I hope my statement will be seen as linked to that just given by my good friend, Jan Egeland, of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Jan Egeland's message is clear, and I can assure him and through him the United Nations family that all National Societies will be working hard to build effective relations with their UN counterparts for the benefit of vulnerable people all over the world.

The partnership they are building is grounded in the quality of and respect for the Movement's Fundamental Principles. This is the clear and welcome message of the United Nations High Commissioner

for Refugees in his report to the United Nations General Assembly this year. He noted the role of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies as important partners for UNHCR, working in various contexts but always within the Fundamental Principles. That message is essentially the same as the one delivered by various speakers in the plenary debate this morning. It is also one the National Societies are hearing more and more often from inter-governmental agencies and their governmental members. In the current state of the world, more effective relationships between governments and National Societies are an absolute imperative.

Within that context there is a need for much clearer understanding of the nature and role of National Societies and their unique status as auxiliaries to the public authorities in their respective countries. That is the role underpinning the work to be done in all commission meetings at this Conference. For our purpose this afternoon, however, I note that that role is vital to the success of work against discrimination and in favour of tolerance and cultural diversity. It is also critical to the success of the enormous efforts being made by governments and National Societies to combat HIV/AIDS. Just as importantly, there can be no successful work to combat disasters and to reduce risk without active cooperation between governments and National Societies. In all cases, National Societies bring a special ability to policy planning and programme development, a mature and considered undertaking, and understanding of the needs of communities in their countries at all levels.

When it comes to discrimination, the issue at the heart of this Commission and the task ahead of us is to find a way of strengthening our commitment to work together effectively to make the Fundamental Principle of humanity live and breathe in our communities. A great deal has been done in the past here and elsewhere to build legal assurances of this commitment. There is great strength in modern international human rights law. Most countries have adopted national legislation on the subject. Many global and regional organizations have set up implementation mechanisms and programmes. But the problem persists and in many respects has got worse in recent years.

There are several reasons for this. The most obvious is a sharp rise in the willingness of communities to discriminate on a religious or ethnic basis since the terrible terrorist attacks of recent years. The tragic events in New York and Washington on 11 September 2001 are symptomatic of this growth. But they were not the first such attacks, and there have been many others since. What they led to, however, is a natural human reaction, a retreat to the safety of narrow communities and ethnic and religious families. This might have been possible to manage 200 years ago, but not now. For better or worse, we live in a world which is increasingly globalizing in every imaginable direction, not just in trade and economic affairs but in all aspects of human endeavour. Take, for example, the World

Summit on the Information Society, which will be held here next week and whose agenda is based on the place of ordinary people in this globalization process. That is at the international level. At the national level, in very many countries the international trend towards globalization has produced reactions including xenophobia, discrimination, violence and outright savagery. No country is immune. We have seen the effects of ethnically-based wars in Africa; in Uganda there are currently about 1.2 million persons in the northern part of the country who have been displaced as a result of strife. This strife has ignored every one of the most basic elements of international law and brought catastrophe to all levels of society. Imagine, if you can, what it is like to be in a country where 20,000 children have been abducted from their homes as a part of this violence. Allow me to draw an analogy: Uganda has a population of 25 million people. The 20,000 children abducted in Uganda would be the equivalent of about 228,000 children abducted in the United States or 300,000 children in the 15 Member States of the European Union. This is just to demonstrate the gravity of the situation. Uganda, of course, is not alone in its misery, but I will not go into detail about any other country except to say that.

There are many special responsibilities which we must all accept, both in countries afflicted by war, countries like Afghanistan, Iraq and many others in Africa, and in countries whose entire social, economic and political structures are being torn apart by the scourge of HIV/AIDS. The sheer weight of these challenges places an even greater onus on the governments represented here and on the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to work together. Governments must make use of the power of humanity, which National Societies must be equipped to mobilize. This must be achieved with the support of the governments and with the active involvement of the entire Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement network. The International Federation, for its part, must continue to upgrade its relationship with partner organizations at the international level, in particular with my friend Jan Egeland and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

What we are talking about now, in this Commission, is the dramatic urgency of the challenges confronting all of us. We have no options anymore. The challenges can only be effectively confronted by an absolute commitment to the implementation of programmes designed jointly by governments and their civil society partners involving volunteers and the many people willing to take part and by providing resources to the countries where the needs are most urgent. This is a message of advocacy. Advocacy within a holistic programme. This Commission, particularly Commission B1, in which many of you are taking part, is at work at the crossroads of humanitarian urgency. It is therefore my hope that the delegations will come together and go forward from here determined to confront this challenge. We have no time to lose, the struggle must continue.

H.E. Ms Yolande Biké, Vice-Chairman of the Conference

(Original French)

We will now resume the general debate on contemporary humanitarian challenges and protecting human dignity, with special consideration for the Conference Declaration. Please remember that each delegation may take the floor for a maximum of five minutes.

10. General debate on contemporary humanitarian challenges and protecting human dignity including on the Declaration

H.E. Dr Amir Hossein Zamani Nia, General Director of International Political Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Islamic Republic of Iran

In the Name of God the Merciful *(Original Arabic)*

(Original English)

This Conference strives to keep hope alive in the midst of what appears hopeless. This Conference calls for States and other players to renew their commitment to a most basic and in fact altruistic principle, that is, protecting human dignity. That the collective wisdom of the Red Cross and Red Crescent has found it necessary and apt to choose "Protecting human dignity" as the theme for the 28th International Conference is a good indication of the sorry state of human affairs at the beginning of the Third Millennium. In my view, this is a most serious and alarming message, which this Conference aims to drive home everywhere.

My delegation focuses on one of the four areas of concern to this Conference and that is the question of missing persons. My delegation completely identifies with the statement made yesterday by the President of Parents of Servicemen Missing in Action. The agony of not knowing what has become of a loved one in an armed conflict and the resulting uncertainty is similar to no other pain resulting from an armed conflict or internal strife. We in the Islamic Republic of Iran face this situation every day as the families of persons missing in the Iran-Iraq war seek desperately to learn about the fate of their relatives from the State and from the representatives of the ICRC. Their inability to bring closure to this pain will endure forever unless they receive credible evidence about the fate of their loved ones. Undoubtedly, the same is true for Iraq.

We are glad to stress that we in Iran have decided to work with and encourage the current Iraqi Governing Council to resume the joint effort to recover and identify remains from the war so as to bring closure to the untold pain and suffering of thousands of families from both sides. Needless to point out, of course, that the ICRC will continue to provide the expertise necessary to achieve this objective of protecting human dignity.

The Islamic Republic of Iran endorses and testifies to the infinite utility of implementing the proposals con-

tained on this issue in the Agenda for Humanitarian Action that we will adopt at the end of this Conference.

In our view, the new challenges we face in protecting human dignity and protecting the most vulnerable segments of our population stem not from shortcomings in international humanitarian law, but from a shortage in our resolve and political will to implement the body of present laws. It is plainly short-sighted to assert that the rules of international humanitarian law impede the administration of justice.

In order to promote respect for the authority and morality of international humanitarian law, the Red Crescent Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran held an International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Youth Coalition for Peace and Friendship, from 16-17 September 2003. Some 52 representatives of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies from around the world met in the city of Shiraz and worked out fifteen recommendations on how to protect human dignity by promoting friendship and understanding. I wish that this Conference would take note of that statement, that declaration.

It is perhaps an open secret that Iran has been home to the largest number of foreign refugees for nearly two decades. In the course of these long years, during which we also worked closely with ICRC representatives on the issue of prisoners of war, we have come to appreciate first-hand the services which international humanitarian workers provide to alleviate the pains experienced by the victims of armed conflict or internal strife and disasters. That is why we believe it is fundamentally important to work together to ensure the safety and continuity of their work in the service of the most vulnerable among us, and to bring the perpetrators of the recent attacks against international humanitarian workers and United Nations personnel to justice.

Mr Wang Xiaohua, Director, External Liaison Department, Red Cross Society of China

(Original English)

Dear Colleagues and Friends, it is a great honour for me to speak on behalf of the Red Cross Society of China.

The 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent has brought together representatives from 191 States and 181 Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies which cover almost the entire world. It provides a good opportunity for all of us to share ideas and aspirations on important humanitarian issues of common interest, and to further strengthen and better define the cooperation between the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement and the government authorities in protecting and assisting the victims of armed conflicts, disease and disasters. The Chinese Red Cross would like to learn from all of your experiences and apply what we learn to the situation in China, in order

to play a more important role and contribute in the humanitarian field.

"Protecting human dignity" is the theme of this Conference. I would like to underscore the importance of a shared commitment to protecting human dignity.

In today's world, peace and development are still the main trends. At the same time, however, people around the globe are facing serious challenges: war and conflicts, natural and technical disasters, climate change, terrorism and organized crime, HIV/AIDS and other new diseases. A good example is SARS, a highly infectious virus that struck China and other countries and regions so viciously in the early part of this year. Globalization brings all peoples and all countries face-to-face with the same tides of economic, social and technological change. These are problems without borders.

In the face of these common challenges, we need a shared commitment to protect, respect and promote human dignity. Each and every Conference participant has a role to play in creating a more humane civil society.

We are very pleased to see that the Conference has maintained the good practice of pledging which was initiated at the last Conference in 1999. This will enable us to bring back home measurable commitments besides the extra luggage of Conference papers.

At the 27th Conference, the Chinese Red Cross made pledges on disaster preparedness and the dissemination of international humanitarian law and the Movement's Fundamental Principles. During the last four years we have felt compelled to meet our commitment. And so we did. For those who are interested, a leaflet is available on our implementation report. We are going to make new pledges on community services, disaster management, dissemination and first-aid training. We realize that we need to work more closely with our communities in ways that build on their capacities and reduce their vulnerability. If all the delegations respond to this call for pledges, the Conference will have more concrete results. With a shared commitment, we are united. Together we will do better.

We wish this Conference complete success.

Mr Haji Mohd Arif Abu Bakar, Deputy Secretary General, Ministry of National Unity and Social Development, Malaysia

(Original English)

Madam Chairperson, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Malaysian delegation joins in extending our congratulations to you on your election as the Chairperson of the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. I am confident that under your leadership and guidance, we will be able to achieve fruitful results. We would also like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the continued and tireless efforts of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

to promote and strengthen universal humanitarian principles in order to protect human dignity.

Madam Chairperson,

International humanitarian law is an instrument to defend human dignity and to protect individuals, whether civilians or combatants, prisoners of war or the wounded. However, the growing complexity of armed conflicts has created massive challenges in terms of the protection of civilians and the application of international humanitarian law. Deliberate and indiscriminate attacks against civilians, forced displacements of populations, the destruction of civilian infrastructure and property, rape and sexual violence, and the use of civilians as human shields continue to threaten human security and human dignity. These abuses of power and violence perpetrated against civilians contravene the obligation to respect the physical and psychological integrity of individuals.

Madam Chairperson,

In the light of the security threats endangering the world today, the challenge faced by the international community is to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law during armed conflicts. Indeed, the protection of human dignity during armed conflicts is largely dependent on the application of international humanitarian law. It is therefore important that all the parties involved in armed conflicts uphold the principles of international humanitarian law and the principle of humanity in order to alleviate human suffering and to protect lives. Besides ensuring respect for international humanitarian law, the international community must also make an effort to control the development and proliferation of weapons that may have indiscriminate effects.

Although Malaysia is blessed with economic, social and political stability, it recognizes the plight of people who are living in conflict zones, especially vulnerable groups such as women, children, the elderly and the disabled. In many cases, women and children suffer more severely from war, as they are the target of specific forms of abuse, including rape, sexual violence and exploitation.

Both the ICRC and the International Federation have developed a significant presence in Malaysia, establishing regional delegations that focus on resource development, communication and pan-regional services. Both the ICRC and the International Federation provide training in disaster preparedness and response and conduct workshops on management and leadership development training.

The government of Malaysia cooperates in various activities of the Malaysian Red Crescent Society, which is an auxiliary to the government and works closely with non-governmental organizations.

Malaysia also understands that the current situation remains volatile in Iraq, Afghanistan and certain parts

in Africa. It is therefore relevant and timely for the ICRC to perform its humanitarian mission to protect the lives and dignity of the victims of war and internal violence.

Madam Chairperson,

The draft Declaration and Agenda for Humanitarian Action represent a new international drive for action on related issues such as the protection of civilians during armed conflicts and missing persons. Both also address the issues of disaster reduction and of reducing the risk and impact of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases. When it comes to "Protecting human dignity", it is the States that are primarily responsible for protecting civilians in armed conflicts, especially women and children. At the same time, however, the principles of State sovereignty, of non-interference in domestic affairs and of national interest should be respected. Malaysia is confident that this Conference will take this into consideration.

Madam Chairperson,

This august Conference provides us with another golden opportunity to further strengthen and reaffirm our commitments to uphold humanitarian principles and to protect human dignity. Given the participants' commitment and enthusiasm, this Conference will be a successful and fruitful endeavour for all of us.

H.E. Mr Igor Luksic, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Serbia and Montenegro

(Original English)

It is my particular pleasure to address you today as the head of the delegation of Serbia and Montenegro. It is only nine months since the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro began its new life, following the adoption of the Constitutional Charter and the Charter of Human and Minority Rights and Civil Liberties.

The road we have embarked on is burdened with the heavy legacy of the past. We are aware that the democratic transformation of our society, the promotion of the rule of law and of full respect for human and minority rights, and the provision to all our citizens of an equal opportunity to fulfil their dreams are far-reaching goals, but we are resolutely determined to invest all our efforts in meeting them.

This Conference is taking place in one of the most peculiar periods in the history of mankind. On the one hand, we are reaping the benefits of dazzling advances in technology, of the information revolution and of tremendous opportunities for each and every human being. However, a large number of people are living in extreme poverty, marginalized and victimized by so many wars and so much internal strife, the victims of organized crime, poverty and intolerance, of human rights violations and of disrespect for human dignity. As a result, millions of refugees and internally displaced persons cannot return to their homes, women and children continue to be exploited, crime and corrup-

tion spare no society, education remains an unfulfilled dream for many, and drugs and AIDS continue to kill young people in particular. In such a global environment, it is the primary obligation of the States not only to fulfil their duties under international human rights instruments and the Geneva Conventions, but also to ensure that every citizen enjoys full protection and respect whatever the circumstances.

Serbia and Montenegro has committed itself to honour all its international obligations, particularly those relating to humanitarian law. In our successor statement of 28 September 2001, we reconfirmed our commitment to all four 1949 Geneva Conventions and their two Additional Protocols. We withdrew all our reservations and made the declaration recognizing the competence of the International Fact-Finding Commission.

South-eastern Europe has long been known as the scene of the most flagrant instances of intolerance and xenophobia. In order to have a better and prosperous future, everyone in the war-torn countries of our region should face up to the legacy of the terrible crimes committed and all perpetrators must be punished. This is not only a political but also a highly moral and civilized act, the best path to reconciliation and the re-establishment of mutual trust, understanding and respect among the States and their peoples.

It is with good reason that the ICRC has put the problems of missing persons high on its agenda, including at this Conference. The role of the ICRC and its long experience of this issue are indispensable. We welcome the establishment of a working group of the Commission on Human Rights to draft a legally binding instrument in this respect. This is truly one of the most difficult humanitarian problems that my country also faces and attaches particular importance to. The solution of this very complex problem, which emerged in the territory of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia between 1991 and 1999, will certainly help promote mutual confidence and improve relations among the region's States and peoples. To this end, bilateral agreements have been signed with Croatia and with Bosnia-Herzegovina, and other joint activities are under way. Furthermore the Commission of the Council of Ministers of Serbia and Montenegro very recently formed a Commission on Missing Persons.

We commend the ICRC for raising the issue of the protection of the civilian victims of different types of weapons that indiscriminately cause enormous human suffering and humiliation. As one of the most heavily affected countries, Serbia and Montenegro supports the new Protocol on the Explosive Remnants of War. We also invest great efforts in fighting the great menace of our times, the illegal transfer of small arms and light weapons that fuel terrorism, illegal trafficking and organized crime worldwide as well as in our region.

We praise the vigorous efforts made by the Red Cross and Red Crescent to combat HIV/AIDS and other

communicable diseases that kill hundreds of thousands of people around the world. This is undoubtedly one of the greatest challenges of our time and requires concerted and well-organized work on the part of the entire international community.

Madam Chairperson,

In closing, let me reiterate our firm belief that human dignity is the foundation of all efforts and should govern all our initiatives in the struggle to meet the global challenges of the modern era.

H.E. Mr Sha Zukang, Ambassador, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of China, Geneva

(Original English)

The present international situation in the humanitarian field is both encouraging and worrisome. On the one hand, we are pleased to see that the just, neutral and independent principles and ideals of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement have been well received by the people, and that the four Geneva Conventions and other humanitarian instruments have been disseminated. This will have positive and profound effects on the promotion of the international humanitarian cause. On the other hand, there are still many problems in the international humanitarian area which cause us deep concern. Local wars and armed conflicts break out from time to time. Terrorist attacks are escalating. The gap between the North and the South caused by globalization continues to widen. As a result, extreme poverty and inequality make people more vulnerable to the threats of disease or disaster. Under such circumstances, how to effectively promote the humanitarian cause and protect human dignity has become an issue of common concern. In this regard, I would like to underline a few points.

First, maintaining peace and promoting development. Promoting peace by humanitarian means is the motto of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Misuse of force cannot create peace, but will only sow the seeds of new conflicts and unrest. The international community should adhere to the principles of mutual respect, equality and mutual trust and seek common ground while agreeing to differ, peacefully resolve disputes through dialogue and maintain security through cooperation. Efforts should be made to reduce the negative impact of globalization, to promote the economic and social development of developing countries, and gradually to narrow the gap between the North and the South so that the goal of every man living in dignity can be met.

Secondly, respecting and adhering faithfully to international humanitarian law. Times have changed. Circumstances are changing. But the international humanitarian principles that have at their core the four Geneva Conventions and their Protocols remain valued and unchanged. All countries should strengthen their efforts to disseminate knowledge of international

humanitarian law, to respect and scrupulously abide by its principal spirit, and to ensure that the relevant humanitarian bodies will be able to provide timely and necessary help and protection for all who need them. We oppose and condemn all forms of terrorist acts. We support and cooperate in the fight against terrorism. We call for effective protection of the safety and dignity of humanitarian workers.

Thirdly, enhancing the public health system and capacity-building. Protecting human lives and health is one of the aims of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Globalization has sped up cross-border human movements and hastened the spread of epidemic diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria, which seriously threaten lives and the health of human society. The outbreak of SARS in some countries and regions in the first half of this year showed that a good public health system is extremely important and is the hallmark of a society's all-round development. The adoption by consensus at the 58th United Nations General Assembly of resolution 58/3 on enhancing capacity-building in global public health, which was co-sponsored by as many as 156 countries, fully reflects the awareness and determination of the international community. We call for further strengthening of international cooperation, an improved global emergency response system and for the reinforcement of the capacity of all nations to deal with major disastrous diseases.

Fourthly, supporting National Societies and strengthening their disaster relief capacity and response preparedness. National Societies are at the front line in disseminating knowledge of humanitarian law, delivering disaster relief and working to improve public health. All governments should strengthen their support to their respective National Society. Efforts should also be made to strengthen the monitoring and warning systems for disasters such as floods and earthquakes, the better to protect lives and property.

Over the years, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has made great contributions to the international humanitarian cause. We appreciate that. We admire the hardworking and self-sacrificing spirit of its humanitarian workers. We are confident that the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement will, with the support of the international community, play an even greater role in the future.

Madam Chairperson,

The Chinese Government has always considered it its responsibility to protect the rights and dignity of the people and has all along supported the efforts made by the international community to solve humanitarian problems. There is an ancient Chinese saying which goes: a State should be people-centred, and one should not go against the people's will. The Chinese Government is, in accordance with the wishes of the people, dedicated to economic development in an effort to build up a society where people across the board are relatively well off. The Chinese people are now living

and working happily, in peace, enjoying various rights. We will earnestly fulfill the obligations set forth in the four Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols and continue to support the work of the Red Cross Society of China and of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

We all cherish a dream: to build a beautiful world where there is no war, no conflict, no poverty and no hunger, and where everybody has equal rights and dignity. The road to realizing that dream is arduous and long. But I firmly believe that this dream will eventually come true through all our efforts.

Hon. Justice Suleiman Galadima, National Vice-President, Nigerian Red Cross Society

(Original English)

Madam Chairperson,

On behalf of the Nigerian Red Cross Society, I wish to thank the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement for the comprehensive reports presented for discussion at this Conference, particularly those on contemporary humanitarian challenges and the protection of human dignity.

The theme of this year's Conference, "Protecting human dignity", is apt and quite appropriate.

Since the establishment of the ICRC and the International Federation, their journeys, visions, focus and commitments have always been essentially for the benefit of the National Societies and vulnerable groups. The Movement has recently keenly observed the huge daily humanitarian difficulties confronting every National Society in Africa in particular. My comments are these. Having clearly identified the provisions and intentions of international humanitarian law, the question is what role is the Movement expected to play in the protection of the victims of international armed conflicts and non-international armed conflicts. The Movement has the following statutory roles.

Firstly, the ICRC should initiate services with a view to encouraging governments and civil society to protect human dignity everywhere in the world.

Secondly, we need to be firmly committed to ensuring that the State's security and national interest in no way jeopardize or hamper our resolve to protect human dignity and security.

Thirdly, the line between political-cum-military action and humanitarian action is becoming dangerously blurred, and we as a Movement are also falling victim to this. We need to take urgent steps to ensure that there are no victims of inhuman treatment for whatever reason.

Fourthly, there is a need for mutual respect, understanding and trust between the governments and the National Societies. This factor must be emphasized. We shall accomplish the task if we so desire.

I cannot end my remarks without drawing the attention of this august body to the problems of refugees in Africa. These people are no less vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and new diseases than other civilians. The sad and practical example of this thorny situation is the ever-increasing refugee population in West, East and Central Africa. I wish to observe that the world as a whole must not take the problem lightly but with all the gravity it deserves. Refugees in Europe receive better and more favourable treatment. For example, for every dollar made available (if at all) for a refugee in Africa, at least ten dollars are made available for his/her counterpart in Europe, or clearly ten times the monetary benefit. My passionate appeal here is that there should be respect for the dignity of African refugees, who should be protected against discrimination.

For our part, I can say on behalf of the Nigerian Red Cross and the government that our pledge for the years 2004-2007 is "to massively engage in the campaign against the spread of HIV/AIDS and protect the dignity of affected victims against discrimination and stigmatization".

H.E. Mr Ian M. de Jong, Ambassador, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the Netherlands, Geneva

(Original English)

Madam Chairman,

The world faces new protection challenges. The 28th International Conference provides a much-needed arena to discuss humanitarian assistance, international humanitarian law and disaster prevention and preparedness. I thank the organizers, and in particular the Standing Commission, for creating a platform for cooperation and dialogue between the Movement and the States party to the Geneva Conventions.

Madam Chairman,

There is no doubt about the continued relevance of international humanitarian law in the world today, even though the nature of conflicts may change. Universal norms and values are expressed in humanitarian law and its rules continue to apply in conflicts of whatever nature. No one should be beyond the protection offered by the law.

There can be no proper implementation of international humanitarian law without proper dissemination of the basic rules. Societies need this. We believe that it is important to look at new ways of dissemination. Therefore, I am pleased to announce that the Netherlands will continue to support the modern dissemination efforts made by the ICRC. My government pledges to provide financial support for remote training for Exploring Humanitarian Law, or rather Internet for teachers to teach others.

Madam Chairman,

We must not accept violations of international humanitarian law. Non-observance undermines the essential

humanitarian values contained in the law. Monitoring the implementation of international humanitarian law is crucial. The speed with which the 1998 Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court entered into force, in 2002, is exemplary for the importance the world attaches to this instrument. As the host State of the Court, we truly hope it will help end impunity. Let me underline, however, that the efforts of States at the domestic level are at least as important.

In this respect I want to highlight one topic in particular: the need to prevent attacks on humanitarian workers and to end the impunity of the attackers.

Humanitarian workers frequently work at the front line of today's conflicts. Their efforts and bravery are pivotal for protecting human dignity. They prevent and even alleviate suffering. Humanitarian workers must be able to do their work in an impartial, neutral and independent manner. Their safety and security are crucial, but in recent times many incidents have taken place involving humanitarian workers. Violence and threats aimed at humanitarian workers are an attack on humanity itself. Attacks on humanitarian workers must be prosecuted.

At the same time, it is essential for the protection of humanitarian workers that unnecessary confusion be avoided between the military and humanitarian roles and that a clear distinction be maintained between the two. In this respect, my government welcomes the adoption of the Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets to Support United Nations Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies, which set out the framework for the exceptional use of military assets in support of such activities.

Madam Chairman,

Human dignity is also challenged by disasters other than armed conflicts. The enormity of the challenge HIV/AIDS poses to the world is undeniable. The Netherlands welcomes the focus of this Conference on HIV/AIDS. National Societies can play a pre-eminent role in combating HIV/AIDS. The Netherlands, in a joint effort with the Netherlands Red Cross, pledges to further strengthen the capacity of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in order to support local communities and to better prepare those communities for their role with respect to HIV/AIDS and disaster preparedness.

Madam Chairman,

Finally two short but important points.

Firstly, the International Conference takes place only once every four years. The outcome of this Conference must reflect the importance we attach to humanitarian issues. We cannot accept final documents that fall below the agreed minimum standards of protection. Respect for and compliance with international humanitarian law are not matters on which we can compromise. I listened with great care this morning to the President of the ICRC, Mr Kellenberger. I fully

support his statement regarding the ICRC's role as the custodian of international humanitarian law. At the same time, I would call on him and the ICRC to play an even more pro-active and public role in this regard. And I call upon this International Conference to make sure that the protection afforded to the victims by international humanitarian law is further improved and that the existing rules are fully implemented by all.

Secondly and finally, speaking as the Dutch representative, I add my thanks to what has been said about and to Princess Margriet for all she did in the last eight years in the Standing Commission. For me, she is a shining example of what volunteers in the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies can achieve in the field of humanitarian affairs. Their commitment and endurance make all the difference. Thank you, Princess Margriet.

H.E. Ms Yolande Biké, Vice-Chairman of the Conference

(Original French)

Thank you, Mr Ambassador, we would also like to pay tribute to Princess Margriet.

Ms Annika Söder, State Secretary for Development Cooperation and Cooperation with Central and Eastern Europe, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden

(Original English)

This Conference is dedicated to the protection of human dignity. It is a unique opportunity for us all to take a strong stance for the protection of those in need and to do it through a rights-based approach. We must never be silent when civilians are targeted or when other principles and rules of international humanitarian law, human rights and refugee law are violated.

We need to implement international humanitarian law, we need to ensure compliance and we need to take action.

As we move into new developments and new eras, we face new challenges such as the development of technology. Computer network attacks are a new type of threat. At this Conference, Sweden will pledge to initiate a process to analyse to what extent international humanitarian law can be applied to these new computer-based threats. We would welcome other States to join us.

State sovereignty implies responsibilities. Governments have a responsibility to protect their people. If they fail, the international community must be prepared to act. In its report, *The Responsibility to Protect*, the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty raises important questions, such as: how shall the international community live up to its responsibility when States fail to protect their people? We hope to provide some answers to those questions at the Stockholm International Forum on Preventing Genocide, to be held in Stockholm in January.

Compliance with international humanitarian law is absolutely essential. We are grateful to the ICRC for arranging regional expert meetings on how to improve compliance. We also wish to draw attention to the International Fact-Finding Commission and its capability and readiness to facilitate implementation of existing rules. The report on women and war states that effective fact-finding strengthens understanding of women's needs and of violations of their rights in particular.

Madam Chair,

Governments have a central role to play as advocates and as providers of timely, flexible and adequate humanitarian funding. In recognition of our shortcomings, 17 major official donors met in Stockholm in June with representatives of the United Nations, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs. We agreed on principles and good practice of humanitarian donorship. We also agreed on a plan to implement improvements in donor behaviour.

The deteriorating situation for civilians in armed conflicts is linked to the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons. At this Conference, the Swedish government will make a pledge to explore appropriate ways of assessing an arms recipient's likely respect for international humanitarian law in our arms transfer control policy.

As many have said here today, HIV/AIDS is a humanitarian emergency. It is a threat to development as well as to global security. Our response cannot be "business as usual". We need to use all tools and much more resources. That is why the Swedish government has put the fight against HIV/AIDS on the top of its agenda. This is also why we pledge to scale up our involvement in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

The prevention of HIV/AIDS is one of the most controversial topics in the world today. It is about the balance of power in society between men and women, children and parents, rich and poor. This makes the struggle difficult but not less important. Everybody needs to engage. I am very glad to see the commitment and dedication of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to this task. With its unique structure, reaching out to the most remote corners of the world, the Movement has a particularly important role to play in the fight against stigma and discrimination.

Madam Chair,

Let me end by stating that Sweden fully supports the statement made by the Italian Presidency on behalf of the European Union. I would especially like to highlight the points made by the Presidency on the issues of mines and explosive remnants of war, as well as on access and protection for humanitarian personnel. When providing humanitarian assistance it is essential to uphold the principles of neutrality and impartiality. A clear distinction must always be made between humanitarian and military players.

Can I also use this opportunity to give our special thanks to Miss Christina Magnuson, who worked with dedication for this organization for many years. We are happy to have her back in Sweden and I know the organization will miss her very much.

H.E. Mr Georg Mautner-Markhof, Ambassador, Director of the Department of Human Rights, International Humanitarian Law and Minority Issues, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Austria

(Original English)

Madam Chairperson, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In addition to expressing its full agreement with the statement and pledges made by the Presidency of the European Union, Austria would like to address three problem areas to which we attach particular significance.

1. Improving the concrete implementation of international humanitarian law and human rights standards

These two bodies of law strive to protect the lives, physical integrity and dignity of individuals, albeit from a different angle. They are complementary and mutually reinforcing. Their point of convergence appears particularly important to us. Together they form part of a notion of human security that provides a broader conceptual approach to an otherwise narrow and at times dangerous security doctrine.

I must add that universality unfortunately only exists in a formal sense for both international humanitarian and human rights law.

One important tool in the general move towards an "era of application", therefore, is education and training in international humanitarian law and human rights. It is key to attaining human security and raising awareness of our common basis for the protection of human dignity. Governments applying a human security-oriented policy, such as Austria, must actively support the promotion of international humanitarian law in conjunction with processes of democratization and the consolidation of the rule of law and with the fight against impunity and against poverty. Austria has submitted pledges in this regard both in a national capacity and as a member of the European Union.

During Austria's recently concluded presidency of the Human Security Network we focused on bridging the gap between humanitarian and human rights law, and on their implementation between information and action and between programmatic concepts and systematic responses on the ground.

As a practical result, we produced, with the assistance of the ICRC, a manual of human rights education called *Understanding Human Rights*. The manual is designed for global use and adaptable to a variety of target groups. It contains a module on human rights in armed conflicts.

2. Protection of vulnerable groups

Madam Chairperson,

Austria believes that one of the most vulnerable groups in any conflict are children and adolescents. Children in armed conflicts was thus another “natural” priority theme in our presidency of the Human Security Network. In this regard, we produced a policy document entitled “Support Strategy for Children in Armed Conflict” and, as a corollary, a “Training Curriculum for Child Rights Monitors and Rehabilitation Experts” – the latter being a guide for the training of qualified field personnel in conflict and post-conflict situations. The Curriculum has already been put to practical use in the European Union’s Operation Artemis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It will now be included in all relevant training activities of the European Union for future missions. A French translation by our human security partner, Canada, is forthcoming. Regarding the Network’s Support Strategy for Children in Armed Conflict, we are pleased that the Italian Presidency of the European Union has taken up this subject and is finalizing the European Union Guidelines on Children and Armed Conflict.

As a follow-up, Austria, together with its partners in the Human Security Network, is organizing a workshop this afternoon entitled “Children and armed conflict: Protecting and rebuilding young lives”. The aim of this workshop is to identify new challenges and opportunities for the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and the States party to the Geneva Conventions to provide effective protection and rehabilitation to children in armed conflicts and to address the question of how such action can be better coordinated among the various humanitarian players.

Let me also mention internally displaced persons as another group of persons to which Austria pays close attention. The application as a standard of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement by a growing number of countries represents a milestone in international efforts to address the plight of the more than 25 million internally displaced persons.

3. Alleviating the inhumane effects of certain weapons

The threats posed by anti-personnel mines and explosive remnants of war represent one of the most pressing humanitarian challenges the world is facing today. Protecting human dignity therefore means addressing these concerns.

Austria considers mine action an immediate priority in post-conflict situations in order to prevent casualties, facilitate the return to normalcy and provide a solid foundation for sustainable development and security. Today, we celebrate the 6th anniversary of the opening of the Ottawa Convention on Anti-Personnel Mines for signature. The enormous progress made since 1997 in ridding the world of anti-personnel mines is an encouraging sign in view of the important challenge still ahead. Austria is proud to have been designated as the

President of the Convention’s First Review Conference and looks forward to working together with all interested parties to ensure the success of this important event.

In this respect, let me also express our satisfaction about the recent successful conclusion of the negotiations on the new Protocol V to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, on Explosive Remnants of War.

Finally, Madam Chairperson, let me assure you of the Austrian Government’s commitment to a successful follow-up to this 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent with a view to further advancing the humanitarian agenda.

Mr Tadateru Konoe, Vice-President, Japanese Red Cross

(Original English)

Madam Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates,

The end of the Cold War opened a path that has offered the international community the opportunity to find a common ground for coping with global humanitarian challenges.

An international environment has emerged which does not allow violations of international humanitarian law – this was not the case during the Cold War – and the International Criminal Court has at long last been set up to judge and punish crimes against humanity.

However, despite the development of international humanitarian law and the related legal framework, basic human rights and international humanitarian law continue to be infringed and deplorable threats to human security and dignity have increased in number; there are no signs that they will decrease.

Trans-border terrorist acts, which indiscriminately kill and wound people, and the internationalization of internal conflict are beyond the scope of present-day international humanitarian law. The letter and the spirit of international humanitarian law nevertheless require all mankind to show humanitarian discipline. There is no situation in which the incompleteness of the law can be invoked as an excuse for inhuman action.

My National Society therefore strongly supports the ICRC’s point of view that the question is not the completeness of the law but the political will of the parties concerned, for they are obliged to observe the law.

Open neglect of international humanitarian law and its spirit is a challenge to humanity which has been shared by all mankind, and the recent attack against United Nations organizations, religious places and other humanitarian organizations, particularly the ICRC, which is the guardian of international humanitarian law and the main purveyor of neutral humanitarian activities, will lead to conflict between civilizations. This can lead to the possibility that mankind will return to the dark Middle Ages.

Madam Chairperson,

The dissemination of international humanitarian law and its spirit is incumbent on both governments and National Societies. Through their involvement in activities at the grassroots, such as health and medical care, social welfare and disaster relief, the National Societies can help alleviate poverty and other vulnerabilities, an essential step towards ensuring human security and dignity.

My National Society is actively involved in activities in all these fields.

I am confident that our Movement, by providing volunteers and youth with opportunities and places to get involved in humanitarian activities both nationally and internationally, can cultivate a humanitarian spirit and a culture of tolerance and promote understanding of diversity in mankind. This will help prevent conflicts and terrorism, although the road ahead is a long one.

Never before has our Movement's motto, *Per humanitatem ad pacem*, been so closely linked to reality. I strongly hope that the governments will renew their recognition of the unique role of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and give us the support and resources we need to build sound and closer cooperative partnerships for the sake of our common goal of "human security" and "human dignity".

In conclusion, my delegation endorses the directions and substance of the Declaration and the Agenda for Humanitarian Action.

**H.E. Mr Juan Martabit, Ambassador,
Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission
of Chile, Geneva**

(Original Spanish)

The main theme of this Conference prompts us to reflect on the means of enhancing humanitarian activities and thus alleviating the suffering of millions of innocent victims who, it must be said, have waited for too long. In practical terms, this reflection takes the form of themes and activities relating to "Protecting human dignity", the slogan for the Conference, the world's most important humanitarian meeting.

In a world scarred by armed conflicts, terrorism – which we firmly condemn – natural disasters and diseases such as HIV/AIDS, which are presently affecting millions of people in many parts of the globe, I wish to highlight and express appreciation for, on behalf of the government and people of Chile, the untiring humanitarian work of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Madam Chair,

I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest condolences to the families and friends of the many humanitarian workers of the Red Cross and Red Crescent who lost their lives in the line of duty.

My country's relationship with the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is long and fruitful. Chile has not forgotten the Red Cross's unstinting efforts to take effective action during difficult periods of its history. By the same token, the plight of the hundreds of victims of the natural disasters that are wont to affect my country has been eased by the selfless work of Chilean Red Cross volunteers. The National Society is very dear to my countrymen.

Madam Chair,

Strengthening human dignity means taking concrete action to make that objective a tangible and lasting reality. Internally, the aim is to encourage and harmonize the work of political parties, the justice system, the education system, health care and the media *inter alia* with a view to heightening public awareness of situations of humanitarian need and to helping them find answers.

Chile gives high priority to the dissemination and development of international humanitarian law as a basic instrument of peace and justice. In this connection I should like to recall the founding of the National Humanitarian Law Committee, which, thanks to the support it receives from the ICRC's Advisory Service, has enabled my country to make significant progress in terms of internal legislation.

The teaching of international humanitarian law is an important component in the programmes of all law faculties, armed forces and police academies and other training centres.

Chile's signing of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court is to be seen in this light. We firmly believe in the law, we believe in international humanitarian law and we just as firmly believe in the value of the multilateral system and cooperation between all peoples.

I will now turn to another aspect of the humanitarian needs occupying the Chilean authorities, namely the proper management and outcome of policies to prevent HIV/AIDS and to treat people living with the disease. Thanks to those policies, all of those who have the disease are presently receiving medication. An important part of that policy is related to the growing effort, made in conjunction with civil society, to reduce and ideally do away with the stigmatization, discrimination and exclusion of those who carry the virus.

Chile is absolutely in agreement with the aims of this Conference relating to the elimination of anti-personnel landmines throughout the world, and it is actively participating, on its territory, in the mine clearance activities provided for in the Ottawa Convention. The present activities will be extended to 2009. We can also announce that we have destroyed all of our existing stocks, even before the deadline initially set.

We also applaud the adoption last week of the Protocol on the Explosive Remnants of War, Protocol V to the United Nations Conventional Weapons Convention, which has played such an important role in the work of the Red Cross.

At the same time, my country is part of the Human Security Network, a group of growing importance in the humanitarian sphere that is participating actively in the work of this Conference, as the distinguished representative of Austria has just pointed out.

Lastly, I would like to mention the great human and professional capacity shown by the Chilean Red Cross in preventing and reducing the effects of the natural disasters that frequently affect Chile and our region.

Madam Chair,

With these words I have tried to convey to you and to the distinguished delegates participating in the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent my country's unwavering humanitarian commitment and my government's intention to participate actively in the collective effort aimed at "Protecting human dignity", the theme of this Conference and a highly topical subject in a 21st century that continues to be plagued by injustice and difficulty. The Movement's volunteers throughout the world have our sympathy and encouragement. We owe them a great deal.

H.E. Mr Javier Gil Catalina, Secretary General for Foreign Affairs, Spain

(Original Spanish)

I will start by endorsing the statement made by the Italian Presidency of the European Union this morning.

Under the theme of "Protecting human dignity", the organizers of this Conference have proposed that we focus on the impact of conflicts and terrorist acts, natural disasters and diseases such as AIDS.

The fight against terrorism is a priority for the Spanish government, as manifested in our foreign policy. Speaking before the Security Council last May, Spanish Prime Minister Aznar affirmed that Spain was a democratic and European nation, two conditions that shaped its fight against terrorism. That fight is based on Spain's firm intention to defend all the rights and freedoms of all its citizens, to maintain the rule of law and to tighten the bonds of solidarity with States sharing that goal. The primacy of the law is also the primacy of humanitarian law in the fight against terrorism.

I wish to take this opportunity to reiterate that we firmly reject and condemn the recent acts of terrorism directed against humanitarian workers from the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations, such as the attack of 27 October in Iraq, and to express my solidarity with the families and friends of the victims.

I will now turn to the second of the Conference themes: natural disasters. In this respect, Spain has contributed in countries such as Algeria, Belize, Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, the Philippines, Honduras, India, Mozambique and Peru, all of which have recently suffered a natural disaster.

The third topic of the Conference is the world's fastest spreading diseases. I refer in particular to AIDS. Spain has pledged to fight this disease by means of bilateral and multilateral cooperation, providing support for programmes such as UNAIDS, the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and the ESTHER Project (a network of hospitals joined in the fight against AIDS).

I should also like to mention, as a further reflection of our activities abroad, the experience and availability of our armed forces in peacekeeping operations.

Madam Chair,

At the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, Spain made two pledges. It has kept them both.

The first pledge was to promote the signature, ratification and application of the Rome Statue of the International Criminal Court. To that end the Spanish authorities have made many official representations in many parts of the world and at numerous international forums.

My country's second pledge was to organize courses on international humanitarian law for armed forces leaders and officers in Iberoamerica, sub-Saharan Africa and Eastern Europe. In fulfilling that pledge we have been able to count on the efficient cooperation of the Spanish Red Cross.

Madam Chair,

In evidence of our continued humanitarian commitment, I should like to conclude by stating that Spain will make the following national pledges at this Conference, in addition to the European Union common pledges:

- Establish and implement a national mechanism for coordination and consultation on the application and dissemination of international humanitarian law.
- Ensure that the technical courses on relief and rescue operations organized by the Spanish authorities in Spain and elsewhere comprise aspects of international humanitarian law so as to heighten the awareness of technicians intervening in this sphere.
- Make the fight against stigmatization and discrimination part of the international cooperation programmes on HIV/AIDS promoted by Spain.

These three pledges are Spain's modest contribution to the continuation of the work undertaken by Henry Dunant two centuries ago.

H.E. Mr Pavel Vosálík, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Czech Republic

(Original English)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the Czech Republic has already aligned itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union, I take this opportunity briefly to elaborate on some of our present humanitarian concerns.

Protecting human dignity as a lasting and up-to-date concept is the founding principle not only of international humanitarian law, but also of human rights law and refugee law. Human dignity – the common denominator of these complementary bodies of law – is worth struggling for every day and continuously, and the need to do so increases in changing circumstances. The objective of human dignity is part of a process; it is not attained once and for all. New input, such as our exchange of views, is therefore essential. In order to remain focused, I shall discuss some of the present challenges to international humanitarian law.

The increase in security threats is a national and international political reality that includes the continuation of anarchic and identity-related conflicts and ever more acts of terrorism. The new threats are characterized by a proliferation of subjects within different hierarchic structures pursuing what are frequently fragmented or unidentified goals that tend to have a negative impact, especially on civilians. Even though armed conflicts can no longer be slotted into their original categories, thus limiting the impact of international humanitarian law, there can be no question about the relevance of international humanitarian law and its application to modern security realities. The process by which traditional humanitarian law instruments have been supplemented with other treaties to keep pace with the technical and other developments employed in armed conflicts has proved to be flexible and helpful in addressing the needs of the victims. The preparation and adoption of Protocol V to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, on Explosive Remnants of War, is the latest example of this process.

Although international humanitarian law has been strengthened, many present-day conflicts are by their nature beyond its scope. In these circumstances, the protection of the victims is assured predominantly by the timely and unwavering application of international human rights and refugee law, which also provide that human dignity must be upheld.

Unfortunately, the changing nature of conflicts also seems to have contributed to the launch of deliberate attacks on humanitarian personnel, including that of the ICRC. This negative and dangerous trend, which challenges the independence, neutrality and impartiality of humanitarian organizations, is to be condemned. Demands to change the status quo of these humanitarian players must be rejected. Providing them with military assistance for the discharge of their mandates

might upset the balance of their functions and mission. In this respect, the International Conference should call upon the States party to the Geneva Conventions and to their Additional Protocols and all the parties to armed conflicts to strive to protect humanitarian workers, who need support if they are to continue fulfilling their mandate even when security is less than adequate.

At the national level, the Czech Republic remains committed to protecting human dignity by enhancing respect for international humanitarian law and reducing the vulnerability of populations to the effects of armed conflicts, disasters and diseases. Its national implementation programmes range from public awareness, training for military personnel, including peacekeeping forces, cooperation with national non-State humanitarian partners, adjustments to the emergency preparedness system and the involvement of volunteers to the ratification of new legal instruments and their implementation.

Humanitarian assistance is the other pillar of humanitarian activities. The latest major preoccupations of my Government in this respect have concerned the Iraq crisis. The Government has provided the Iraqi people with humanitarian assistance in the amount of 1,150,000 US dollars, including assistance provided through UNHCR, the World Food Programme and directly deployed emergency material assistance. National non-State humanitarian practitioners, including the Czech Red Cross, have also provided emergency medical assistance to Iraq.

In keeping with the pledges it made at the 27th International Conference, the Czech government *inter alia* withdrew its reservations to the Geneva Conventions, acceded to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, on the involvement of children in armed conflicts, and strengthened its cooperation on emergency preparedness with the Czech Red Cross and other non-State humanitarian players. On this occasion, I have the honour to pledge, in line with the obligations arising from the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines, that my Government will contribute 3 million Czech koruny to the mine-clearance programme of the International Committee of the Red Cross, field educational activities and mine-victim assistance. We also pledge further to strengthen the partnership with the Czech Red Cross and other non-State humanitarian partners, to improve the national mechanisms for the comprehensive national implementation of international humanitarian law and to build the Czech Red Cross's capacity in terms of emergency preparedness and response.

To sum up, Madam Chairperson, I hope that our present deliberations will result in the adoption of the Declaration and the Agenda for Humanitarian Action on current humanitarian challenges and will help us to refresh the legal, political and moral imperative to uphold the principle of protecting human dignity.

**H.E. Mr Hardeep Singh Puri, Ambassador,
Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission
of India, Geneva**

(Original English)

The present Conference is not only the first in the new millennium but takes place at a time in which new issues and challenges have arisen. The very nature of modern conflicts, the role of non-State actors, the status of combatants and civilians in such conflicts, the use of force and the applicability of international humanitarian law are all issues that merit attention. We draw solace from the fact that the Geneva Conventions have stood the test of time and have made a major contribution towards alleviating human suffering in times of conflict. As we gather here for our 28th Conference, let us make a renewed commitment to the humanitarian values enshrined in these Conventions. The International Conference needs to address the new challenges and focus on strengthening the application of the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law.

It is appropriate that the central theme of this Conference, Madam Chair, is "Protecting human dignity". Today the biggest threat to human dignity emanates from terrorism, which is threatening the lives of innocent men, women and children. There can be no justification for terrorism and no alibi for terrorist acts. We need to be unequivocal in condemning all forms of terrorism and in calling for united action against those who support, shelter, sponsor, arm, train and finance terrorism or terrorists.

It has been suggested that, in view of the changing nature of conflicts, the existing provisions of international humanitarian law are neither appropriate nor adequate to meet the new challenges, particularly in the context of the war on terrorism. Often attacks against States appear to have been conducted by non-States actors, such as armed rebels, insurgent outfits and terrorist organizations. Therefore a question may be asked: which part of humanitarian law governs war against non-State actors? This, in turn, calls for a more refined approach to war and criminal justice.

Madam Chair,

India supports the United Nations vision of a world free of the threat of landmines and unexploded ordnance, where individuals and communities live in a safe environment that is conducive to development and where mine survivors are fully integrated into society. India remains committed to the objective of a non-discriminatory, universal and global ban on anti-personnel mines achieved through a phased process that addresses the legitimate defence requirements of States while ameliorating the critical humanitarian crisis that has resulted from the indiscriminate transfer and use of landmines. It has to be acknowledged that the legitimate security concerns of countries necessitate the use of anti-personnel landmines within valid security norms and in accordance with internationally

acknowledged and well defined safety parameters. India has already ratified amended Protocol II to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and has taken steps to implement its provisions. India also played a leading role in the adoption last week of the new Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War.

Madam Chair,

India is gravely concerned about the fact that infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS constitute a growing global emergency, undermining social and economic development throughout the world, particularly in developing countries. We would like to emphasize the need for an urgent, coordinated and sustained global response that addresses this pandemic through prevention, treatment, care and support. The comprehensive national AIDS control programme in place in India seeks to establish a wide range of programmes on prevention, care, support and treatment, access to information, education and services, strengthened anti-discrimination units and human rights protection for HIV-infected vulnerable groups.

Finally, Madam Chair, we must always remember the need to build long-term development perspectives into humanitarian assistance and to strengthen national capacity to provide humanitarian and development assistance and protection to the most vulnerable.

**H.E. Ms Yolande Biké, Vice-Chairman of the
Conference**

(Original French)

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to make a few announcements. First, this plenary meeting will run later than 5 p.m. Second, the workshops will start at 5 p.m., as scheduled. Four workshops will be held today. The first will deal with international humanitarian law and the challenges of contemporary armed conflicts; workshop 2 will focus on children and armed conflicts: protecting and rebuilding young lives; workshop 3 will discuss National Societies in civil-military cooperation: questions, challenges, opportunities and prospects; workshop 4 will focus on biotechnology, weapons and humanity. Workshop 1 will be held in the WIPO auditorium, whereas workshops 2, 3 and 4 will be held at the Varembe Centre.

**Dr Wolfgang Kopetzky, Secretary General,
Austrian Red Cross**

(Original English)

Madam Chair, Excellencies, Red Cross and Red Crescent Colleagues and Delegates,

This International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent takes place at a gloomy moment in history. Not often in the lifetime of most of us has the future seemed as unclear as at this time.

At the international level, we have had to face the limits of humanitarian assistance and to take note of an increasing number of grave breaches of international humanitarian law. Let me reiterate that the Austrian Red Cross is deeply concerned about the increasing number of breaches of international humanitarian law, in particular attacks against humanitarian organizations and the civilian population, including the most vulnerable: children, women, sick persons and the elderly.

In this context, the Austrian Red Cross has set out to internationalize itself. We have taken up the issue of forgotten victims and in cooperation with ECHO have launched a campaign to draw public attention to their fate. The Austrian Red Cross very much hopes that more governments and National Societies will turn their attention to these "blind spots", which run the risk of being overlooked.

Let me also point out here that the Austrian Red Cross fully supports the International Federation's project on international disaster response law, which aims to facilitate and accelerate international disaster relief operations.

Even after the end of armed conflicts, explosive remnants of war constitute a major threat to the civilian population. The Austrian Red Cross therefore appreciates the successful conclusion of negotiations of an international agreement on the total elimination of such weapons. Austria was the first country to adopt national legislation for the prohibition of anti-personnel mines. I am happy to inform you that the Austrian Red Cross will assist Ambassador Wolfgang Petritsch, the President of the First Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-personnel Mines to be held in Kenya in December 2004, in his endeavours for the total elimination of these indiscriminate weapons.

Missing persons are another post-war tragedy. The International Conference organized by the ICRC in February on people missing as a result of armed conflict drew attention to their fate. I would like to thank the ICRC for its initiative and hereby underline the importance for all parties to a conflict to respect the "right to know" set forth in international humanitarian law. We remain committed to supporting further initiatives by the ICRC on "The Missing".

Many people fleeing armed conflict or poverty come to Austria in the hope of starting new and better lives. The VIth European Red Cross and Red Crescent Regional Conference, which took place in Berlin and focused on migration and health, was a starting point enabling the Austrian Red Cross to strengthen its attention for this vulnerable group. We have since engaged in a number of activities to support asylum seekers, refugees and migrants and are at the moment awaiting the results of a comprehensive study on migration. The outcome of the study will serve as the basis for our strategic positioning and plan of action with regard to the issue of migration. Migration must be seen as a positive challenge and as making a contribution to our societies, not as a problem.

It has been said that the Red Cross, which mitigates suffering, must also prevent suffering. The whole range of Red Cross activities, including influencing opinion and behaviour by means of advocacy, is required here. The role of the Red Cross as a "neutral intermediary" takes on a new dimension.

Madam Chair,

Let me close by underlining that the Austrian Red Cross is proud to be a part of the Movement. Much more needs to be done to alleviate human suffering and to improve the lives of vulnerable people. Good partnership with our governments is the premise on which we operate, and we look forward to fruitful cooperation with all components of the humanitarian network.

H.E. Mr Samuel Žbogar, State Secretary, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Slovenia

(Original English)

Madam Chairperson, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me, Madam Chairperson, first to congratulate you on your election and to wish you every success in your work. I would like to express my appreciation to the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement for the questions and dilemmas it has raised; as always, they are future-oriented and highly topical for both the governments and the Movement itself. We look forward with great interest to the upcoming discussions. Slovenia aligned itself with Italy's statement on behalf of the European Union. I, for my part, would like to focus on some questions of particular importance.

Madam Chairperson,

Whereas the principle of the protection of human dignity initially referred primarily to wounded and exhausted soldiers on battlefields during the First World War, today we need to strive to have this principle applied to the numerous victims of national and international armed conflicts. These victims are, unfortunately, mostly civilians, and many are children. Recently, an increasing number of humanitarian workers have fallen victim to armed conflicts as well. Although international law addresses modern conflicts, these conflicts all too often fail to respect the written rules, with no respect being shown for people and their dignity. In this regard, we believe that the functioning of the International Criminal Court will enhance the protective and preventive components of international humanitarian law.

Our experience has shown that, contrary to what we want, people do not know enough about humanitarian law and that more education is required about the importance of peace, solidarity and humanity. One of the pledges made by Slovenia four years ago was to promote education about the Geneva Conventions, their Additional Protocols and other instruments of international humanitarian law within its armed and security forces and its educational, health and other

institutions. We have been working to meet that pledge, which remains one of our main tasks in the field of humanitarian law. The publication entitled *To Serve and to Protect*, prepared by the International Committee of the Red Cross, has been translated into Slovenian. Furthermore, the National Commission on International Humanitarian Law has been seriously examining the possibility of introducing international humanitarian law into the educational programmes of primary and secondary schools.

Madam Chairperson,

We are particularly pleased to note that our present endeavours to guarantee human dignity are for the benefit of individuals. We are pursuing identical goals as a member of the Human Security Network, a group of like-minded States concerned to ensure and provide security to individuals.

Children are the most vulnerable group of all and therefore require particular protection. One of the great challenges faced by the international community is the resolution of problems concerning children in armed conflicts. Children are both victims and perpetrators of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. In Slovenia, therefore, we decided to establish the foundation Together, a regional centre for the psycho-social well-being of children. The centre's activities comprise initiatives in south-eastern Europe and a recent joint Slovenian-Austrian-Jordanian project to provide psycho-social assistance to Iraqi children.

Slovenia considers problems relating to illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, and to the misuse and wide accessibility of these weapons, as a major threat to international peace and security. We are striving effectively to prevent illegal trafficking in small arms and light weapons (SALW) and to bring about a general reduction in the number of small arms and light weapons, particularly in post-conflict societies. For these reasons, a SALW contact point will shortly begin its activities in Slovenia.

We would also like all countries to take an active part in the Ottawa process, thus contributing to the success of the initiative for a universal ban on landmines. The Slovenian Government has endeavoured to include humanitarian demining as an important and distinctive element in its agenda, and to that end has established the International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance. In the past five years, together with other donors, we have allocated considerable funds for and invested much energy in demining the south-east European region and recently also the Caucasus. The prospects are good that countries in south-eastern Europe will be proclaimed mine safe in the coming years, and we are launching an initiative to declare that part of Europe a mine-safe region by the end of the decade.

Madam Chairperson,

In conclusion, allow me to refer to Slovenia's pledges as part of its commitment to protecting human dig-

nity. At the Conference, Slovenia is going to make the following pledges: first, to further enhance respect for international humanitarian law by adopting regulations relating to the use and protection of the Red Cross emblem; second, to compile a list of qualified persons in the area of international humanitarian law; and third, to amend the Penal Code in order to bring it in line with the new instruments of international humanitarian law ratified by the Republic of Slovenia.

**H.E. Mr Leonid Skotnikov, Ambassador,
Permanent Representative of the Russian
Federation, Geneva**

(Original English)

Madam Chairperson,

The Russian Federation commends the efforts the Movement has undertaken since the 27th Conference to improve respect for the principle of humanity. We hope that the present meeting will further underscore all the activities of the Movement's components and will help enhance the Movement's cooperation with the governments.

The theme of the Conference, "Protecting human dignity", is clearly apt and deserves support. We look forward to the discussions on how better to promote respect for all human beings regardless of their origins, beliefs or status by enhancing protection of their physical and psychological integrity and rights. The agenda of the Conference, which covers the most urgent issues of shared humanitarian concern, provides us with ample opportunity to do so. The Declaration and Agenda for Humanitarian Action – which I trust we will adopt – serve, in our view, as a plan of action for the States and the Movement's components in the years to come. These documents should reflect recent developments in international humanitarian law. In particular, we should welcome the recent adoption of Protocol V to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, on Explosive Remnants of War, which we hope will enter into force soon. We welcome the active involvement of the International Committee of the Red Cross in the efforts to expand the scope of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and to strengthen the scope of the Biological Weapons Convention.

Russia shares the Movement's view that reducing the risk and impact of disasters and diseases, including HIV/AIDS, is an urgent task that is clearly related to the protection of human dignity. We welcome the attention that this Conference is paying to these issues. The Movement should continue to be an important player in this field. We also support the conclusions reached by the International Conference of governmental and non-governmental experts on the problem of people who are unaccounted for as a result of armed conflict or internal violence and on assistance to their families.

Madam Chairperson,

We place great value on our wide-ranging cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross and

the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The assistance they provide in the northern Caucasus is a welcome addition to the aid provided to displaced persons by the federal authorities and by the Russian Federation's regional partners. Our cooperation extends well beyond that and includes, for example, educational programmes on international humanitarian law, assistance for the people in the territories affected by the Chernobyl disaster, and cooperation with medical institutions in Russia's Far East.

Madam Chairperson,

We need this Conference to achieve meaningful results in order to reaffirm our commitment to protect human dignity by enhancing respect for the law and reducing vulnerability to the effects of armed conflicts, disasters and disease. The Russian Federation is committed to this goal and will contribute to the success of this meeting.

H.E. Mr Omar Hilale, Ambassador, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Morocco, Geneva

(Original French)

(...)

H.E. Ms Yolande Biké, Vice-Chairman of the Conference

(Original French)

Thank you, Mr Ambassador, but I must inform you that my interruption earlier was quite deliberate. I do not think it is a good thing to speak of specific situations here. That is the rule, and I simply wanted to tell you that we know how painful the situation is, but that it is not our custom, at International Red Cross and Red Crescent Conferences, to discuss specific situations. We avoid doing so. We do not want the delegates to do so, and I would therefore like to ask all the delegates and speakers who will be taking the floor not to do so. Thank you for your understanding.

H.E. Mr Tyge Lehmann, Ambassador, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark

(Original English)

Our Conference takes place at a time in history when we are witnessing major challenges to the international legal order, including international humanitarian law. This point has been made by all speakers, so I take it that it is one conclusion to be drawn from the Conference. Another point on which we all agree is that the most distressing feature of recent times has been the lack of respect for humanitarian organizations providing impartial assistance to all victims of armed conflict. When the distinctive emblem is used as a shield for an attack and the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement are made the direct target of attack we have indeed reached the bottom line of disregard for international humanitarian law; indeed, we are

far below that line. This unfortunate experience underscores the importance of carrying the message of international humanitarian law to all States and peoples – not least to the non-State actors who are spreading terror in various parts of the world.

As has been said over and over again: we are not short of rules; what really matters is the application in good faith of the existing rules, even though some adjustments may be required in the face of changing situations.

Dissemination and teaching of international humanitarian law are of paramount importance in order to build respect for these norms. This is an ongoing endeavour carried out from one generation to the next. We appreciate the work being done in this respect by the various components of the Red Cross Movement. Another encouraging event contributing to respect for international humanitarian law is the recent establishment of the International Criminal Court. This represents a milestone in our common efforts to see justice prevail in the face of serious breaches of international humanitarian norms. It represents an essential step in the move from law to action.

On the positive side, we also wish to commend the ICRC for its untiring efforts to provide assistance to the victims of armed conflict even when its delegates themselves come under attack. Particular praise goes to the Committee's report on women and war, a subject that unfortunately deserves much attention. The Danish government, together with the government of Chile, the United Nations and the European Commission, held a conference in Santiago de Chile in November last year on the subject, "Building Capacities for Peacekeeping and Women's Dimensions in Peace Processes". One of the Conference's conclusions was that more women must be involved in peacekeeping and conflict resolution in order to ensure better protection of women.

We also welcome the ICRC's initiative to focus on the respective roles of humanitarian workers and military personnel during armed conflicts, and we look forward to further consideration of this issue at the workshop this afternoon organized by the National Societies of Germany, the Netherlands and Denmark.

One of the main topics at this Conference is to reduce the availability and use of certain conventional weapons. In this respect, the Danish government will make a pledge on the legality of such weapons.

Finally, Madam Chairman, I wish to congratulate the Standing Commission for the excellent job it has done in preparing this 28th International Red Cross Conference. In so doing allow me to draw your attention to the candidacy of Dr Freddy Karup Pedersen, President of the Danish Red Cross, for one of the vacant seats on the Commission. The candidacy of Dr Pedersen has the full support of the Danish government and, I may add, of all the Nordic countries and their National Societies.

Dr Abdul Rahman Attar, President, Syrian Arab Red Crescent

(Original Arabic)

I am convinced that we are all aware of the importance of human dignity. Of this I am sure. However, we need to know to what extent human dignity is respected by the National Societies and States. We are grateful to those who put this item on the agenda, and would like to stress that efficient solidarity is the way to find appropriate means of respecting human dignity everywhere in the world.

Clearly, Madam Chairman, human dignity is not respected and is indeed violated, as we can see on TV and in the media. Human dignity is the founding principle of international humanitarian law. This is why we say that violations of this law constitute gross violations of human dignity.

This being said, how can we remain silent when ambulances marked with the red cross and red crescent emblems are attacked, when ICRC and United Nations staff working in the humanitarian field are attacked? Experts in humanitarian law have endeavoured to establish rules for holding the perpetrators of violations of human dignity to account. For this reason, an appeal was made for the establishment of the International Criminal Court. Rules were drawn up enabling the Court to prosecute and punish those who commit such crimes. The Court has now been established and we hope it will start its work.

This is why, Madam Chairman, I hope that this Conference will consider the appropriate ways and means for making an open and clear declaration for the protection of human dignity. We condemn terrorism. I nevertheless hope that the fight against terrorism will not serve as a pretext for the violation of international conventions and for failure to respect human dignity and the values of which the Movement is proud.

H.E. Mr Tassos Kriekoukis, Ambassador, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Greece, Geneva

(Original French)

Madam Chair,

It is an honour and a privilege for me to address the Conference on behalf of the Hellenic Republic.

I should like to start by thanking you personally and expressing my congratulations on the excellent organization of the Conference.

Greece is enormously grateful for the activities of the International Committee of the Red Cross to alleviate the suffering of those affected by armed conflicts and for the constant efforts it makes in the face of the humanitarian disasters occurring around the world.

The 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, which brings together numerous

international players, is an opportunity both to disseminate the ideals of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and to promote and implement its Fundamental Principles.

Madam Chair,

Greece naturally endorses the statement made this morning by the Presidency of the European Union, and I assure you that it will do everything it can to help ensure the Union's pledges are met. Greece is particularly pleased that the European Union included in its pledge respect for and promotion of humanitarian law in peacekeeping operations.

In application of the national pledge it made at the 27th International Conference, Greece has ratified the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the Ottawa treaty banning anti-personnel landmines. At the same time we continue to support, bilaterally and multilaterally, collective efforts for humanitarian demining.

Pursuant to its pledges to promote international humanitarian law, the Greek government has adopted important measures to spread knowledge of the law. These include the establishment of the Commission on the Implementation and Dissemination of International Humanitarian Law.

Furthermore, in accordance with the European Union's programme and common action to prevent and suppress illegal trafficking in conventional weapons, Greece is reviewing its legislation on arms exports with a view to solving the problem of brokerage. At the international level, it has already signed the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms supplementing the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime. It is also taking part in numerous multilateral initiatives on the matter.

It is nevertheless obvious that in spite of the positive outcome of the implementation of the pledges made at the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, much remains to be done.

This is why my country pledges, in the coming four years:

- first, to establish the national mechanisms needed to ensure respect for The Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two protocols;
- second, to promote the teaching of international humanitarian law among young people and national armed forces personnel;
- third, to improve and modernize national structures for emergency humanitarian action in natural disasters.

Madam Chair,

Allow me once again to express my gratitude for the efforts made by the International Committee of the Red Cross throughout the world and to wish the Conference every success. May it be a success for us all.

Mr Fisseha Yimer, Ambassador, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Ethiopia, Geneva

(Original English)

The Ethiopian Government endorses the overall approach adopted in the draft Declaration and Agenda for Humanitarian Action, which follows the explanation provided in the introductory part of the draft texts. Nonetheless, the proposed actions would not create new obligations or change existing ones in any way.

Madam Chairperson,

The near universal acceptance of the 1949 Geneva Conventions by the peoples of the world and the growing number of States that have acceded to the Additional Protocols and other major international humanitarian law instruments are impressive achievements in the long process of promoting humanitarian causes and respect for human dignity. The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, along with other humanitarian agencies, has played a significant role in the campaign for the universal adoption and implementation of major international humanitarian law instruments. In particular, the Movement has paid a very high price in lives for its determination to come to the assistance of the victims of conflicts and disasters in spite of today's chaotic environment. In this connection, my delegation wishes to pay tribute to the delegates and local staff of the Movement and to the first-aid workers of National Societies who have lost their lives in the course of their humanitarian duties.

Madam Chairperson,

In spite of the global efforts to obtain universal ratification of and to promote human rights instruments, and the success of those efforts, the international community and humanitarian agencies are increasingly confronted with situations marked by a proliferation of armed conflicts in all corners of the world. Consequently, increasing numbers of non-combatant soldiers and civilian internees have been subjected to various violations of humanitarian laws and inhumane treatment; civilians and civilian infrastructure are often deliberately picked out as military targets, vulnerable groups of the population, notably children and women, continue to be victimized, and circumstances arise in which persons become unaccounted for.

Madam Chairperson,

The number of conflicts raging in the world today and the scale of the victims' needs give us an idea of the magnitude of and trends in these humanitarian challenges.

This situation obviously calls for a new, comprehensive approach to dealing not only with the consequences of conflicts but also with their root causes. Time and again, fighting has broken out over issues involving the defence of cultural identity, resource sharing and terri-

torial claims. Above all, conflict situations, in particular in developing countries, are often rooted in poverty. Rather than reacting when confronted with a mounting tide of violence, we can achieve better results by preventing violence from breaking out. Therefore, the 28th Conference, unlike previous conferences, should come up with concrete recommendations for measures to prevent conflict, most importantly poverty reduction measures for those most affected. While commending the efforts made to draw up the comprehensive draft texts of the Declaration and Agenda for Humanitarian Action, my delegation wishes to comment that despite its significance this issue has not been properly discussed in either text.

Madam Chairperson,

My country's recent bitter history of self-defence against foreign aggression compels my government to attach significant importance to the issue of people who are unaccounted for and their families under international law. Responsibility for preventing persons from becoming unaccounted for and for ascertaining the fate of all those who are unaccounted for, as soon as they are reported missing, lies primarily with the government authorities. Those responsible can no longer ignore missing persons or their families, and they should be brought to international justice. My delegation wishes to underscore once again that in the draft Agenda for Humanitarian Action, the issue of responsibility has been loosely framed despite the strong concern that many delegations share with us. My delegation is ready to come up with specific proposals during the drafting process.

Most of us agree that humanitarian action fosters peace. In this regard, while appreciating the attention quite appropriately given to the pressing problem of HIV/AIDS in the draft Agenda for Humanitarian Action, my delegation shares the view of other delegations that other killer diseases, such as malaria and tuberculosis, which have more or less the same devastating effect on the population, should be included.

With regard to the national implementation measures undertaken by Ethiopia, the work of the National Advisory Committee for the Implementation of International Humanitarian Law is critical in strengthening concerted action among the humanitarian players in the country. A national programme has been launched to promote awareness of the principles of international humanitarian law among the armed and security forces. National action on anti-personnel landmines, and the on-going trial of officials from the Derg regime for the crimes they committed against humanity, are among the significant measures being taken in the national effort to promote international humanitarian law and fight impunity.

In closing, the Ethiopian delegation reaffirms the total commitment of the government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the Geneva Conventions, the Additional Protocols thereto and the principles and norms of international humanitarian law.

**Dr Oktamkhon T. Vakhidova, President,
Red Crescent Society of Uzbekistan**

(Original Uzbek)

Distinguished Participants in the International Conference,

On behalf of the Uzbekistan Red Crescent I would like to support the theme "Protecting human dignity".

During the year the Red Crescent Society of Uzbekistan has been carrying out consultations on terrorism-related issues and the mitigation of the effects of terrorism on people. We are therefore very satisfied to see that the Declaration mentions not only armed conflicts, but also a new type of violence that recognizes no borders or national or racial groups, namely terrorist acts.

At the same time, as we noted in our statement to the General Assembly, the result of terrorism is that innocent people in more and more countries are regularly falling victim to indiscriminate violence.

Terrorist acts can be considered as emergency situations, or as non-standard armed conflicts, i.e. as "wars without rules".

Today, various States, interState associations and organizations are developing a position on terrorism. We consider it necessary to emphasize the aspect of terrorism in the text of the Declaration.

States are obliged to play the most important role not only in standing up to the challenge of terrorism but also in mitigating its effects on people.

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, for its part, will be looking for effective ways of helping the victims of terror, but it can only supplement the action taken by governments.

I avail myself of the fact that the governments of the States party to the Geneva Conventions are participating in the work of the Conference to express my opinion that the international community should work to have the governments sign a regulatory document, as they did in the case of the Geneva Conventions, in which they made specific commitments to help the victims of terrorist acts. The following two principles should underpin this document:

First, the States on the territory of which a terrorist act has occurred should recognize that they have certain obligations to render assistance to the people of their country who suffered from that act.

Second, it is very important that providing help to the victims of such violence is not only a concern for the State of which they are citizens, but also a duty for the international community. If a large-scale terrorist act occurs on the territory of a country that is unable to give the necessary help to the population, all other States should meet certain obligations to render assistance to that country.

Not only would this be a manifestation of humanity and justice, it would unite the world in its struggle against terrorism. There is no doubt that such a document will be signed in the long run.

**Dr Ivan Usichenko, President, Ukrainian Red
Cross Society**

(Original Ukrainian)

Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Delegates,

I wish to draw your attention to the problem of illegal migrants in Ukraine. Because of its geography, Ukraine has become a country of transit for illegal migrants crossing our country to Central and Western Europe for a better life or fleeing armed conflict. According to Interior Ministry statistics, there are about fifty thousand illegal migrants from 49 countries in Ukraine.

The phenomenon is strongest in the western territories of our country, and the problem will soon be exacerbated because some countries near Ukraine will shortly become members of the European Union; the number of people wishing to reach those countries will increase.

The problem is also acute in the eastern part of our country, near Russia. Under our legislation, those that we arrest at the border are put in cells and then sent home, but the procedure very often takes quite a long time – up to several months – and therefore creates considerable difficulties for our border services. Since we have picked up many people we do not have enough facilities to provide them with decent conditions. This is why there is a risk of epidemics in these regions. We would therefore like to be given help so that we can help the migrants. The International Federation has been providing us for several years with aid for a programme to help legal migrants, and we are hoping to improve their living conditions.

For those people who are illegally in our country, we have adopted a law, and in January 2002 Ukraine acceded to the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees. Moreover, the Ukrainian Parliament has adopted a law on refugees. The main partners of the National Society in Ukraine are the ICRC and the UNHCR office. The problem is not, however, getting enough attention, especially from UNHCR, because the situation is not stabilizing; indeed it is becoming increasingly disturbing as time goes on. With the ICRC we are trying to develop cooperation with UNHCR. We need a system for providing medical assistance to illegal migrants in the western part of our country, and we think that this is something that should be made more effective.

When it comes to missing people, our community is disturbed that we have still not managed to find our compatriots who participated in the armed conflict in Afghanistan when the Soviet Union was there. These people are missing. We are trying to find them. We have contacted many National Societies and many other organizations. In 2000 we met with the leaders of the

Afghan Red Crescent through the intermediary of Pakistan. We gave a major press conference in Pakistan and signed a cooperation agreement with the Pakistan Red Crescent Society with a view to finding our nationals. We are grateful to the National Societies of Afghanistan and Pakistan, which have helped us and are continuing to do so.

In addition, I would like to say that we hope that the Declaration and Agenda for Humanitarian Action will be adopted, because they are absolutely essential in these times.

Mr Rezső Sztuchlik, Vice-President, Hungarian Red Cross

(Original English)

The Hungarian Red Cross welcomes the special emphasis put by the International Conference on the question of protecting human dignity and it fully supports the draft Declaration submitted to this effect.

Of the four main issues figuring on the Agenda for Humanitarian Action, the Hungarian Red Cross will focus on the following subjects, as reflected in the pledges it has made.

First, the promotion and dissemination of international humanitarian law and of the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. In this area we have put to efficient use a special publication and educational method developed by the ICRC: *Exploring Humanitarian Law*. Our objective is to introduce this into the Hungarian Red Cross reference school network and also eventually to have it accredited by the national education authorities.

Given that the Hungarian Red Cross makes this pledge with the support of the Hungarian government, we are confident that it will be possible to meet it. In addition, we have joined the pledge concerning promotion and dissemination made by the National Societies of the Member States of the European Union and the accession States through their liaison office in Brussels.

Another subject we would like to focus on, insofar as our means allow, is minimizing the impact of disasters by implementing disaster risk reduction measures and by improving disaster preparedness and response mechanisms. In this field, we will concentrate on building our disaster preparedness and disaster response capacity and on increasing our participation in international disaster response operations.

Another subject of deep interest to us and on which I would like to speak at greater length is the dignity of the victims, of the vulnerable, and respect for their right to have a say about the assistance they receive and how they receive it.

We have started some specific Red Cross programmes in Hungary to this effect, under the International Federation's framework programme for participatory development projects. One such project also figures in our pledges.

We have already had some initial, very encouraging results. The programmes' efficiency and cost-effectiveness have increased greatly, as the beneficiaries were able to identify fully with the projects concerned.

There were also significant collateral results. Ethnic communities, like Roma and Hungarians living side by side in small villages without much contact, started to talk to each other and to discover shared values. They are in a better position to solve their problems by truly working with one another.

The Red Cross is only a facilitator, but its role is often recognized by the local population. In fact, in almost all of the villages where the Red Cross was not yet present, a local Red Cross organization was created.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that respect for the dignity of the victims and for their right to have a say in how they are assisted and what support they get is also a process of education for us, Red Cross workers and volunteers, to adopt this approach and to work together with the victims on an equal footing, without any discrimination.

It is by making practical contributions like this to the protection of human dignity that we can really best strengthen the power of humanity, providing continuity between Conferences and helping us achieve our basic aim.

H.E. Ms Yolande Biké, Vice-Chairman of the Conference

(Original French)

Ladies and gentlemen, we have reached the end of the First Plenary Meeting. I remind you that the general debate will continue on Friday, 5 December, under items 5 and 9 of the agenda. Tomorrow, Commissions A and B will start their deliberations at 9 a.m. sharp.

Mr. Frank Mohrhauer, Assistant Secretary General of the Conference

(Original English)

The figures are quite encouraging: I would like to announce that we have received 115 pledges so far. I would like to remind all delegations to register their pledges as soon as possible so that this figure continues to grow over the next couple of days. Secondly, as we are meeting tomorrow in commissions, the rooms will be changed. Commission B will be meeting down here in Room 2, and Commission A will meet in Room 1, which is the upper room.

H.E. Ms Yolande Biké, Vice-Chairman of the Conference

(Original French)

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your patience; we have had a very busy afternoon. I congratulate you in particular on your statements this afternoon. This meeting is closed. I wish you a pleasant evening.

Civilian deaths and injuries caused by explosive remnants of war should be significantly reduced.
Agenda for Humanitarian Action, Final goal 2.2

François De Sury / ICRC / Iraq, 2003



4.6 MEETINGS OF THE PLENARY COMMISSIONS

4 December 2003

Commission A2: Humanitarian aspects of the issue of persons missing in connection with armed conflict

Chairman:

Ms. Amina C. Mohamed, Ambassador of Kenya

Panellists:

Ms Yvonne Visaka Dharmadasa, President of the Parents of Servicemen Missing in Action (Sri Lanka)
Prof. Marco Sassóli, Quebec University, Montreal
Prof. Jacques Forster, Vice-President of the International Committee of the Red Cross

Rapporteur:

Ms Jacqueline Boga, Red Cross Papua New Guinea

List of speakers:

Members of the Conference
Governments: Argentina, Australia, Canada, Cyprus, France, Israel, Lebanon, Mexico, Peru, Sweden, Switzerland, United States of America (The)
National Societies: Australia, Austria, Cameroon, Canada, Gabon, Iceland, Indonesia, Netherlands (The), Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Sweden
International Committee of the Red Cross

For further information, please refer to the report on the work of the Commissions presented by Ms Marie Gervais-Vidricaire, Rapporteur of the Conference (section 4.9).

Commission B2: Reducing the risk and impact of disaster and improving preparedness and response mechanisms

Chairman:

Ms Martine Letts, Australian Red Cross

Panellists:

Mr Edgardo Caldero Paredes, Peruvian Red Cross
H.E. Minoru Endo, Ambassador of Japan

Rapporteur:

Ms Lucy Brown, American Red Cross

List of speakers:

Members of the Conference
Governments: Armenia, Australia, Canada, Mexico, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America
National Societies: Algeria, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Colombia, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Hungary, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Mongolia, Nigeria, Philippines, Poland, Senegal, Serbia and Montenegro, South Africa, Sweden, Syria, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, United Arab Emirates, Zambia
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Observer: World Health Organization

For further information, please refer to the report on the work of the Commissions presented by Ms Marie Gervais-Vidricaire, Rapporteur of the Conference (section 4.9).

Commission A3: Confronting the human costs of weapons availability, use and misuse

Chairman:

Ms Amina C. Mohamed, Ambassador of Kenya

Panellists:

Dr Patricia Lewis, Nuclear physicist and Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research in Geneva (UNIDIR)
Dr Malcolm Dando, neurologist, biologist and Professor of International Security in the Department of Peace Studies at Bradford University (United Kingdom)

Rapporteur:

Ms Carole Powell, Jamaica Red Cross

List of speakers:

Members of the Conference
Governments: Burkina Faso, Canada, China, Mexico, Netherlands (The), South Africa, Sweden, Thailand
National Societies: Australia, Poland, Sweden, Syria, United Kingdom (The)
International Committee of the Red Cross
Observers: Bureau International de la Paix (BIP), World Health Organization

For further information, please refer to the report on the work of the Commissions presented by Ms Marie Gervais-Vidricaire, Rapporteur of the Conference (section 4.9).

Commission B3: Reducing the risk of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases on vulnerable people

Chairman:

Ms Martine Letts, Australian Red Cross

Panellists:

Mr Tito Fachi, National President of the Zambian Red Cross and Vice-chair person of the Health Commission
Ms Anandi Yuvarag, International HIV Alliance and representative of the Global Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (India)
Ms Marika Falher, Director of Social Mobilisation and Information, UNAIDS

Rapporteur:

Amb. Tibor Tóth (Mr), Hungary

List of speakers:

Members of the Conference
Governments: Australia, Canada, China, Holy See, Mexico, Sweden, United Kingdom

National Societies: Belgium, Cambodia, Cameroon, China, Cook Islands, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, France, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran, Italy, Namibia, St Vincent & Grenadines, Sweden, Syria, Togo
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Observers: World Health Organization

For further information, please refer to the report on the work of the Commissions presented by Ms Marie Gervais-Vidricaire, Rapporteur of the Conference (section 4.9).

Comprehensive disaster risk reduction, including disaster management, prevention and mitigation can be achieved through education and awareness-raising activities.

Agenda for Humanitarian Action, Final goal 3.1

Christopher Black / International Federation / Bangladesh, 1998



4.7 SECOND PLENARY MEETING

5 December 2003

**Mr Jaime Ricardo Fernández Urriola,
Chairman of the Conference**

(Original Spanish)

Your Royal Highness, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Dear Friends,

Before officially opening today's session, I would like to say a few words about the special nature of 5 December. When you entered the conference centre today, the volunteers gave each of you a pin bearing the words "The power of humanity", and you may have noticed the new posters hung up to mark International Volunteer Day. We are very pleased to be celebrating International Volunteer Day during the Conference, above all because volunteers play a large role in the work of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement worldwide. On this highly significant day, I wish to express to the volunteers of the Geneva Red Cross Youth our gratitude for the extraordinary work they have done in the past few days.

We shall be spending some more time on International Volunteer Day this afternoon, under item 6 on the agenda.

Professor Rhinow, the Conference Vice-Chairman, has kindly agreed to chair the second plenary meeting, which will start with the election of the members of the Standing Commission. The results of the first ballot will be made public at about 11.30 a.m. In addition, this morning the Conference will hear reports on the amendments to the Regulations of the Empress Shôken Fund, on the role of National Societies as auxiliaries to the public authorities and on the emblem.

The meeting will continue with the general debate on contemporary humanitarian challenges and the protection of human dignity. Given the high number of speakers on the list for today, we will be obliged to continue the debate during the lunch hour and until the end of the afternoon, without a break.

Wednesday's general debate took place in a constructive atmosphere. I would nevertheless like to remind all the participants about the importance of observing the Fundamental Principles in our debates. No one should speak about a politically controversial subject. I regret to observe that the statement made by one of our delegations during the debate of Wednesday afternoon did not respect that rule and the Chairman had to intervene. I therefore ask all the delegations to respect that principle, in an open and constructive spirit, during the long debate planned for today. In view of the long list of speakers, I would like to know whether any delegations are willing not to take the floor or have expressed their views in the commission meetings. Those delegations are asked to inform the Secretariat accordingly. We shall now start the election process.

1. Election of the members of the Standing Commission

**Prof. René Rhinow, Swiss Red Cross,
Chairman *ex officio***

(Original French)

Hello. I will immediately give the floor to the Secretary General, Ambassador Kupfer, who will give us further information on the election procedure.

Ambassador Thomas Kupfer, Secretary General

(Original French)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On Wednesday an information document describing the voting procedure was placed on each delegation's table. The final list of candidates and their respective curriculum vitae were delivered to you on Thursday, yesterday.

In accordance with Rule 20, paragraph 6 of the Rules of Procedure, the election of the Standing Commission will start this morning with the official designation of the three tellers who are in charge of counting the votes.

We shall then call the roll to determine the absolute majority required at the first ballot. As you know, several ballots may be required. The candidates who obtain an absolute majority at the first ballot are elected to the Standing Commission.

If all the seats on the Commission are not taken, a second ballot will be held directly, after which the candidates who win the most votes are elected.

After the roll call, and while we consider item one on the agenda, voting will start for the first ballot.

The delegations will be divided into six groups and will be asked to vote in French alphabetical order. Each group will be called to vote via a slide projected on the screens in the plenary hall. When your delegation is called, therefore, the head or the member designated as his proxy will go to Room 15, level D, one floor down from this one, and vote by secret ballot.

We ask you to make sure your badge is clearly visible, in order to facilitate the procedure.

If the head of delegation has designated a proxy, the proxy must present his badge and a completed and signed proxy form. Blank forms were distributed at the same time as the voting instructions.

As you know, we have to elect five members of the Standing Commission. You can only choose five names. Each name can only receive one vote. Any ballot on which more than five names have been selected will be declared invalid. To avoid mistakes during the

counting, please indicate your choice by completely blacking out the red square next to the candidate's name, using the pen you will find in the voting booth.

Those candidates who obtain an absolute majority as established by the roll call are elected at the first ballot. If fewer than five candidates obtain an absolute majority a second ballot will be organized, with the candidates obtaining the highest number of votes being elected.

In conclusion, allow me to remind you that, in accordance with Article 10, paragraph 4 and Article 17, paragraph 1a) of the Movement's Statutes, the International Conference elects the members of the Standing Commission in a personal capacity, taking into account personal qualities and the principle of fair geographical distribution.

**Prof. René Rhinow, Swiss Red Cross,
Chairman *ex officio***

(Original French)

We can now start the vote procedure. I will first read out the names of the nine candidates for the Standing Commission by region and in alphabetical order.

Africa:

Prof. Shimelis Adugna, Ethiopian Red Cross Society
Ms Bana Ouandaogo Maïga, Burkinabe Red Cross Society

Americas:

Ms Janet Davidson, Canadian Red Cross Society
Ms Zoy Katevas de Sclabos, Chilean Red Cross

Asia:

Dr Mohammed M. Al-Hadid, Jordan National Red Crescent Society
Major General Z. A. Khan, Bangladesh Red Crescent Society

Europe:

Mr Philippe Cuvillier, French Red Cross
Mr Freddy Karup Pedersen, Danish Red Cross
Mr Rezső Sztuchlic, Hungarian Red Cross

Under Rule 20, paragraph 6 of the Rules of Procedure, the Chairman appoints three tellers from among the delegates to the Conference. I therefore ask Ms Niki Rattle of the Cook Islands Red Cross Society, Ms Britta Sydhoff of the Swedish Red Cross and Ms Moliehi Khabele representing the Government of Lesotho to agree to perform this task. Thank you.

The tellers will be assisted by Mr Jean-Luc Blondel from the ICRC and Ms Elise Baudot-Queguiner from the International Federation.

We shall now proceed with the roll call, starting with the Movement's components, namely the National Societies, the ICRC and the International Federation, and then moving on to the States party to the Geneva Conventions. I give the floor to Mr Frank Mohrhauer

for the first part of the roll call and to Ms Angela Gussing for the second.

**Mr Frank Mohrhauer, Assistant Secretary
General**

(Original English)

I will now start the roll call for the components of the Movement, which are the National Societies, the ICRC and the International Federation. I ask all delegates, when called, to lift their name plates high so that we can see them clearly. I will start in French alphabetical order, which I confess is a bit of a challenge for me. I apologize for any mistakes. I will start now.

(Original French)

Afghanistan, not present, South Africa, Albania, Algeria, Germany, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Saudi Arabia, Argentina no, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei no, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic no, Chile, People's Republic of China, Colombia, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Republic of Korea, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic no, Dominica, Egypt, El Salvador, United Arab Emirates, Ecuador, Spain, Estonia, United States, Ethiopia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia no, Georgia, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Cook Islands, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Iran, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Jamaica, Libya, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan no, Kiribati, Kuwait, Laos, Lesotho, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Malawi, Mali, Malta, Morocco, Mauritius, Mauritania no, Mexico, Micronesia, Moldova, Monaco, Mongolia no, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, New Zealand, Uganda, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Palaos, Panama, Papua-New Guinea, Paraguay no, Netherlands, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, United Kingdom, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, San Marino no, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Solomon Islands, Samoa no, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Serbia and Montenegro, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Suriname, Swaziland, Syria, Tajikistan, Tanzania no, Chad, Czech Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Turkey, Ukraine, Uruguay, Vanuatu no, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe, International Federation, ICRC.

(Original English)

This concludes the roll call of the components of the Movement.

Ms Angela Gussing-Sapina, Assistant Secretary General

(Original French)

I will proceed in exactly the same way. I will ask the governments to be so kind as to raise their name plates as I go down the list.

Afghanistan no, South Africa, Albania, Algeria, Germany, Andorra no, Angola no, Antigua and Barbuda no, Saudi Arabia, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas no, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan no, Bolivia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei no, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia no, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde no, Central African Republic, Chile, People's Republic of China, Cyprus no, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Republic of Korea, People's Democratic Republic of Korea, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire no, Croatia, Cuba, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Dominica no, Egypt, El Salvador, United Arab Emirates, Ecuador, Eritrea, Spain, Estonia, United States, Ethiopia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia no, Fiji no, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia no, Georgia, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea no, Guinea-Bissau no, Equatorial Guinea no, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Cook Islands no, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Iran, Ireland, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Libya, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan no, Kiribati, Kuwait, Laos no, Lesotho, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia no, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Malawi no, Maldives no, Mali, Malta, Morocco, Mauritius, Mauritania, Mexico, Micronesia no, Moldova no, Monaco, Mongolia no, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, New Zealand, Oman, Uganda, Uzbekistan, Pakistan no, Palao no, Panama, Papua-New Guinea no, Paraguay, Netherlands, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, United Kingdom, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis no, San Marino, Holy See, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines no, Solomon Islands no, Samoa no, Sao Tome and Principe no, Senegal, Serbia and Montenegro, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia no, Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Suriname no, Swaziland no, Syria, Tajikistan no, Tanzania no, Chad no, Czech Republic, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga no, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkmenistan no, Turkey, Tuvalu no, Ukraine, Uruguay, Vanuatu no, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen no, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Prof. René Rhinow, Swiss Red Cross, Chairman *ex officio*

(Original French)

The roll call is now complete.

The result of the roll call of the Movement's components and of the States party to the Geneva Conventions

is as follows: 166 components of the Movement are represented here, and 144 governments, for a total of 310 delegations. The absolute majority required at the first ballot is therefore 165 votes. We think we will have the results of the first ballot at about 11.30 a.m. We can now start the vote. I invite the delegations whose country names in French start with a or b to proceed to Room 15. The first letters of the next delegations invited to vote will be displayed in due course on the screen. We can now start our consideration of the agenda.

2. Amendments to the Regulations of the Empress Shôken Fund

Ms Kraus-Gurny, President of the Empress Shôken Fund

(Original English)

Mr Chairman,

The Empress Shôken Fund is a unique and special fund. It was established in 1912 when her Imperial Majesty the Empress Shôken presented 100,000 yen in Japanese gold to the Red Cross to promote the activities of National Societies.

Since then the Fund has played an important role in supporting Red Cross and Red Crescent Society projects related to disaster preparedness, health, youth, blood programmes, social welfare and the dissemination of the humanitarian ideals of the Red Cross and Red Crescent worldwide.

Following a number of subsequent donations from the Japanese Imperial Household and the Japanese government, the value of the Fund's capital now stands at 10.5 million Swiss francs. The Fund is therefore making an important difference to the many National Societies it supports.

A full report on the Fund's work over the last four years was sent to the participants of the International Conference prior to this meeting. Let me give you some examples of the assistance provided in the last year alone: equipping the ambulance and emergency response teams of the Gambia Red Cross Society, funding a mobile health unit in the Uruguayan Red Cross, supporting a tuberculosis awareness campaign by the Romanian Red Cross, training 1,000 young people in disaster preparedness and response in the Red Crescent Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran and supporting the establishment of new branches in new Societies like the East Timor Red Cross Society. This is how the Fund, in response to direct applications, helps National Societies build their capacity to assist vulnerable people.

The Fund is also a good example of commitment and cooperation both within the Movement and with the Japanese government and Red Cross Society. Managed by a joint commission comprising ICRC and Federation representatives, the Fund works to maximize its effectiveness and value to the individual

National Societies. Under the auspices of the Japanese Red Cross, a special relationship has been maintained over the years with the Japanese Imperial Household and the Japanese government, the main contributors to the Fund.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Japanese Imperial Household and the Japanese government for their support for this important Fund. In recent years, the Empress Shôken Fund has been affected by the changes in the world around us. The crisis in the world's stock markets has, as everywhere else, had a negative effect on the level of funds available to National Societies. This is reflected in the report to this Conference. Prudent modifications have been made in the Fund's financial management to address this issue, and it is hoped that this year a larger amount will again be available for allocation to the Fund's important projects.

In September 1999 the Standing Commission recommended that the Empress Shôken Fund should be treated as a Movement matter and dealt with by the Council of Delegates rather than the International Conference, as is the case under the existing regulations. It was felt that this would allow for more effective and regular monitoring of the affairs of the Fund on a biannual basis. Following extensive consultation with the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Imperial Household Agency through the Japanese Red Cross, a final draft of the revised regulations has been submitted to the International Conference. These revised regulations are presented to you today for approval under Resolution 2.

3. Special report: *Auxiliary Role of National Societies*

**Prof. René Rhinow, Swiss Red Cross,
Chairman *ex officio***

(Original French)

We take note of your report, and move immediately to item 3 on the agenda, the special report on the auxiliary role of National Societies.

**Ms Razia Essack-Kauaria, Secretary General of
the Namibia Red Cross, Member of the
International Federation Governing Board**

(Original English)

I would like to make a short presentation on the background to the study and highlight some of its main points.

On the background, we have become used to speaking frequently of the special position of National Societies as auxiliaries to the public authorities. There has, however, been little recent reflection on the real meaning of this in today's world. In recognition of this, both the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent and the Strategy for the Movement invited the International Federation to carry out an in-

depth study of the working relationship between States and National Societies, taking into account changing needs in the humanitarian, health and social fields, the auxiliary role of National Societies and the evolving role of the States, the private sector and voluntary organizations in service provision.

The full study is now available to all members of the International Conference. What was distributed in advance in preparation for the Conference is the paper we have before us, which is a summary of the study that focuses particularly on the conclusion.

Let me now turn to my second point, which is a brief summary of the main conclusion. The study begins by looking at the environment in which States and National Societies provide services. It attempts to identify some of the major trends in the need for services and the roles played by National Societies, on the one hand, and States, on the other. It then goes on to trace how the concept of auxiliary status evolved from the original concept of "auxiliary to the medical services of the armed forces" to the wider notion of "auxiliary in the humanitarian services of governments". It notes that although the concept is universal, there is no common understanding of it and the expectations of different partners vary considerably. It is clear, however, that the Movement's Statutes and international humanitarian law reflect the specific status of National Societies, which is different from that of other national humanitarian organizations, and that this is reflected in the nature and quality of the dialogue between the States and the National Societies.

There are different types of interaction between a State and its National Society, and they are analysed in the report. Firstly, there are those related to the *functioning* of the National Society, including the process of establishing a Society, the role of the State in Society decision-making, financial control, statutory amendments, the selection of National Society leaders, tax status and the use of the emblem. Secondly, there are interactions related to National Society activities, including those related to financing, relief for sick and wounded soldiers on the battlefield, and other activities related to conflicts, choice of programmes and services and activities abroad.

Having considered the different dimensions of the interaction between the National Society and the public authorities, the report looks at the tools available to assess and guide the development of the relationship. Some already exist, such as the Fundamental Principles, the conditions for recognition of National Societies, the "Guidance for National Society Statutes" and the "Characteristics of a Well-Functioning National Society". However, the report concludes that additional guidance would be valuable.

While keeping in mind the differences that may arise as a result of the diversity of contexts in which National Societies act, and the need for the relationship between a State and a National Society to evolve,

it is useful to identify the characteristics of a balanced relationship between States and National Societies. The "Characteristics" proposed by the study are as follows:

- underline the importance of partnership, dialogue and mutual respect and outline the scope of cooperation in the partnership;
- stress the importance of respect for the Fundamental Principles as the benchmark for National Society work in the partnership;
- highlight specific points relating to the partnership in times of armed conflict;
- suggest means of creating an enabling environment for the work of the National Society and provide guidance for action in case the Society's integrity is in jeopardy.

The Council of Delegates adopted Resolution 6 on this subject, inviting National Societies to initiate discussions internally and with their governments with a view to strengthening government understanding of the value of the auxiliary character of National Societies and the importance of a balanced relationship. In recognition of the fact that the work undertaken, while important, is by no means the end of the matter, the resolution invites the International Federation to press ahead, in cooperation with the ICRC, with its work on this subject, including through further consultations with National Societies, States and international organizations.

We hope that the governments will also find the study and its conclusions of value and look forward to continuing our work on the subject with National Societies and governments.

**Prof. René Rhinow, Swiss Red Cross,
Chairman *ex officio***

(Original French)

We take note of your report. The resolution, like all the other resolutions, will be dealt with tomorrow morning.

We can now go on to item 4 of the agenda.

4. Report on the follow-up to Resolution 3 of the 27th International Conference, on the emblem

**Mrs Christina Magnuson, Special
Representative of the Standing Commission,
Chairman of the Standing Commission
Working Group on the Emblems**

(Original English)

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Colleagues and Friends,

In 1999, the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent reached a consensus and adopted Resolution 3, which [pursuant to

Resolution 2 of the 1999 Council of Delegates] invited the Standing Commission "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".

You have received a very substantive report on the follow-up to that resolution. The report provides complete information on the progress made on the issue through the initiatives developed in close consultation with government representatives and within the framework of the Movement, through working groups established for that purpose by the Standing Commission.

The 2003 Council of Delegates, which has just completed its deliberations, gave in-depth consideration to the matter, which remains a priority on our Movement's agenda in its quest to achieve full universality and simultaneously further to enhance the protection of victims of war.

On 1 December, the 2003 Council of Delegates, aware of the importance of this issue, adopted Resolution 5 taking stock of the substantial progress made and requesting "the Standing Commission to continue to give high priority to securing, as soon as circumstances permit, a comprehensive and lasting solution to the question of the emblem, in cooperation with the Swiss government as depositary of the Geneva Conventions and with other concerned governments and components of the Movement, on the basis of the proposed draft Third Additional Protocol".

In this respect, I would like to put on record that the proposed draft third protocol additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, circulated on 12 October 2000, constitutes a sound basis for negotiations at a diplomatic conference to be convened as soon as circumstances permit.

By adopting Resolution 5 by consensus, the Council of Delegates wanted, on the one hand, to show that it is determined to pursue the efforts already made, and, on the other, to remind the States party to the Geneva Conventions that they share responsibility with the Movement's components for securing a comprehensive and lasting solution to the question of the emblems. It is therefore on behalf of the National Societies, the ICRC and the International Federation that I have asked, in my capacity as the Standing Commission's Special Representative on the emblems, to bring Resolution 5 adopted by the Council of Delegates on 1 December 2003 to the attention of the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. To that effect, the Standing Commission has submitted a draft resolution for the Conference to consider.

On behalf of all the members of our Movement, allow me to conclude by expressing my gratitude to all of you, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, dear friends, and to thank you for your continued support.

5. General debate on contemporary humanitarian challenges and protecting human dignity (continued)

**Prof. René Rhinow, Swiss Red Cross,
Chairman *ex officio***

(Original French)

Resolution 5 will be deliberated tomorrow morning. We shall now move directly to item 5 of the agenda. I would like to resume the general debate started on Wednesday, during the First Plenary Session, on contemporary humanitarian challenges and protecting human dignity. Before I give the floor to the first delegations, I would like to remind you once more that Article 11, paragraph 4, of the Movement's Statutes stipulates that all the participants at the International Conference must respect the Fundamental Principles. For the Conference's deliberations to enjoy everyone's trust, I must ensure that at no time does a speaker engage in a controversy of a political, racial, religious or ideological order. I would be grateful if you could facilitate that task. I also remind you that the time granted to each delegation is strictly limited to five minutes. I would ask all speakers strictly to observe this rule, out of respect for all those who wish to speak during this session. I also do not think we want to be here until midnight. Again, I would be grateful if you would follow this rule. A clock displayed on the video screen tells you how much time is left.

**Mr Fred De Graaf, Member of the Board,
Netherlands Red Cross**

(Original English)

Mr Chairman,

Last year we saw a number of unprecedented attacks on humanitarian workers. The brutality of the attacks shocked us all. These attacks resulted not only in unacceptable loss of life, they also showed that our humanitarian mission to come to the help of those in need in an impartial, neutral and independent way is greatly endangered. Humanitarian workers play a vital role in the prevention and alleviation of suffering. It is for this reason that we call on all States to prevent and denounce attacks on humanitarian workers and relief organizations and to ensure that such attacks do not go unpunished.

Mr Chairman,

We warmly welcome the report of the International Federation on the auxiliary role of National Societies. In a changing humanitarian environment, the redefinition of this role from the partnership perspective is refreshing and opens up new opportunities to extend our relationships with our governments. But, as has been clearly stressed in the report, the need to uphold our Fundamental Principles is crucial if we are to safeguard our humanitarian mission.

Finally, Mr Chairman, I draw your attention to climate change. Climate change is not an abstract risk in the

future. It is already here. One of the characteristics of climate change is the expected increase in extreme weather: more floods, more droughts, more heat waves, more hurricanes. We have already seen a steep increase in weather-related disasters.

Moreover, as poverty, migration, HIV/AIDS and other stresses render people increasingly vulnerable, it can be expected that more people will call upon the National Societies for help. The HIV/AIDS pandemic in particular is a major human concern. I therefore warmly thank the government of the Netherlands for our joint pledge, in which we commit ourselves to strengthening the capacities of sister Societies to face the challenges of disaster risk reduction and HIV/AIDS. It is crucial that we always be aware of these issues and the impact they will have on human dignity.

We must speak out on the plight of vulnerable people and no longer hesitate to act.

**H.E. Mr Mohamed-Saleh Dembri,
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of
Algeria, Geneva, speaking on behalf of the
Arab Group**

(Original French)

Mr Chairman, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Even as we meet, on the international stage the humanitarian situation is deteriorating, justice is to all intents and purposes absent and balance is no longer a matter of concern. The events of recent years and up to this day, worldwide and in the occupied Palestinian territories in particular, have had deeply negative consequences. Moral standards have been eclipsed, and the judgements of the international community on many clearly different problems have pointed a finger at some countries and communities and ignored others. The situation has also been used as a pretext to marginalize international humanitarian law. This is why we are pleased with the objectives of our International Conference, which this year involve updating the law and the provisions on application procedures.

The documents submitted to the Conference show that a succession of situations in which the law is flouted is the main source of violations of human dignity. Thus, as evidenced by reports from international agencies, every day sees the violation of customary and treaty-based international law in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Although we do not wish to exploit the International Conference on account of only one humanitarian cause, we nevertheless wish to state, on the basis of that particular situation and of the lessons it has taught us, that the response to the dangers facing human dignity in our modern world must be grounded in the fulfilment of four interdependent conditions:

1. the dissemination and practical application of existing mechanisms to monitor and implement the provisions of international law;

2. State respect for the commitment to do everything needed to respond effectively and definitively to the most serious breaches of the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols;
3. the promotion and development of the protective role of the ICRC, including its function as a substitute for the Protecting Power and its investigative role when international humanitarian law is violated;
4. the unconditional commitment to respect and protect the ICRC and its delegates, and any other international humanitarian agencies present in the field, and to facilitate their work.

Let us hope that our deliberations will culminate in the establishment of practical instruments for fulfilling and monitoring the implementation of these conditions, which we believe are an essential prerequisite for meeting the Conference's objectives.

Mr Chairman,

Regarding the problem of the third emblem of neutrality, the Arab Group, which approves the principle of the Movement's universality, is gratified that negotiations will resume on the draft third additional protocol once the situation on the ground has stabilized, essentially in the form of the introduction of a just and global peace in the Middle East.

In terms of reducing the impact of disasters on human dignity, we are pleased to see increased international cooperation with a view to establishing active partnerships that will help strengthen the national technical and legislative capacity of developing countries.

Lastly, when it comes to protecting human dignity when illness strikes, we would like to underscore the equally serious nature of all deadly diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, and affirm that the first step in the struggle to control those diseases must be the establishment of an effective network of international cooperation that will contribute to the development of health systems in developing countries, to the strengthening of their national capacities and to the preparation of their programmes. In this context, we salute WHO's 3x5 Initiative (to provide HIV/AIDS treatment to three million people by 2005).

Mr Chairman,

In conclusion, the Arab Group reaffirms its concern to obtain practical results that translate this Conference's objectives into a reality to be materialized by means on which we must all agree.

H.E. Ms Irma Ertman, Ambassador, Director General, Department for Legal Affairs, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland

(Original English)

My delegation fully associates itself with the statement made by Italy on behalf of the European Union on

Wednesday. Let me just add a few remarks from a national perspective.

The horrendous attacks against the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross headquarters in Baghdad this year illustrate the increasing dangers and security risks faced by humanitarian personnel in crisis areas. It has become painfully clear that not enough has been done to prevent, deter and suppress such acts. It is a good sign, however, that the United Nations General Assembly has agreed to start negotiations with a view to extending the scope of the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel, hopefully in order to cover all missions under United Nations control. Resolution 1502 on the protection of humanitarian personnel, adopted by the United Nations Security Council in September, is also welcome. This Conference must send an unambiguous message that States must prevent and denounce attacks on humanitarian personnel and relief aid and ensure that such attacks do not go unpunished.

We would like to commend the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation for the excellent reports prepared for the Conference, which shed light on topical issues of great importance. The forthcoming publication of the extensive report on customary humanitarian law will be a landmark event in clarifying universal obligations.

To take up just one point, the status of persons captured or detained in the context of the ongoing war on terror has been a controversial subject. My delegation sees a great deal of merit in the conclusions drawn by the ICRC and others concerning the legal regime applicable to civilians who have taken a direct part in hostilities in an armed conflict. Indeed, as has also been confirmed by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, if an individual in the hands of a party to the conflict is not entitled to the protection of the Third Geneva Convention as a prisoner of war, he or she necessarily falls within the ambit of the Fourth Convention as a civilian if the nationality requirements under that Convention are met. My government is concerned about the claims that there is a third category between combatants and civilians, ineligible for due process and not entitled to the protection of the law. All persons captured must be treated humanely, in accordance with the protection provided by international humanitarian law and human rights law.

We also welcome the report on the international disaster response law project and support the ongoing work of the International Federation in this context.

Turning now to specific humanitarian commitments, Finland joins in the pledges made by the European Union. As far as the European Union pledge on the International Criminal Court (ICC) is concerned, I would like to add that Finland will ratify the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the Court during the first half of 2004.

On a national basis, we pledge to remain committed to efforts to end the impunity of perpetrators of the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole, including serious violations of international humanitarian law. We have already enacted legislation that provides for full cooperation with the ICC. Now we will undertake to review the national legislation concerning the crimes under the jurisdiction of the ICC, and amend the relevant provisions as appropriate in order to ensure the possibility of national trials under the principle of complementarity. We are deeply concerned about the fate of missing persons and pledge, together with the Finnish Red Cross, to enhance cooperation to ensure effective tracing activities.

Mr Chairman,

HIV/AIDS is an enormous tragedy. The number of AIDS orphans is now counted in the millions. To counter the menace, strong leadership and an active civil society role are required. Finland underlines the role of prevention and the importance of partnership between governments and the International Red Cross Movement in this respect.

We join other delegations in warmly welcoming the recent adoption by the States of a new protocol to the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, on explosive remnants of war.

Mr Chairman,

Finland would like to express its strong support for the activities carried out by the components of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. We wish every success to the final days of the 28th International Conference.

**Mr Paul Wharram, Deputy Secretary General,
Canadian Red Cross Society**

(Original English)

Mr Chairman,

The Canadian Red Cross welcomes this opportunity to speak in plenary and commends the Standing Commission, the ICRC and the International Federation, which have worked so hard to organize this Conference. We wish to speak briefly about this great and unique institution, the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, and the important role it plays.

For the last two days, we, the National Societies of our Movement representing the grassroots of our various communities, have sat side by side with our government colleagues, on an equal footing, sharing points of view, discussing collaborative efforts and building partnerships with one another, sharing a common goal, to protect human dignity.

While during these days a few of us may have become focused on a single issue, may have held a narrow view,

or may have felt overwhelmed by the complexity of the challenges, let us not lose sight of why and how we came to this place and the reasons for doing what we do. We have recognized that together, we can accomplish great things, have a positive impact on the state of humanity and make a difference in the lives of persons affected by armed conflicts, disasters and disease. Over the years, we have been building our capacity to mobilize the power of humanity and in so doing, we are making a difference in this world by reducing violence, discrimination and vulnerability. With concrete and measurable goals, we have committed to improving protection in armed conflict and ensuring safe access to all victims.

However, what is perhaps even more important is how we have come to make these things happen – and that has been by putting our Fundamental Principles into action.

Granted, there are many organizations that raise awareness about the missing, that provide services and care for people living with HIV/AIDS, that respond to disasters and situations of conflict; but what makes this body, the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, different is that we, its components, work within an overarching framework guided by Fundamental Principles which are beyond dispute and above politics. Our values of universality and impartiality are indeed the pillars of what we do.

The Canadian Red Cross calls upon the States Parties and the National Societies working together to further strengthen these pillars by realizing true Movement-wide universality with a permanent and prompt resolution of the emblem issue, and to respect the auxiliary yet independent nature of our partnership. Let us also never allow the uniqueness of our collaboration or the strength of our cooperation to be eroded or weakened by the dimensions of the challenges we face.

We embrace the outcomes of this Conference, the Agenda for Humanitarian Action and the pledges. Our Society has spoken frequently during these deliberations and with particular urgency about the special circumstances and need for protection from violence and abuse of children, certainly among the missing, and generally among those young lives entrusted to our care.

We strongly support youth participation and appeal to all National Societies to provide safe environments for Red Cross and Red Crescent youth. We welcome the pledge of the International Federation to this end and encourage others to join us in fulfilling this goal. We applaud the commitment from National Societies and governments like our own to support disaster preparedness and response mechanisms in order to reduce the impact of disasters and to enhance the capacity of National Societies.

As part of the global Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, with so many of our sister Societies gripped with the challenges of assisting women,

children and men living with HIV/AIDS, we welcome the recent bold initiative by our Government and encourage others to enact legislation that will provide affordable anti-retroviral medicines to those particularly vulnerable people.

We support the ICRC's report on the missing and join a number of our sister Societies who have resolved to reinforce our international network of tracing services and to build our capacity to reach out to and support families separated by conflict.

We publicly reaffirm and invite National Societies to share in our commitment to landmine awareness and encourage the universal implementation of the Ottawa Convention.

But perhaps more importantly, Mr Chairman, we announce to this Conference our Society's new strategic goal, approved only three weeks ago, "to increase awareness of, respect for and promote action on humanitarian values and international humanitarian law". We have pledged that over the next four years, the Canadian Red Cross will build volunteer and staff awareness of and commitment to the promotion of humanitarian values and law, and will undertake public campaigns to encourage tolerance and respect and curb discrimination, particularly against indigenous and immigrant populations.

Mr Chairman,

As the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent draws to a close, we wish to pay tribute to our millions of volunteers and staff who are the faces of humanity in action and who frequently carry out their work at considerable risk to their lives and health. They, as we, have been inspired by the rallying call for the Movement championed by the Standing Commission and demonstrated by the exemplary leadership of Princess Margriet. It will be the collective achievements of our volunteers and staff, supported by our partners, that will strengthen our legacy of providing care, hope and courage to the millions around the world who rely on us every day and every year.

**Maj. General Zahirul Amin Khan, Chairman,
Bangladesh Red Crescent Society**

(Original English)

Mr Chairman,

The 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent takes place at a time when new issues and challenges have arisen. The number of conflict-affected countries has increased in the last few years. Local wars and armed conflicts have also broken out from time to time. Terrorist attacks are escalating. There is widespread violation of international laws. But the Geneva Conventions have stood the test of time and have made a major contribution towards alleviating human suffering in times of conflict.

The central theme of this Conference is protecting human dignity and addressing the humanitarian challenges posed by the contemporary world. Promoting peace by humanitarian means is the motto of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Since its inception, the Movement has been properly applying international humanitarian law. It is well known that human rights were established by the Geneva Conventions of 1949, which were further strengthened by the two Additional Protocols of 1977.

One of the aims of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is the protection of human lives and health. Bangladesh is concerned by the fact that diseases like malaria, arsenicosis, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and waterborne diseases are threatening people's lives and health. Bangladesh made significant progress in supplying safe drinking water to rural people, but arsenic contamination of ground water has made the drinking of well water unsafe for about 80% of them. People are now dependent on contaminated surface water. As a result, there has been an outbreak of waterborne diseases. Countries like Bangladesh urgently require international cooperation to deal with major disastrous diseases and health hazards.

As you know, Bangladesh is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world. Every year there are cyclones, tidal waves, floods and other natural calamities. It has been observed that it is not enough to distribute relief materials to those affected and to rehabilitate them. A planned economic programme is needed to build the capacity of the people affected, so that their economic situation does not fall below the existing level. Population displacements from river erosion have created a psychological crisis in Bangladesh. Every year thousands of people are rendered homeless because of river erosion. International cooperation is urgently needed to improve the disaster management system and to rehabilitate the displaced. The ICRC has already been with us in our moment of need.

Finally, let me reiterate the firm belief of Bangladesh that human dignity is the foundation of all of our efforts to meet the challenges of the present time. The united and collective efforts of all governments, National Societies and other organizations can ensure the protection of human dignity.

**Prof. Marc Gentilini, President,
French Red Cross**

(Original French)

Mr Chairman, Dear Colleagues,

I would like to address the subject of the auxiliary role of the National Societies.

The 1999 International Conference called for "an in-depth study into the working relationship between States and National Societies". We congratulate the International Federation on the excellent report it has submitted on that subject. Indeed, we consider this to be

a topic of great current interest. We approve the report's conclusions, but we believe that the Conference must go further and forcefully remind the governments, and the Movement, that it is in their interests to implicate themselves in this respect. Our status and exceptional mission, conferred on us by the States when they created the National Societies they wanted, must be respected. We are at the heart of the founding act of Solferino. The political upheaval, the economic and social changes that have occurred since then have not laid that partnership open to question, quite the contrary: they have made it a topic of current concern. This is especially true when one considers the anarchic arrival on the scene of new non-governmental humanitarian players that sometimes barely deign to cooperate with the governments and may even be hostile and demanding. It is important to remember that fact. The governments wanted the National Societies. It is therefore only fair that in return we expect those governments to set aside for us, in their humanitarian operations, the special space that is our due. And that they give us the means of performing the mission they entrusted to us.

Is it normal that some National Societies have to rely on the generosity of the public to survive and are totally ignored by the public purse? We ask the governments to give us the financial and logistical means we need to carry out our missions. These are our missions, but also theirs.

**H.E. Milos Vukasinovic, Ambassador,
Permanent Representative of Bosnia-
Herzegovina, Geneva**

(Original English)

Mr Chairman,

It is my honour to address you on behalf of the government and the Red Cross Society of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The government and the Red Cross Society of Bosnia and Herzegovina express their gratitude for the Society's admission to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies as a full-fledged member of one big family, a family whose greatness and importance are fully understood by people and nations, in particular those who have lived through the tragic experience of war, other disasters or diseases.

My country has, unfortunately, had the experience of war and of the tragic consequences that war brings. This tragic experience is one more reason to express our true commitment to international humanitarian law, respect for human rights, human dignity and the principles on which the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is founded.

I avail myself of this opportunity to express our deep gratitude to the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and many National Societies for the aid they provided, during and after the tragic conflict, to Bosnia-Herzegovina and its citizens.

It will take us much hard work over a long time to heal the wounds of the conflict. In these endeavours, we are very much in need of support from the Red Cross Movement, especially the International Committee of the Red Cross. The government and the Red Cross Society of Bosnia and Herzegovina trust that the ICRC and the International Federation will continue their activities in Bosnia-Herzegovina and not phase them out. This is why we fully support the Agenda for Humanitarian Action to be adopted by the Conference, as it provides thus.

Since the war, when the greatest challenge was to alleviate the suffering of the civilian population, Bosnia-Herzegovina has faced new challenges.

The issue of missing persons remains unresolved. This issue is not only humanitarian, it is also political. Solving it is the condition for the reconciliation of nations in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The scope of the problem is illustrated by data from the latest ICRC list of missing persons, according to which approximately 16,000 people from Bosnia-Herzegovina are still missing. The government of Bosnia and Herzegovina deeply appreciates all the ICRC's efforts to date to support the work of the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to solve this issue. The government of Bosnia and Herzegovina expects that the ICRC will continue its activities in Bosnia-Herzegovina until the issue is settled once and for all.

The other big challenge stemming from the tragic conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina is uncleared mine fields. Fully aware of the significance of this issue, Bosnia-Herzegovina was one of the first countries to ratify the Ottawa Convention. The greatest obstacle to fulfilling the obligations of the Convention is mine-field clearance. Out of 18,600 minefields, only 10 per cent have been cleared. The total number of those killed and injured by anti-personnel landmines since 1992 is approximately 4,500. The number of minefields registered represents a great risk in the long term. Since 1996 the Red Cross Society of Bosnia and Herzegovina has been conducting, with ICRC support, the Mine Awareness Programme.

Another great challenge facing Bosnia-Herzegovina is the establishment of the necessary legal framework in this field. Bosnia-Herzegovina is committed to defining the position and responsibilities of the Red Cross Society by law. The government of Bosnia and Herzegovina highly appreciates the technical assistance the ICRC has been providing in the preparation of this law. The special law on missing persons is also in the process of being adopted.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that, in the post-war period, Bosnia-Herzegovina has achieved significant results in the implementation of human rights standards and humanitarian law.

I am convinced that the ICRC experience in Bosnia-Herzegovina can serve as a model for further humanitarian action worldwide.

H.E. Mr Yaakov Levy, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Israel, Geneva

(Original English)

Mr Chairman,

On behalf of the delegation of the State of Israel, I wish to thank you for the opportunity to address this important conference. I would like to begin with words of condolence for the families and colleagues of those killed in the brutal terror attack on the International Committee of the Red Cross headquarters in Baghdad on 27 October. The horrific phenomenon of suicide terrorism, the abuse and total disregard of the sanctity of the Movement's emblems, are clearly crimes against humanity.

The attack against the ICRC compound in Baghdad is one of a number of recent attacks targeting humanitarian workers providing assistance to those in need, including the assassination of United Nations High Commissioner Sergio Vieira de Mello. It is another manifestation of the practice of deliberately targeting and killing innocent persons, a practice with which Israel must contend daily. Such attacks are not limited to humanitarian workers or even to any one region. They are a global phenomenon that threatens us all. We must join together here and now to condemn such terrorism and work together to increase respect and protection for civilians, humanitarian workers and health care providers.

Israel, as a participant in the Diplomatic Conference that drafted the four Geneva Conventions during the spring and summer of 1949, only a year after the founding of the State of Israel, is a strong supporter of the vision and messages regarding "Protecting human dignity", the theme of this 28th International Conference. Our delegation includes officials of the State of Israel and of our National Society, Magen David Adom, all dedicated to the causes of the Movement.

Despite the difficult situation in our region and the conflict that has existed since its birth, Israel has remained committed to the goals of the Movement. This commitment can be seen in the activities that Israel has carried out, supporting humanitarian concerns both in the region and around the world, such as cooperation with the International Federation in 2000 in order to send medical supplies valued at over 500,000 US dollars to Eritrea and a series of training programmes in Sofia, Bulgaria, organized in a number of fields in 2002 and 2003. Our delegation includes Dr Carlos Gruzman, who served as medical director of the Israeli field hospital established in 1999 in the city of Adapazari, in north-western Turkey, following the region's devastating earthquake.

Only last month, Magen David Adom hosted a training workshop in Israel on disaster management. The workshop was organized in cooperation with the ICRC, the International Federation and the American Red Cross. Representatives from the Federation's

regional delegations in Amman and Central Asia, the American, British, German and Norwegian Red Cross Societies, the Palestine Red Crescent Society, and other colleagues from Israel and around the world took part in this workshop.

Israel has similar commitments for the future and will submit a pledge to the Movement this week that will include the continuation of its tradition of sponsoring intensive international training programmes via the Department for International Cooperation (MASHAV) of Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 2004, such courses will include training in developing and organizing a trauma system and advanced studies leading to a Masters degree in public health. Similar programmes, based on local needs, will be offered around the globe.

At the same time, Israel continues to be deeply concerned about the fact that Magen David Adom, Israel's National Society, remains officially outside the Movement. Its representatives sit apart from the "official" members of our delegation. Israel appreciates the efforts of the ICRC, the International Federation and many delegations and National Societies to include Magen David Adom in their events and the Movement. One significant note of progress was the signing, for the first time, of a cooperation agreement between the ICRC and Magen David Adom earlier this year. Nevertheless, until Magen David Adom becomes a full member of the Movement, its historical anomaly as a non-political humanitarian organization that embodies the spirit and ideology of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement yet is not allowed membership status, will remain. Progress must be made on the path selected by the Movement, the development of a neutral emblem via a third protocol to the Geneva Conventions, not only for Magen David Adom but for the vital goal of universality that is at the very heart of the Movement. States must act, led by Switzerland, as the depositary of the Geneva Conventions, to resolve this issue, which has affected the Movement for too many years.

Israel appreciates the efforts of the International Committee of the Red Cross in developing cooperation and programmes of action on the missing. Sadly, over the years, Israel has had much experience in this subject. There is no topic that speaks more poignantly of human dignity than the need to provide information to family members who live daily with the open wound of not knowing the fate of their loved ones. Israel's pledge this week will include playing a role in the Movement's efforts to develop cooperative efforts in this sphere.

Finally, on behalf of the delegation of Israel, I would like to salute the efforts of Red Cross, Red Crescent and Magen David Adom field workers around the world, including our region, especially the ICRC's representative in Israel, Mr François Bellon and his team. These efforts embody the Jewish and universal value of *pikuach nefesh* – the importance of saving human life, beyond all other concerns. *Pikuach nefesh* stems from a well-known verse from the biblical Book of Leviticus (19:16): "neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy

neighbour" (*quoted in Hebrew*). This verse declares the inestimable value of human life, which is a cardinal principle of Jewish law and philosophy. I am proud that we share this value with our colleagues.

Prof. Shimelis Adugna, President, Ethiopian Red Cross Society

(Original English)

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

There can be no protecting human dignity without respect for international humanitarian law, and while poverty remains widespread the challenges of protecting human dignity will remain many. I would like to take up three of them: natural and man-made disasters, HIV/AIDS and compliance with international humanitarian law.

Natural disasters are becoming more and more frequent – droughts and floods that were occurring at ten-year intervals are becoming bi-annual events and in some cases even annual occurrences. My country has suffered frequent bouts of drought and many governments and Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies here have been of great help. I would like to thank all those who assisted us most sincerely.

The floods in Germany and France, the hurricanes that batter the Americas and the Pacific, the Po river flow in Italy decreasing to the extent that people walk where they used to go by boat, the effect on power stations and the rationing of electricity are all problems of climate change.

I mention these situations in the developed countries not to minimize the recent drought in southern Africa and the Horn, where more countries than ever before are being affected. Climate change is raging with a vengeance and affecting many more countries and larger populations. We need to be better prepared – but support for preparedness, including development measures such as dams, irrigation and protection and rehabilitation of the environment, is limited. We have the unfinished business of implementing the declarations and commitments we made at the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen – alleviating poverty and unemployment, and if possible eradicating both. The Millennium Development Goals are lofty ideals and essential measures that would prevent disasters and emergencies.

Relief and rehabilitation, on the one hand, and development, on the other, are two sides of the same coin, and both need our attention. To do only relief work without development and rehabilitation is to perpetuate misery. When I attended the World Food Conference way back in 1976 as Ethiopia's Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner, the then Secretary of State of the United States of America, Dr Henry Kissinger, said "No child shall go to bed hungry". Three decades since, more, indeed many more children

are going to bed hungry. There are millions of children asking for more food. Unfortunately more is not coming. To make food security, and in particular household food security, a reality we all need to implement our declarations and commitments. I remember the great Mahatma Ghandi saying, "Even God dare not appear to a hungry man except in the shape of bread".

Governments, Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the Movement members present here can do no less. It would even be better if peasants in developing countries could be empowered to produce more food or pay for the food they need. This would be possible if resources were available for disaster preparedness and disaster prevention development measures. Then and only then would food aid be a thing of the past and food security within our reach.

Mr Chairman, allow me to turn to the major disaster and emergency of our era, the HIV/AIDS pandemic. It killed 3 million people last year, and infects one person every six seconds. In 2001 there were 5 million infections, 3.5 million of them in Africa – 70 per cent of people living with HIV/AIDS are in Africa. There are 8,200 dying every day. That is two and a half times the number of victims of 9/11.

We are all living with two and a half times the number of victims of 9/11 dying daily. How long can we go on? With dedication and resolve we can reverse the situation. Uganda has done so. It has reversed the infection rate, and I would like to congratulate them for their great work. My plea is for all of us to join hands for the 14 million orphans who need our support, 11 million of them in Africa. There are 42 million people living with HIV/AIDS. All of them need our care and support.

The orphans are left in the care of 13-year-olds who should be going to school and enjoying their childhood. These children are saddled with the adult responsibility of caring for their younger siblings.

On the issue of HIV/AIDS we have the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGAS) Declaration of Commitment at the global level and the Abuja Summit Declaration for Africa. We have said all the right things. We have to protect the young and vulnerable, care and comfort the orphans and change their blank look to one of hope, and free the people living with HIV/AIDS from the "death sentence" with care and treatment.

We can alleviate this misery. There is a saying in Amharic (*quoted in Amharic*), which rendered into English means roughly: if you try to put your trousers on while running, the solution may come while you are still running.

The only situation urgent enough to require this is HIV/AIDS. I urge all of us to put on our trousers while running and make sure they stay on.

Mr Igor Grexa, Director of the International Law and Consular Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Slovakia

(Original French)

Mr Chairman,

I would like to begin with a brief personal memory. Eight years ago, in December 1995, in this very room, I took the floor during the 26th International Conference and spoke, for the first time, in the name of an independent Slovakia.

At the time I was deeply moved. I sought to reassure those assembled here that the young Republic of Slovakia pledged to be a reliable and active link in the humanitarian network of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

I felt on me the watchful gaze of many people, saying "Oh yes, we've heard many statements of good intent, they're commonplace. But we'll see whether you act accordingly every day".

Mr Chairman,

Today, eight years later almost to the day, I can say without hesitation that Slovakia has honoured its pledges.

However, much remains to be done in my country, too. Human distress always stirs feelings of guilt that we were not insightful or active enough. What is more, we are aware that a mere obligation of conduct is often not enough in humanitarian action. We must commit to an obligation of outcome, even if we concede in advance that that outcome will never be entirely satisfactory.

Now, Mr Chairman, I will make a few tangible points.

Slovakia will soon be a member of the European Union. To us the Union represents a community of values in terms of protection of human dignity as well.

We associate ourselves with the statement Italy made on behalf of the European Union.

We share the pledges made by the Union to promote international humanitarian law, support the International Criminal Court and abide by international humanitarian law in the framework of peacekeeping operations.

In addition, my country pledges to ratify, as soon as possible, the Optional Protocol concerning the involvement of children in armed conflicts. We make the same pledge in respect of amended Article 1 of the 1980 Convention on Conventional Weapons, and of the Second Protocol to the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict.

Slovakia, in response to the appeal of the ICRC, has withdrawn all the reservations to the Geneva Conventions made by the former Czechoslovakia.

Since June 2000, Slovakia has therefore applied the four Conventions without reservations.

In April 2002, we ratified the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. At the same time we amended our Penal Code, introducing an article on crimes against humanity that refers explicitly to Article 7 of the Rome Statute. In addition, the definition of war in the Penal Code was broadened and now also covers internal conflicts.

From the internal point of view, we are trying to improve the methods of implementing and disseminating international humanitarian law.

In January 2002, our Minister for Foreign Affairs established a committee for the promotion and dissemination of international humanitarian law that has permanent consultative status. The committee was established on the initiative of our National Red Cross Society. This is proof of the close cooperation and partnership existing between the governmental authorities and the Slovak Red Cross.

Just a few words on anti-personnel mines, Mr Chairman. My country reiterates that it is determined to fulfil the objectives of the Ottawa Convention to the letter. I would simply add that Slovakia is known to be active not only in the field of mine clearance as such but also as a producer of machines able to clear and destroy mines. We intend to further increase our capacity in this area and to step up our participation in programmes.

One final point, Mr Chairman. Slovakia endorses the draft resolutions of the Conference. Once they have been adopted, it will implement them, on its own and with other countries, at national and international level.

Mr Freddy Karup Pedersen, President, Danish Red Cross

(Original English)

Mr Chairman,

As the chairman of the International Federation's Health and Community Services Committee I would like to make two comments on the issue of HIV/AIDS, which I believe is the most important humanitarian challenge of our times.

This is so not only because of the sheer number of people affected and because of the social and economic consequences, but also because of the illness's dramatic ability to expose inequities in access to health, the shortcomings of our health systems, and the prejudices associated with certain diseases.

The grassroots network of Red Cross volunteers has been participating in the fight against HIV/AIDS for a number of years, in the fields of prevention, home-based care and anti-stigmatization. As we all know, however, in spite of their efforts and those of many others, the number of people affected is still going up, especially in sub-Saharan Africa.

The International Federation has consequently decided to apply a truly holistic approach to the fight against HIV/AIDS, which will also mean entering into the field of treatment with anti-retroviral drugs. To do this, we need to work in partnership with governments. Our network of volunteers has a comparative advantage when it comes to outreach, social mobilization, monitoring drugs and side effects, and so on. But we need to partner with government health systems to import and prescribe drugs, and so on.

My aim today is to urge the national governments of individual States to work with the National Societies in this endeavour for the benefit of all those affected and to relieve their suffering and avoid death.

**Col. Jean-Pierre Bayala, Technical Adviser,
Ministry of Defence, Burkina Faso**

(Original French)

Mr Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,

The 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent is being held against the dismal international backdrop of numerous armed conflicts, heinous terrorist acts, the HIV/AIDS pandemic and other equally devastating scourges undermining peace and security.

The organizers of the Conference, who deserve our absolute admiration, were inspired when they chose its theme, which lies at the heart of today's major challenges.

Indeed, in view of the many serious violations of international humanitarian law and the most basic human rights, protecting human dignity no longer seems to be the thing we hold dearest. These violations eloquently reflect what little value is attached to life and human dignity worldwide.

In the face of these abuses, which threaten our existence, the time has come to act quickly, here and now, to preserve our humanity.

My delegation therefore fully supports the draft Declaration, Agenda for Humanitarian Action and Resolution 1 submitted for approval to the Conference. They clearly reflect the international community's awareness of the situation and allow us to correct our increasingly inhuman and degrading behaviour.

Burkina Faso, for its part, will be a willing participant in any endeavour to mitigate and alleviate human suffering and protect human dignity.

Mr Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,

During the 27th International Conference, my country made a number of pledges for the 1999-2003 period. Those pledges are now a reality. They comprise:

- accession to the 1980 Convention on Conventional Weapons and its Protocols as in force since 2001 (15 April 2003);

- adoption of legislation on the protection of the emblem (21 October 2003);
- ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (22 October 2003);
- the training of national instructors and legal advisers within the national armed forces;
- the declaration accepting the competence of the Fact-Finding Commission (27 October 2003).

Besides these measures, a committee has been established within the armed forces on the dissemination and follow-up of international humanitarian law.

In this respect, it is important to note that the teaching of international humanitarian law is an integral part of mandatory military instruction, and receives a mark with a co-efficient.

Mr Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,

Burkina Faso is aware that these measures are limited in scope; they are part of a lengthy process that must, of course, be dealt with as a matter of urgency but also substantively.

It is to that end that my country has pledged, at this Conference, to sign and ratify, as soon as possible, the new Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War, to accede to the 1999 Protocol relating to the protection of cultural property, to establish an interministerial committee on international humanitarian law and human rights, and lastly, to appoint legal advisers to armed forces commanders.

Mr Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,

My delegation salutes the untiring efforts of the ICRC in its daily quest to obtain respect for international humanitarian law and hence peace and respect for human dignity.

We must all share that struggle. Refusal to participate or indifference is tantamount to a crime against humanity.

The heightened awareness the situation demands of us requires that the international community stop manufacturing and employing the weapons and other instruments of death that cause intolerable human suffering.

In Western Africa, small and light arms today represent a scourge that substantially undermines the development efforts made.

There is no need to recall that weapons, far from bringing security, are the polar opposite of development.

Mr Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,

Combating the evils we all denounce and condemn also means casting a caring look and making a gesture of support, relief and assistance towards the families of the missing and persons living with HIV/AIDS. These people ask us, not to be generous but rather to do our

humanitarian duty. In this respect, the government has adopted a plan of action that is being implemented in partnership with all the components of the National Society.

African wisdom teaches us that we must add earth to earth in order to increase the size of our world, but we must take care not to add to misfortune. There is therefore hope, we must act quickly and well so that law and human dignity can prevail.

Ambassador Pablo Macedo, Permanent Mission of Mexico, Geneva

(Original Spanish)

Mr Chairman,

Mexico strongly condemns the terrorist attacks perpetrated against representatives of the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross. We pay a heartfelt tribute to the victims of those attacks and urge the international community to step up security for all humanitarian workers.

This Conference is taking place in a highly complex international context, with multiple challenges to international peace and security and to human dignity. Millions of people around the world continue to subsist in abject poverty. The devastating impact of pandemic diseases is affecting a growing number of people. Damage to the environment and natural and man-made disasters are on the rise. Situations of internal violence and international wars are growing in number, rolling back the development of many societies and holding back economic and social growth everywhere. Human rights are being violated worldwide. In very many cases, human dignity is completely obliterated.

Strengthening general compliance with international law, international humanitarian law and human rights and intensifying international cooperation for the economic and social development of all peoples are steps that must be urgently taken by the international community, in order to establish an international system of peace and security in which respect for human dignity is a reality. These efforts must focus on the plight of the disabled, refugees, internally displaced persons, migrants, women and children, and all vulnerable groups.

We face numerous humanitarian challenges today. The response of the international community must be broad and permanent. The topics covered in the draft Declaration and Agenda for Humanitarian Action are but a few of the urgent matters that we, the members of this Conference, have to deal with individually and collectively. The final documents must serve to reinforce dissemination of international humanitarian law and to promote full compliance with it in all armed conflicts. As in the past, the top priority is protection of the civilian population and full respect for human rights, even in the fight against terrorism.

Mexico reiterates that it is firmly committed to disseminating and applying international humanitarian

law. Our government is taking concrete action to this end. We are especially pleased that in 2001 the ICRC opened a delegation in Mexico. This has contributed enormously to the training in international humanitarian law of members of the armed and security forces. In addition, in the past few years Mexico has ratified various human rights and international humanitarian law treaties, in order to strengthen the culture of respect in our country. President Fox's government maintains its pledge to ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. As in many other countries this will require a constitutional amendment. The corresponding draft legislation has already been submitted by the executive to the legislature. As part of its pledge to work together with the Mexican Red Cross, the government of Mexico has launched a study for the preparation of draft legislation on the protection of the red cross emblem in our country.

The challenge of obtaining full compliance with international humanitarian law is enormous. We trust in the political determination of the members of this Conference to continue defending and constructing an integrated system of respect for humanitarian rules and human rights, in order to promote fulfillment of human dignity everywhere in the world. Mexico remains firmly committed to the implementation of this objective.

In conclusion, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation for the valuable documents they have prepared for us.

Mr Ulfar Hauksson, President, Icelandic Red Cross

(Original English)

Mr Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Geneva Conventions represent a relevant and comprehensive set of rules for the protection of persons in an international conflict. The Icelandic Red Cross encourages States to apply the letter and the spirit of the Geneva Conventions, reaffirm the principles and rules of international law, and respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law in all circumstances.

An increasingly important challenge facing humanitarian actors is how to focus attention and channel resources. We must reaffirm our commitment to providing humanitarian assistance in strict accordance with the Fundamental Principles, and at the same time campaign vigorously among all actors to guarantee the humanitarian space in which we work.

The Icelandic Red Cross deplores attacks on humanitarian workers. We urge all parties, the Movement, governments and the public at large to enhance the security of humanitarian workers by all possible means and to safeguard their access to those in need. The willingness to help lies within all human beings and must not be over-

shadowed by violence. The Movement must represent this feeling of solidarity and be able to manifest it in action.

Civil society in the broadest sense must be mobilized to support the application of international humanitarian law, rules and principles and must maintain the momentum to apply and strengthen existing mechanisms of implementation and repression. The Icelandic Red Cross welcomes the study on women and war. The study shows that women are often made victims simply by virtue of their gender. They are victims of sexual violence, abduction, trafficking, slavery, persecution and harassment. But we should also pay special attention to women's position in another battlefield, which is the struggle against the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Women bear a particularly heavy burden as they often care for those affected by the disease and those left behind, sometimes even though they are themselves seriously ill.

The promotion of basic rights pertaining to education, property and health, particularly family planning, would enhance the security of women and may reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Mr Chairman,

May the facts, the findings and the spirit of this Conference guide us in fulfilling our noble promise to protect human dignity.

H.E. Mr Claude Bouah-Kamon, Director of Political and Humanitarian Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Côte d'Ivoire

(Original French)

Mr Chairman,

I would like to take this opportunity to renew to the President of the ICRC the most sincere condolences of the Ivorian people on the tragic deaths of ICRC staff members who were killed or wounded in Iraq, the victims of an antiquated barbarity and intolerance.

Mr Chairman,

For over one year Côte d'Ivoire has been confronted with the most serious crisis in its history, a crisis with disastrous consequences.

The country is split in two, over one million people have been displaced, and about 50,000 Ivorians have sought refuge elsewhere in the region; the crisis has exacted a heavy toll in human lives and destroyed property.

In the areas occupied by the new forces, there are discernible signs of a humanitarian disaster.

In the face of this dramatic situation, the community of humanitarians, with the ICRC in the lead, has been especially active, enabling the population to bear up under the crisis unjustly imposed on it, and the country to avert the major disaster lying in wait.

Allow me to take this opportunity to express, on behalf of the President of the Republic, the Ivorian Government and the entire population of Côte d'Ivoire, my country's gratitude for the outstanding humanitarian assistance provided to the victims in the course of protection activities.

Mr Chairman,

"Protecting human dignity" is the theme that brings us together today.

What can be done to enhance the protection of civilians, women and displaced persons in particular, and to evaluate the development of risks relating to disasters and communicable diseases, above all HIV/AIDS? This is the issue facing all political leaders.

A country of legendary solidarity and fraternity, Côte d'Ivoire calls for greater awareness of the issue and asks all nations imbued with the spirit of peace and private and multilateral humanitarian players to redouble their efforts on two fundamental points, namely the prevention of conflicts and the fight against the humanitarian disaster of diseases, especially that modern-day plague, HIV/AIDS.

In terms of preventing armed conflicts, we believe that the time has come to work to prevent and eliminate all factors of crisis by providing training and information on human rights principles and respect for the rules of international humanitarian law, so as to humanize relations between belligerents and protect the vulnerable in times of crisis.

Generally speaking, the health of our world resides in our capacity to pool our intelligence and our resources in order to stop everything that can pose a threat to our survival and to human dignity.

Concerning disease control, Côte d'Ivoire remains deeply preoccupied by the modern pandemics of HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. Regarding HIV/AIDS in particular, Africa needs substantial help to curb the spread of an illness that hampers all development efforts.

Mr Chairman,

In keeping with the pledge it made in 1999, Côte d'Ivoire has prepared two draft laws:

- one on the use and protection of the emblems of the red cross and red crescent;
- the other modifying and supplementing the law on the Penal Code, with a view to punishing all breaches of international humanitarian law.

Both laws are shortly to be adopted by Parliament, leading to the positive development of Ivorian law in this regard.

I would like to conclude by expressing Côte d'Ivoire's full endorsement of the draft Declaration on protecting human dignity before the 28th International Conference.

Mr Pedro Antonio Fanego Sea, Ministry of Foreign Relations, Cuba

(Original Spanish)

Mr Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,

I should like to start by expressing my country's sorrow at the death of Red Cross staff and volunteers in all parts of the world. We share the pain of their families and loved ones, and of their companions in the noble and human mission of providing aid and assistance to the victims of armed conflicts and disasters.

The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement symbolizes human nobility, humanism and solidarity. Its founders would be terrified today to see how the human species is using its creative capacity and its overwhelming resources to kill, maim and destroy, instead of to prevent, cure, alleviate and reconstruct.

Nor do I think that they would approve if the fight against the execrable manifestation of violence that is terrorism culminates in the destruction of entire nations, in the violation of the right of peoples to reign sovereign over their futures and their natural resources, and in countless violations of international humanitarian law.

My country also disapproves of and vehemently denounces the violations of international humanitarian law that occur daily in illegally occupied territories and the hindrance of the free passage of medicines, medical material, indispensable food and clothing as a method of warfare, an act denounced in other fora and prohibited by the Fourth Geneva Convention (Article 23) and Additional Protocol I (Article 54).

For Cuba, preserving human dignity means working for a world in which there are fewer conflicts, fewer violations of international humanitarian law, greater solidarity with the weak and vulnerable and more resources to eradicate the structural causes of international and internal conflicts: underdevelopment, poverty, inequality, discrimination and intolerance.

We proclaim our absolute adherence to the spirit and letter of the instruments of international humanitarian law, but we are opposed to war, no matter what grounds it is waged on. We condemn the impunity of those who kill thousands with sophisticated weapons of extermination and of those who have trampled on human dignity by causing hundreds of people to disappear, thereby blighting the lives of their families and loved ones.

We enthusiastically support the fact that the Agenda for Humanitarian Action to be approved by this Conference discusses the impact of HIV/AIDS and other diseases, namely the deaths of millions of people in Africa and the hateful discrimination and stigmatization that compound the suffering of the sick and their families in all parts of the world.

The international community should endeavour to channel the resources currently devoted to war and the

manufacture of weapons towards placing within the reach of everyone, everywhere, the most advanced medicines and technologies for the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS and other illnesses. We must firmly oppose the use of such medicines and technologies for the most egotistical and inhuman form of enrichment.

Cuba is a fervent participant in the efforts to reduce, at national and universal level, the effects of disasters and to improve preparation, prevention and recovery mechanisms. Those efforts imply, in the first place, greater awareness and responsibility in dealing globally with the environment. The worst disasters striking the planet are man-made, either the direct consequence of war or the outcome of irresponsible treatment of the ecosystem.

The international community must cooperate effectively in order to prevent disasters and provide the victims with support and assistance. It is important to codify international standards and principles on humanitarian assistance in the event of disasters, but it is even more important to have the resources needed for prevention and rehabilitation. And let us not forget the need for development aid. Underdevelopment results in inadequate preparation for disasters, which then hinder and roll back progress towards development.

It would be remiss of me not to express Cuba's gratitude to the Movement and its components for the help it has received each time disaster struck.

In this conflict-ridden, globalized, egotistical and individualized world, the selfless and altruistic commitment of Red Cross and Red Crescent staff and volunteers is a beacon of hope that deserves our admiration and recognition and inspires us to carry on the work of Henry Dunant and his colleagues.

Guaranteeing a world of peace in which human rights are respected and bequeathing to future generations a world in which life is safer, healthier and more fulfilling for all are the best things we can do to help give effect to the theme of this Conference: protecting human dignity.

Dr Gyula K. Szelei, Director-General for International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Hungary

(Original English)

Mr Chairman,

May I start by expressing our sincere gratitude to the International Committee of the Red Cross and to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies for their outstanding work. We highly value their efforts aimed at protecting the fundamental values inherent in all human beings and assisting the victims of armed conflicts and natural or man-made disasters, regardless of their nationality, gender, ethnic origin, religious or political beliefs.

Hungary is fully committed to supporting the wide array of efforts being made by the components of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. In this respect, Mr Chairman, I am proud to announce that Hungary will increase its financial contribution to international humanitarian operations within the framework of international development assistance.

Mr Chairman,

This Conference provides a unique forum in which to discuss a crucial aspect of modern humanitarian endeavour: our responsibility to protect human dignity.

The government of Hungary attaches great importance to full compliance with international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law, which are to be considered as complementary to each other in their implementation.

Allow me to recall that Hungary is a party to almost all the existing instruments of humanitarian law and human rights law. In addition to that, my government will soon seek parliamentary consent for the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

As far as the application of existing humanitarian legal instruments is concerned, we continue to share the views of those who urge us to bridge the widening gap between existing norms and diminishing respect for them. It is our strong belief that all parties to conflicts, including peacekeeping personnel, should observe these rules in international and non-international armed conflicts. In this connection, we would like to encourage wider acceptance of the competence of the International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission established under Article 90 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions.

Mr Chairman,

Impartiality, one of the basic and unique principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, makes it possible to act to preserve the human dignity of all people, but mainly of those in need of assistance and those who are vulnerable.

International terrorism constitutes one of the biggest threats to peace and security. We must therefore spare no effort to combat this phenomenon by fully respecting the provisions of international humanitarian law and human rights law. Hungary is acting accordingly.

I would like to reaffirm our strong commitment to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Hungary hopes that the International Criminal Court will provide a powerful instrument of deterrence against international crimes such as crimes against humanity and war crimes. The International Criminal Court is also a major judicial institute, one of the

essential means of promoting respect for international humanitarian law and human rights law, and thus of enhancing freedom, justice and the rule of law.

We must remember, when speaking about human dignity, that it can be threatened not only by armed conflicts but also by diseases and disasters. Today, very few countries are able to tackle all the consequences of such human catastrophes. In this context, may I express the appreciation of my delegation for the efforts of the international community for more closely coordinated preventive action and response to emergencies and natural disasters.

Mr Chairman,

My delegation is proud to announce that Hungary plans to submit a pledge aimed at elaborating a project to enhance the deliberate disease response capabilities of interested partners. In our view, international cooperation could be promoted by adopting a comprehensive multidisciplinary approach to be carried out in conjunction with several appropriate intergovernmental organizations. The final goal would be to raise the level of preparedness to prevent the outbreak of deliberate diseases.

We share the view that the wide dissemination of humanitarian principles is essential for the effective implementation of international humanitarian law. The government of Hungary strongly supported the establishment of the Hungarian National Advisory Committee on the Implementation of International Humanitarian Law. The Committee performs its functions in close cooperation with national actors in the field as well as with the ICRC and other competent international organizations. One of the results of this fruitful cooperation was the highly successful Second European Meeting of National Commissions and Other Bodies on International Humanitarian Law, held in Budapest by the ICRC regional delegation with the assistance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence.

Mr Chairman,

The government of Hungary aligns itself with the common pledges made by the European Union. Furthermore, my government declares its pledges as follows:

- encouragement of the ratification process of the Second Protocol to The Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict;
- promotion of the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict;
- progress in disseminating the educational project on Exploring Humanitarian Law in cooperation with the National Red Cross Society.

**Ms Marsha Johnson Evans, President and CEO,
American Red Cross**

(Original English)

It is a privilege to speak to you today as the representative of the American Red Cross.

As many have noted, since the last International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in 1999, the world has changed dramatically. We are now faced with complex security challenges that directly affect the way the Movement operates; one could become discouraged very easily.

Recent horrific attacks on the ICRC give us great pause and offer a sobering picture of our new realities. Famine, lack of access to clean water and basic sanitation, and preventable diseases together threaten hundreds of millions of people around the world. "Protecting human dignity", the theme of this Conference, is more important than ever before for the Movement and our partners.

Despite the enormous challenges of these times, the Movement has much unique strength, which can guide us and assure our relevance. I would like to emphasize three characteristics and strengths of the Movement today – principles, strategy and solidarity.

The Fundamental Principles of our Movement define who we are and how we act. Long before it became fashionable to talk about organizational values, this Conference adopted the core principles embodying the Movement's personality. Like many Societies, the American Red Cross has faced many external challenges to these principles in the past four years. It is a testament to our collective strength and our determination that we have repeatedly relied on these principles and reaffirmed them through critical decisions about how we act.

Perhaps most challenging are the principles of impartiality and neutrality. We live in a time in which many people simply do not understand how any organization can remain committed to impartiality and neutrality. There is a dangerous and apparently pervasive sentiment in the world today that "if you are not with us, you must be against us". We believe that the Movement must increase its efforts to emphasize that this sentiment has no place in humanitarian discourse.

Another critical characteristic of the Movement is that it has a strategy. At a time when our actions and beliefs are being questioned by many with less than humanitarian motives, it is essential that we reaffirm our commitment to implementing the Strategy for the Movement. This Strategy, coupled with the decisions of the Council of Delegates, the Federation's Strategy 2010, and the Seville Agreement are a guidebook for making the Movement more effective in working to fulfil its mission. The American Red Cross believes that the thinking underpinning the Strategy for the Movement and the Seville Agreement remains valid despite the many challenges

which have arisen since their adoption. We applaud the decisions taken by the Council of Delegates to review the implementation of these agreements, although it is imperative that we not discard them.

Strengthening the components of the Movement, improving our effectiveness and efficiency through increased cooperation and coherence, and improving our image and relations with governments and external partners all remain fundamental to achieving our humanitarian objectives. Together, through an increased emphasis on implementing the actions detailed in the Strategy while clarifying the grey areas identified through implementation of the Seville Agreement, we can ensure our ability to protect human dignity and improve the lives of vulnerable people around the world.

The Movement has another strength, which benefits greatly from renewed emphasis on our principles and strategy. It is the solidarity our Movement's focused action represents to those who enable us and those we serve – to the world we are one organization. The American Red Cross wishes to reach out to all components of the Movement in solidarity and clearly state our belief in the importance and power of our unity.

At a time in history when so many are focused on the divisions between cultures, the Movement's humanitarian impact will be directly correlated to its solidarity. This unity of purpose offers us tremendous opportunity. We hope the Declaration and Agenda for Humanitarian Action adopted by this Conference will enable us to speak with one powerful voice and focus on ways we can best leverage the power of humanity embodied in our extensive volunteer network. We can have a powerful influence on the course of human events.

Our Movement has achieved many things in the past four years. We should celebrate these successes while we look for ways to protect more vulnerable people. Examples include:

- increasing our impact on disease prevention and alleviation of suffering through global public health partnerships,
- improving the effectiveness of our joint, coordinated responses to natural disasters and complex emergencies,
- making critical progress towards achieving the universality of our Movement,
- strengthening our capacity to represent our Movement and its Fundamental Principles among our own populations and internationally, and
- extending understanding of international humanitarian law.

As we gather today, let me take the opportunity to highlight one of the Movement's institutional mechanisms that remains critical to our principles, strategy and solidarity – the Standing Commission. We would like to thank the current members of the Standing Commission for their work over the past four years to establish unity, coherence and cooperation within the Movement. We would especially like to thank Her

Royal Highness, Princess Margriet of the Netherlands, for her eight years in service to the Movement as the Chair of the Standing Commission. We recognize these have been challenging years and are grateful for the leadership Princess Margriet has provided to the Commission and to us all.

We are humbled by the potential represented by the convergence of humanitarian organizations and government decision-makers assembled here at this Conference. On behalf of the American Red Cross, I ask you please to accept our gratitude for the partnerships we have forged and our commitment to work together to better protect human dignity.

H.E. Mr Gordan Markotic, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Croatia, Geneva

(Original English)

Mr Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,

For the Republic of Croatia the question of missing persons is at present one of the key post-war humanitarian issues. This issue deserves our utmost attention and readiness to act in a manner appropriate to the tragic position of those who need our help in this regard. Already in 1991, in the midst of the aggression, Croatia started to work to determine the fate of missing people and those held in prisons. Two commissions that were established at that time were united and later developed into the Government Office for Imprisoned and Missing People. The Office started by attempting to determine the fate of 18,000 imprisoned and missing people. Years of hard and dedicated work enabled it to lower that number to the present 1,245 persons. Here I would like to mention the valuable cooperation received from the authorities of Serbia and Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Since 1995, 137 mass graves and a large number of individual graves have been discovered and the remains of 3,425 victims exhumed. The remains of 83.7% of those exhumed have been identified and the rest will be tested and cross-checked in the country's three DNA laboratories. We sincerely hope and indeed anticipate that this difficult job will be finished in the near future.

Mr Chairman,

AIDS, the other main theme of this Conference, is the biggest threat to life and prosperity in the developing world, where this year alone 3 million people have died. Croatia is relatively little affected and has registered 386 infected persons. Since the appearance of the disease in the early 1980s, 111 people in Croatia have died of AIDS. This number gives us hope that we can continue to cope with the plague of the new millennium, particularly through preventive measures. Only appropriate education on the disease and how it is transmitted can raise awareness about the illness and at the same time, by eliminating the stigma accompanying AIDS, facilitate the integration of those living with AIDS into normal life.

Mr Chairman,

Let me also address the issue of the protection of civilians and combatants from weapons that can have indiscriminate effects or whose use can lead to abhorrent death or injury. Croatia attaches great importance to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its Protocols as a set of instruments that comprehensively regulate the restrictions on or ban the use of certain weapons. We would like to remind you that Croatia has ratified the amendment to CCW Article 1, which paves the way for the CCW rules to be implemented in internal conflicts as well.

In this context Croatia has fully supported the adoption of the new instrument annexed to the Convention, Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War, despite the fact that we are not completely satisfied with some of its provisions. However, Croatia considers that the adoption of this protocol will greatly help alleviate the danger presented by unexploded ordnance, especially to the civilian population. Let me assure you that Croatia will be among the first countries to ratify this protocol, and in so doing will accelerate its entry into force.

Mr Chairman,

Croatia supported the establishment of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Court as new institutions whose role is to fight the most serious crimes. As a result of the cooperation which exists, Croatia has supplemented its legislation and adopted the Constitutional Law on Cooperation with the ICTY and has established a Government Cooperation Office. The Croatian Parliament contributed to the advancement of cooperation and mutual trust by adopting a declaration expressing Croatia's readiness actively to participate in the prosecution of all war crimes regardless of their national affiliation.

Mr Chairman,

Croatia was also one of the first countries to ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, and thus helped to strengthen the universal rules of law and jurisdiction for the most serious crimes against humanity, war crimes, genocide and crimes of aggression.

The recently established National Committee on International Humanitarian Law is currently organizing a study on the implementation of international humanitarian law in domestic legislation. All relevant ministries will be involved in the preparation of this study, which we expect to complete by the end of next year; this will be also reflected in Croatia's pledges to this Conference.

Finally, I would like to underline the potential role of the International Fact-Finding Commission in armed conflicts. As a country that has recognized the Commission's competence, Croatia fully supports a

future active role for the Commission. My delegation would also like to welcome the ICRC effort to produce the study on customary international humanitarian law. We hope that the study, together with promotion of and respect for international humanitarian law, will ensure enhanced application in non-international armed conflicts. Also, given that we are still far from obtaining universal ratification of international humanitarian law instruments, my delegation considers that customary international humanitarian law with its global applicability can help fill the gaps created by the fact that many States are not yet party to the international treaties in this field.

H.E. Ambassador Eui-yong Chung, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea, Geneva

(Original English)

Mr Chairman,

At the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, we were buoyant with expectations for the new millennium. However, the globe is still plagued by armed conflicts of various types, terrorism, natural and man-made disasters, violations of human rights, hunger and communicable diseases. With the persistence of these problems, the need to further intensify the work of our Movement is even more urgent than before. In this regard, as the workers of the Movement increasingly put their lives on the line every day in their noble efforts to alleviate the suffering of the most vulnerable, it is our responsibility to devise means by which we can protect them.

Mr Chairman,

Allow me briefly to touch upon the activities undertaken by my government in order to meet the pledges we made at the last Conference. First of all, the government of the Republic of Korea acceded to the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its protocols in 2001. We have made meaningful progress in the area of demining, including clearing mines in important transportation corridors between North and South Korea and in minefields around military bases in rear areas, extending the moratorium on the export of anti-personnel landmines and contributing 670,000 USD to the UN Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Clearance and to other UN demining initiatives. Moreover, my government established the National Committee for International Humanitarian Law in 2002 and hosted the 42nd session of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization, which adopted the Seoul Resolution on the Relevance of International Humanitarian Law in Today's Armed Conflicts.

Last year, the government also launched a five-year project to enhance disaster relief management. We have also set the balanced development of our Society as one of our main policy objectives. In this respect, during the last four years my government has carried out enhanced social security policies, including more

widely available medical grants, expanded education and health care opportunities for the most vulnerable and reinforced welfare policies for the elderly.

In addition, the Republic of Korea has faithfully undertaken its duty as a member of the international community. We have pledged over 57 million USD in humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan since the latter half of 2001 and 210 million USD to Iraq since 2002. We have also taken part in disaster recovery programmes and provided medical assistance in 55 different countries.

Mr Chairman,

Let me now turn to the fundamental humanitarian issue of separated families on the Korean Peninsula. In the four years since the last Conference, remarkable progress has been made on this issue. In 2000, the two Koreas agreed to provide opportunities for separated families to meet.

There have since been eight exchanges enabling a total of 8,000 people to meet with their families otherwise divided across the peninsula. The Republic of Korea National Red Cross, together with its counterpart in the North, has played a significant role in managing these events. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my government's sincere appreciation to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies for its work in helping to facilitate these exchanges. In addition, North and South Korea recently agreed to set up, as soon as possible, a permanent meeting point where separated families can come together. This will no doubt promote further exchanges between separated families.

However, more should be done in this area. Reunions of separated family members should be expanded in terms of volume and frequency, and an inter-Korean post office should be established so that family members can freely keep in contact with each other. Such measures will serve our ultimate goal of providing families with opportunities to reunite. The window of opportunity for such work is rapidly closing, given that many members of these separated families are advanced in age. We rely on the continued support and assistance of the international community and the Movement to help expand this kind of activity.

In addition, the two Koreas are expanding their cooperation in a variety of humanitarian areas. In fact, humanitarian cooperation is of fundamental political and strategic importance in that it forms the initial bedrock upon which real engagement and national solidarity can be rebuilt, eventually leading to our peaceful reunification.

In closing, my government welcomes the decision last week by the International Federation's General Assembly to hold the 15th Session of its General Assembly in Seoul in 2005. As part of our firm commitment to the work of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, my government looks forward to working

closely with the International Federation and the National Societies to make this event a success.

The Korean people view the work of the Movement as a natural extension of the founding ideals of our nation. It is believed that Korea was founded 4,300 years ago by a mythical progenitor who charged our nation "to use itself for the benefit of all peoples". I believe that this enduring principle on which our nation was founded corresponds perfectly to the fundamental mission of the Movement. In keeping with its traditional commitment to humanitarian goals, the government of the Republic of Korea will continue to do its utmost to facilitate the work of the Movement.

Mr Novruzali Aslanov, President, Red Crescent Society of Azerbaijan

(Original Russian)

The protection of human dignity is of special importance in a changing world. The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement should be adapted to a constantly changing world. We should spread knowledge of our Fundamental Principles and thereby bring hope to the hearts of people, irrespective of their ethnic, national, social or political origins. We should not only assert the Principles, we should search for new methods, programmes and projects through which we can mobilize the force of humanity and enhance the protection of human dignity. Not only should communities know about our mission and Fundamental Principles, we should also search for ways to influence their behaviour and methods.

In speaking about humanitarian problems and human dignity, we should not be isolated within our Movement. We should be actively involved in other projects and programmes outside the Movement, using television, radio, the Internet and newspapers. I think this will make our work more balanced and harmonized.

In our world, we have very many fora, symposiums and conferences during which the international community expresses its concerns by adopting a declaration and pledges. But if we analyse these events over the last ten years, we see that many of them have remained a dead letter. This is not and should not be a reason for pessimism, because we understand the direction of our activities and we will go forward despite all difficulties and obstacles, and that will be our major mission.

There are too many opportunities in the world to humiliate people. I will identify only two of people being forgotten and double standards being the policy. I speak about refugees in my country. Their rights have been abused over the last ten years. These people live in tents and in railway cars in humiliating conditions. And now a generation of children has been born in these towns/cities. Soon they will become adults and their psychology as refugees will stay with them forever. A couple of days ago during the Council of Delegates, we spoke about intolerance, discrimination, etc. We should recognize that these attitudes are not

only caused by disease and natural calamities. The problems we cannot solve today are the source of problems in the future.

Mr Chairman,

In conclusion, I would like to state that in this century of war, social inequality and ethnic tension, the ideals of the Red Cross and Red Crescent call upon all people to protect human dignity. We have to look at the consequences of armed conflict and then we will realize right away that we have to prevent the same thing from happening in the future. Unlike politicians and the military, we do not have the force to make it happen, but we have a greater power at our disposal: the ideals of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

Our discussions are just a continuation of the work started by Henry Dunant, and all delegates present here today should contribute their efforts to strengthening our humanitarian work for the benefit of the vulnerable people of the world.

H.E. Mr Bishar Shaar, Minister of State for Red Crescent Affairs, Syrian Arab Republic

(Original Arabic)

The theme of this Conference is human dignity, a transparent term which shows how important man is to God. Dignity is not compatible with humiliation and submissiveness. However, in armed conflicts men face not only humiliation by the enemy, but also physical elimination.

How much do we really need to talk about dignity? Aggression and foreign occupation are clear examples of violations of human dignity, of humiliation and attempts to dominate other men. This is the primary foe of dignity. What this Conference should do is ensure that the instruments of international humanitarian law are properly interpreted, for they contain enough provisions to address this situation, which is in contravention of all the precepts of religions and moral values.

Attempts to use the tragic events of 9/11, which we have condemned, to undermine the Arab people and to accuse Islam, a religion of peace and tolerance, of terrorism cannot be tolerated. Human beings are equal everywhere on earth. It is not acceptable that some suffer humiliation in order to preserve the dignity of others. Why should this be?

Mr Chairman,

The attempt of some parties to create a new emblem for the Movement and to promote the adoption of a third protocol additional to the Geneva Conventions is a matter of great concern for us. This is contrary to the identity of a humanitarian movement. It paves the way for an endless number of emblems. The danger is that the Movement may fragment and the trust it enjoys all over the world be lost. This will have grave consequences and erode the protection that the Movement has endeavoured to ensure in all cases. It will place the

guarantors of international humanitarian law in serious situations. This is why my country's delegation expresses serious reservations about the draft resolution before us and the draft protocol and stresses its support for the Arab Group in this respect.

Mr Chairman,

International humanitarian law is the supreme outcome of the efforts deployed by generations to preserve human dignity and fundamental rights. This Conference should ensure that it meets its obligations with regard to the implementation of international legal instruments, particularly the 1949 Geneva Conventions, at all times. The credibility and respect earned by the ICRC, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and millions of workers and volunteers are a sound basis for performing this task. We appreciate the sacrifices made to that end.

Mr Chairman,

Finally, my delegation would like to stress the need to preserve the Movement's unity and not to undermine the coherence of humanitarian law instruments and the mechanisms that for almost a century have provided protection for the vulnerable throughout the world. We would also like to draw the attention of the international community to the causes of armed conflicts, so that those conflicts can be settled on an equitable basis able to ensure the legitimate rights of all, a key element of dignified coexistence and peace.

Mr Chairman,

Here, in the name of the Syrian government, I would like to thank the ICRC, the International Federation and the National Societies for the great services they have rendered to the wounded and the needy, to our brothers in Palestine, particularly by setting up camps for refugees from neighbouring countries, an important and urgent necessity.

H.E. Mr Carlos Antonio Da Rocha Paranhos, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Brazil, Geneva

(Original English)

Mr Chairman,

Let my first words be devoted to expressing the heartfelt condolences of the Brazilian government and our people to the ICRC and the families of those who lost their lives in the October attack against the ICRC office in Baghdad. This despicable act against those whose aim is to alleviate the human suffering caused by war and conflict and who do so with selflessness and impartiality can only merit our strongest and most vehement condemnation.

In a year unfortunately marked by the ravages of conflict we also mourn the death of Sergio Vieira de Mello and of all those who fell with him on 19 August in

Baghdad. The former United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Sergio was a man whose commitment to the humanitarian cause earned him not only a distinguished career within the UN, but also the love and respect of his colleagues and of his native country, Brazil.

Let us pay tribute to those men and women whose sacrifice so deeply shocked us, and draw inspiration from their courage and devotion to the humanitarian cause.

Mr Chairman,

As we know, international humanitarian law encompasses principles that make it both unique and special. Defending human dignity in times of war is based on the conviction that even during armed conflict it is possible to preserve some degree of decency and humanity. Among other international humanitarian law obligations, we wish to point out the illegality of targeting civilian objectives and other protected facilities. These rules must be respected by all those who declare themselves belligerents, regardless of considerations about the legality or the illegality of a particular conflict, or of whether they find themselves in the condition of the aggressor or the aggrieved. In accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, national liberation movements also have to respect international humanitarian law.

Mr Chairman,

On the occasion of the 27th International Conference, in 1999, Brazil undertook to take its international humanitarian law commitments further. Since then, we have taken all internal measures necessary to ratify the Optional Protocol of the Convention of the Rights of the Children on the involvement of children in armed conflicts. The process is now complete and the respective instrument of ratification should be deposited with the United Nations Secretary-General shortly.

As we also pledged during the 27th Conference, I have the pleasure to announce here today the establishment, on 28 November, of the Brazilian National Committee for the Implementation and Dissemination of International Humanitarian Law. This initiative reinforces our commitment to the essential prerogatives of the victims of armed conflicts. We undertake to respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law in all circumstances.

Having established the National Committee, Brazil now pledges to ensure its proper functioning, as well as to promote the full incorporation of international humanitarian law norms into the training programmes and operational manuals of the armed forces.

Mr Chairman,

In the face of present-day challenges, international humanitarian law remains a fundamental body of legislation. Brazil considers that the existing instruments

and conventions of international humanitarian law form an adequate basis for dealing with the most important humanitarian problems. As we all know, the true challenge when it comes to raising humanitarian standards is to ensure that existing agreements are complied with. We therefore support the full implementation of the existing mechanisms established to promote the application of international humanitarian law and reiterate the need for prior authorization by the United Nations for any proposed intervention. Such authorization remains the only legitimate basis for intervention, and we view with reservations attempts to introduce new concepts that could be invoked as justification for unauthorized interventions.

Brazil hopes that the participants of this Conference remain attached to the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law and avoid distorting the objectives of this forum. It is important, in our view, to ensure that the Conference contributes to the objective of respecting and ensuring respect for international humanitarian law, of ensuring human dignity.

The Brazilian government welcomes the emphasis placed by this Conference on the issue of HIV/AIDS. Prevention, care, support and treatment are of paramount importance in dealing with the pandemic, and we must also muster forces to get rid of the stigma linked to the disease and fight all kinds of discrimination. Moreover, we emphasize the imperative necessity of affordable access to medication, particularly bearing in mind the great success of the anti-retroviral drugs that have been allowing people to lead normal and dignified lives.

As for counter-terrorist campaigns, although most of them do not meet the requirements to be formally considered as armed conflicts – a situation in which the full application of existing human rights agreements would be suspended – it is not admissible for such campaigns, legitimate as they may be, to include behaviour which would be considered a war crime if committed during an armed conflict.

The entry into force of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court was a landmark event and constitutes an important deterrent against the practice of heinous acts during armed conflicts. It sends out a clear message that international society will no longer tolerate impunity for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. Brazil is firmly committed to the Rome Statute in its entirety and to its full implementation.

Mr Chairman,

In conclusion, let me once more recall those brave men and women who lost their lives while striving for a better world and seeking to implement the humanitarian ideal. The best way we can honour them is to carry on with the task of ensuring the full implementation of international humanitarian law.

Hon. Christine Amongin Aporu, Minister of State for Disaster Preparedness and Refugees, Office of the Prime Minister, Uganda

(Original English)

Your Excellencies, Honourable Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to deliver the Ugandan Government statement to this forum, which brings together the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and the States party to the Geneva Conventions.

The world today is facing complex and enormous humanitarian challenges which require the concerted efforts of all humanitarian actors if we are to make a difference in the lives of the many people who are suffering as a result of disasters and armed conflicts. The worldwide efforts of the Red Cross and Red Crescent to alleviate human suffering are commendable. The Ugandan government is grateful for the role played by the Uganda Red Cross Society in supplementing government efforts to reduce vulnerability.

In Uganda, the Department of Disaster Preparedness and Refugees, which is run by the Office of the Prime Minister, and the Ministry of Health are the line ministries under which the Uganda Red Cross Society operates. The mission of these ministries is respectively to mitigate and address disaster situations and to provide health care services.

Quite often, the two ministries are overwhelmed by the magnitude and frequency of the need for intervention in situations of human suffering. Situations like the 17-year armed conflict in northern Uganda by the Lord's Resistance Army have led to a humanitarian crisis. Increased rebel attacks on innocent civilians have led to the internal displacement of over 1,300,000 people who are forced to live in crowded camps. Internally displaced persons in camps have scant access to basic necessities, including land for survival, and cannot participate in development programmes. The rebel incursions have hindered proactive planning and development and have caused severe shortages of food, medical supplies and other humanitarian provisions.

In addition, Uganda is host to 220,000 refugees who have settled in various parts of the country. More refugees are being received as a result of the situation in some of the countries neighbouring Uganda. Refugees are in need of support in terms of basic services, food and protection in general.

Natural disasters, for their part, have led to unnecessary loss of life and have watered down our development efforts. Some of the disasters experienced in the recent past in Uganda include floods, landslides, drought, fatal road accidents, Ebola, cholera, fires and earthquakes. Uganda continues to be susceptible to the same disasters.

My country is also still faced with health challenges, especially HIV/AIDS, malaria, preventable diseases like

measles and waterborne diseases, all of which lead to high infant mortality and morbidity rates and thus loss of adult productive manpower.

The Ugandan government is committed to reducing the vulnerability of its citizens to human suffering. The Department of Disaster Preparedness and Refugees continues to coordinate all the humanitarian actors so as to ensure the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the protection of the people affected. It has also developed mechanisms and policies to guide humanitarian interventions. They include:

- the development of annual district emergency preparedness and response plans;
- the establishment of an early warning system;
- the development of a national disaster policy;
- the development of a policy on internally displaced persons.

The principles and values of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement – essentially to prevent and alleviate human suffering and to protect life – are geared towards the same objectives. The work of the Uganda Red Cross Society is a clear reflection of respect for these principles in partnership with the government.

The Uganda Red Cross Society has played a key role in the development of the draft national disaster preparedness and management policy, which is yet to be adopted by parliament. The overall goal of this policy is to ensure that disaster preparedness, prevention, mitigation, response and recovery measures are implemented in a manner that integrates disaster management issues within national development plans and programmes. This will ensure that the people of Uganda are protected against the serious social and economic disruptions that can result from disaster events.

The government of Uganda is already allocating budget support to the Uganda Red Cross Society. It pledges to engage proactively in addressing humanitarian concerns and to maintain its support for the Uganda Red Cross Society so as to enable the latter to perform its auxiliary function.

I would like to conclude by calling on all of us to be increasingly sensitive and to speak out on issues that violate the human dignity of our people. There is a need to address the issues of missing persons and support for their families, the misuse of weapons in armed conflicts, reducing the risk and impact of disasters, and reducing the risk and impact of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases that are now more widespread than ever before.

I call upon my colleagues from other governments to support the Red Cross Movement. The mission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, its impact and the respect it has earned worldwide go a long way in showing that it can be depended on to address the needs of the victims of a range of disasters.

Mr Zalmay Aziz, Head of the United Nations and International Conference Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Afghanistan

(Original English)

Mr Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I take part in this gathering of a Movement with a vision, a Movement with a mission, a Movement with a purpose and a Movement true to its Fundamental Principles.

Let me thank everyone associated with organizing this 28th International Conference. Allow me also humbly to thank those unselfish and most of the time unseen heroes who are working hard to deal with humanitarian challenges and trying to create solutions and opportunities to address these challenges so that human dignity may prosper.

Let me also offer my sympathy and condolences on the loss of the lives of the humanitarian workers who were killed because they were helping others.

Mr Chairman,

During the past quarter of a century Afghanistan and its people have suffered tremendously from disasters of natural origin, like drought, epidemics and earthquakes, and from disasters of human origin such as foreign invasion and occupation, war for freedom, factional fighting, the imposition of the Taliban and al Qaeda and the menace of terrorism.

Terrorists unfortunately have currently decided that relief agencies and aid workers are legitimate targets for their heinous acts.

Terrorism itself has become a direct, constant and long-term threat to peace, stability, human dignity and the most basic human right of all of us, the right to life.

September 11 and the events that have unfolded since then make it clear that the terrorist threat is multifaceted, determined and global in scope. The response of the world community must also be multidimensional, steadfast and comprehensive. This campaign will be long and hard, and should not be measured in weeks and months, but in years, and fought with every available tool on many fronts.

Mr Chairman,

We are seriously concerned about the safety of humanitarian workers and hail United Nations Security Council resolution 1502 (2003) on their protection.

We have to seek ways of ensuring the safety and security of relief organizations and humanitarian personnel through, *inter alia*, greater government involvement, stepped up law enforcement and observance of humanitarian law.

Closing down these organizations and stopping the provision of humanitarian assistance are exactly what the terrorists commit their crimes for. We should not allow them to achieve their objective.

Let me note here that in the course of the past two years Afghanistan has acceded to or ratified all twelve anti-terrorism conventions and protocols.

Mr Chairman,

The need to protect "human dignity in the face of continued human suffering by anti-personnel mines and explosive remnants of war" is perhaps felt nowhere more than in Afghanistan. Some estimates suggest that up to sixteen million mines have been laid in the country. Every hour of the day innocent people fall victim to these silent killers. At around one million, Afghanistan probably has the largest population of disabled people.

Last year we ratified the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on their Destruction. I urge all States not yet party to the Convention to adhere to it.

Afghanistan would like to see our region become a "mine-free zone", and we encourage those of our neighbours that have not yet done so to accede to the Ottawa Convention at the earliest opportunity and to join us in this vision. We also support the extension through 2009 of the Movement Strategy on Landmines adopted by the Council of Delegates.

**Dr Carlos Gruzman, Head of delegation,
Magen David Adom in Israel**

(Original English)

Mr Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,

The relationship between the Magen David Adom (MDA) in Israel and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has undergone a period of intense change and growth since the last International Conference in 1999.

Ties have been created and cooperation improved in diverse spheres of activity as a direct result of the Movement's strategic decision to develop ties with the Magen David Adom. These decisions include, for example, the establishment of an International Federation office in Tel Aviv in 2000, the invitation to representatives of the MDA to participate in Red Cross events around the world, and, most recently, the signing of a cooperation agreement with the ICRC in June 2003. This agreement offers assistance to the MDA in carrying out its humanitarian mission, assistance that has proved its importance in these troubled times in our region by helping the MDA to provide emergency services and other infrastructure to all in need – regardless of race or creed. Such activities serve to emphasize that the MDA is an organization that exemplifies the goals, priorities and world view expressed in the primary objectives of the Movement.

In recent years, the MDA has begun work in a number of key areas of interest to the Movement. It has created, with the support of the American Red Cross, the British Red Cross and the ICRC, a tracing unit. It has also developed programmes to spread knowledge of international humanitarian law, humanitarian values and the principles of the Movement among its employees and volunteers, high school students and the general public.

Last month, the MDA held its first ever disaster management workshop, thanks to the vital contributions of the ICRC, the International Federation, the American Red Cross, the British Red Cross, the Norwegian Red Cross, the German Red Cross and the Palestine Red Crescent Society. This workshop offered experts from Israel and other countries an opportunity to share knowledge on this crucial topic.

The MDA has significant experience in the field of disaster relief. In recent years, the MDA has participated in a large number of international emergency relief operations, including in Ethiopia, Eritrea, India, Congo and Kenya. The MDA's contribution to these operations included sending paramedics, medical equipment and food. The operations were carried out in cooperation with Israeli partners, as well as with the American Red Cross and the Movement.

The Magen David Adom has pledged to continue to further develop its activities in the field of disaster management and to offer its expertise to other National Societies. It will continue to be ready to offer emergency assistance wherever and whenever it is needed.

The Magen David Adom Blood Service is responsible for the national blood programme in Israel. Its activities include organizing blood donor recruitment campaigns, blood drives and the collection of over a quarter of a million blood donations each year.

It is the hope of the MDA that the Movement will continue down the path it has chosen so as to achieve the vital and all-important goal of universality that is at the very heart of the Movement. The MDA is deeply appreciative of the efforts of both the Movement's leadership and like-minded States and National Societies to this end. The Magen David Adom looks forward to the day when it will finally be accepted as a full member of the Movement.

**H.E. Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, Apostolic
Nuncio and Permanent Observer of the Holy
See, Permanent Mission, Geneva**

(Original English)

Mr Chairman,

This 28th International Conference takes place at a moment marked by the rumblings of war and by an explosion of terrorism of unprecedented magnitude. Civilian victims of well reported and of forgotten wars and of their destructive consequences run in the

millions. In fact some States and non-State actors try to exploit the desperation of endemic poverty and of extreme social inequality to promote their private objectives through violent actions.

The world is confronted by a great challenge that raises dramatic questions right now, as we examine the ways and means of strengthening our commitment to defend human dignity during armed conflicts and other emergency situations and to promote respect for humanitarian law.

In the effort to contain and overcome a wave of intolerable and unbearable violence, the temptation emerges to have recourse to methods of fighting that are not always respectful of the legal rules adopted by the international community to ban war as a means of settling disputes and to protect the dignity of the person in every circumstance.

Unfortunately, humanitarian law appears at present to be hamstrung by its weak impact on armed conflicts and its limited relevance at the political negotiating table. Some governments are reticent to accept effective control mechanisms, while public opinion seems to have become accustomed to violations of humanitarian law, as if the painful spectacle of so many victims were leading to resignation instead of prompting a reaction capable of influencing wrong political and military choices.

The Holy See looks at international humanitarian law as an important, invaluable, non-negotiable and still relevant instrument. "Its observance", noted John Paul II in an address to the members of the International Institute of Humanitarian Law on 18 May 1982, "or non-observance is a real test for the ethical foundation and for the very reason for existence of the international community". The Holy See will continue to promote appropriate initiatives of an inter-religious character to defend human dignity during armed conflicts and to increase respect for international humanitarian law, especially through the vast network of Catholic educational institutions.

At this stage, it is not so much a question of strengthening the normative framework, already considerably developed, but of finding an appropriate way to make that framework effectively operational and of encouraging the political will for its global implementation.

One sadly eloquent sign of disregard for humanitarian law is the attacks purposely directed against the humanitarian workers who generously serve in the midst of conflicts, in particular the recent deadly attacks against the International Committee of the Red Cross.

In this troubling context, it becomes imperative to pursue an educational process directed not only at the dissemination of legal instruments, but also at teaching and heightening awareness of the great principles underpinning humanitarian law: the dignity of every human being, solidarity with the victims, the primacy of law over force.

In this regard, the Holy See carried out the pledge it made at the 27th International Conference to enhance the training of Catholic military chaplains in humanitarian law and it will continue to do so. In order to prevent and contain the tendency to privatize the indiscriminate use of force, a more determined effort can be made to address the root causes of the deep dissatisfaction that has exploded into violence, to make them known in the mass communication media, and to remedy them.

The dignity of the human person is at risk in other contemporary situations characterized by forced displacement, catastrophes, infectious diseases, all generally affecting the poorest segments of the population and especially women and children. No stigma must be attached to human suffering. For this reason, the Catholic Church has educational and assistance programmes for persons affected by HIV/AIDS in 92 countries. It is the first partner of the States in this social area, providing a sign of hope and bearing practical witness to the dignity of these millions of patients.

The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement can count on the partnership and support of the Catholic Church. Collaboration with religious institutions and faith communities will make for more effective humanitarian action. Religious motivation, we should not forget, gave a decisive push to the work of Henry Dunant, whose inspiration the present Conference carries on today.

**Mr Kevin Brennan, Deputy Director,
Department of Foreign Affairs, Republic of
South Africa**

(Original English)

Mr Chairman,

My delegation aligns itself with the statement to be made on behalf of the African Group by Algeria, and with that to be made on behalf of the Human Security Network by Switzerland.

Mr Chairman,

Last week former President Nelson Mandela correctly noted that poverty is an affront to the dignity of human beings.

My government's position on promoting respect for human dignity is based on the realization that in Africa extreme poverty is the greatest root cause of human suffering. As long as vast inequalities in wealth exist, there can never be human security within the affected societies or between nations. While vast inequalities exist, so will the impetus exist, simultaneously, for human beings to seek to change that status. When peaceful and democratic means are not productive, people often resort to violent and undemocratic means of achieving this end. This is a root cause of instability in our region and often the spark that ignites violations of human rights and of international humanitarian law.

We have at our disposal a wide range of instruments to protect the human dignity of persons affected by

armed conflict and by other violations of their basic human rights. But the issue remains, how are we to ensure respect for international humanitarian law? Some basic examples: all attacks on humanitarian workers must be prevented, by all the means at our disposal. International humanitarian law must be disseminated and respected as widely as possible, including to and by armed groups.

We must promote the universalization of the international instruments in this field: the Geneva Conventions, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, the Ottawa Convention, and the Convention on Conventional Weapons and its Protocols. My government is committed to promoting respect for the rules of international humanitarian law and willing to cooperate with other governments to facilitate the universal implementation of these treaties; to share its experience with other governments drafting their own national legislation on the implementation of these instruments; and to work towards combating the scourge of small arms and light weapons in our region.

We would like to express our appreciation to the ICRC, which has worked tirelessly with the governments of the SADC (Southern African Development Community) States, to disseminate the rules and build the capacities of our governments to ensure respect for international humanitarian law. We refer here to the training courses in international humanitarian law provided to our defence and police forces; to the three annual SADC seminars on promotion of respect for international humanitarian law, conducted by the ICRC in Pretoria since 2001 under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and to the three annual All-African courses in international humanitarian law for legal academics from across Africa, presented in cooperation with the University of Pretoria. The seminars and courses have clearly created political will and focused the attention of governments on what needs to be done in promoting respect for international humanitarian law, and have provided clear guidelines on the most effective means of achieving this. International humanitarian law courses are now being offered by a number of law schools in the region. Basic courses in international humanitarian law have now also been introduced into the school curriculum. My government will continue to work closely with the ICRC to further these important processes.

As a result of drought exacerbated by enduring extreme poverty and the effects of HIV/AIDS, over 15 million persons in six of our neighbouring States last year faced dire food insecurity. While drought decimated their harvests, the coping mechanisms of the poorest households were rapidly exhausted as families sold off their assets and the means of agricultural production. Family members stricken by AIDS were no longer able to work to support their dependents. Through a rapid and coordinated response by the major international organizations, coordinated by the WFP and generously supported by the donors in

cooperation with the affected governments, life-saving food was delivered to the most vulnerable households. We would like to address a special word of thanks to the WFP and participating organizations, including the International Federation, and especially to the donors, for their rapid humanitarian life-saving response. The South African government will continue to do its share to facilitate the relief effort. Efforts to address the root causes of the food insecurity need to continue.

Our government is establishing a national disaster management framework based on the principles of mitigation, relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction. An early warning system is being developed within the National Disaster Management Centre. The government supports the OCHA Integrated Regional Information Network's (IRIN) sub-regional early warning systems.

In late November the government announced the roll-out over the next five years of a comprehensive plan for the treatment and care of HIV and AIDS sufferers in South Africa. This will include the provision of anti-retroviral treatment for those who need it as well as an intensified prevention campaign and increased advocacy campaigns to eliminate the stigma. The government will work with the South African Red Cross Society in this field and in the field of disaster management. We will also continue to provide emergency assistance within the limits of our means to neighbouring States and in response to appeals from other States affected by disasters.

Mr Chairman,

Conflict situations in Africa, fuelled by extreme poverty, are a major cause of violations of human dignity. The African Union has therefore adopted the New Programme for Africa's Development, NEPAD, to serve as the agreed framework within which coordinated efforts will be made by all African governments to promote democracy, good governance and respect for human rights, the pre-conditions for stability and sustainable socio-economic development. We welcome the ongoing support of the international community for the implementation of NEPAD. The institutions of the African Union, which are presently being established, will also serve to safeguard democracy, stability, security and justice.

Socio-economic development requires stability. The South African government is therefore investing much time and effort in initiatives with regional institutions and governments to resolve conflicts. Efforts are ongoing in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in Burundi and in the Comoros, to mention but three. Our efforts in this regard will continue. Equally important is post-conflict reconciliation, the reintegration of displaced populations and the building of civil institutions. Otherwise, vulnerable groups could once again become internally displaced persons, refugees or economic migrants, having an effect not only on their own and neighbouring countries and societies, but also on the countries and societies of the developed world.

The South African government believes that a multi-lateral approach to these issues is essential and therefore will continue to work with the international community in addressing the problems of insecurity and promoting human dignity.

6. Standing Commission-Election: Proclamation of results

**Prof. René Rhinow, Swiss Red Cross,
Chairman *ex officio***

(Original French)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let us return to the elections for the Standing Commission. We have just received the results of the vote: the following people have been elected to the Standing Commission, having obtained the absolute majority of 156 votes required according to the roll call.

Dr Mohammed M. Al-Hadid, 222 votes
Ms Janet Davidson, 209 votes
Dr Freddy Karup Pedersen, 173 votes
Mr Philippe Cuvillier, 173 votes
Ms Zoy Katevas de Sclabos, 167 votes

There will be no second ballot. Votes were also cast for:

Mr Shimelis Adugna, 161
Ms Bana Maiga Ouandaogo, 137
Mr Z. A. Khan, 80
Mr Rezső Sztuchlik, 54

Ladies and gentlemen, I am pleased to congratulate the new members of the Standing Commission on your behalf.

I congratulate you on your outstanding election. I invite the new members of the Standing Commission to hold their first meeting this evening at 6 p.m. in Room 18. Ladies and gentlemen, this marks the end of the election of the new Standing Commission. Thank you for your support, which enabled us to obtain this result swiftly. The general debate will resume in five minutes.

5. General debate on contemporary humanitarian challenges and protecting human dignity *(continued)*

**Mr John Pesmazoglu, President of the
International Relations Committee, Hellenic
Red Cross**

(Original English)

Mr Chairman,

I am particularly happy to be the first speaker after the elections. Our room may be only partly full but that does not mean that our message of congratulations for good luck and good work can be dispensed with at this moment.

The Hellenic Red Cross wishes to bring to the attention of the Conference its efforts to implement the pledge it made at the 27th International Conference. Our pledge was to protect the red cross emblem in general and in our country.

The Hellenic Red Cross started this campaign among its staff and volunteers, adopting internal regulations on the use of the emblem and logo of the Hellenic Red Cross.

We proposed to the Commission on the Implementation and Dissemination of International Humanitarian Law the creation of a working group on the emblem. This working group is intended to help update the national legislation regarding the protection of the emblem.

The Hellenic Red Cross will continue in the coming years to work towards the dissemination of international humanitarian law with a special focus on young students. This will serve the noble cause expressed in our Conference's theme, "Protecting human dignity". Heartfelt thanks to the organizers of this Conference, who worked so hard to make it successful.

Finally, I express my deep appreciation for the quality of the document entitled "Agenda for Humanitarian Action" and compliment its author, who was deeply inspired by the principle of humanity, one of the cornerstones of our civilization and our organizations.

**H.E. Mr Michel Adam, Ambassador and
Permanent Representative of Belgium, Geneva**

(Original French)

Mr Chairman,

I would like to start by asking you to convey the congratulations of my delegation to the newly elected members of the Standing Commission.

Mr Chairman, Your Royal Highness, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

My delegation associates itself with the statement made at the beginning of the Conference by the delegation of Italy on behalf of the European Union and the acceding and associated countries, describing our points of view on the themes of this Conference.

This 28th Conference is taking place at an important point in the history of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in an international community agitated by dangerous turbulence, as witness the attack against the ICRC's premises in Baghdad on 27 October. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to those who conveyed and continue to convey the Red Cross message, courageously, competently and with dignity, in the most difficult and dangerous of circumstances, and to salute the memory of those who have fallen in the performance of their humanitarian task.

Our country fully shares in the international efforts deployed to promote and protect human dignity. In

this respect, the spheres in which the Red Cross and Red Crescent are active stir both the government and civil society to action, the latter including the Belgian Red Cross, whose President, H.R.H. Princess Astrid, is here today.

In terms of government action, the International Committee of the Red Cross is one of the priority institutions for Belgian development cooperation, which this year has contributed sums in excess of nine million Swiss francs. This financial effort is intended to back protection and assistance activities for people facing danger, in particular in situations of conflict. Many activities have been undertaken to that end, in particular in the conflict areas of Central and Eastern Africa.

Our government has also made substantial contributions to the ICRC emergency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, where we believe that the ICRC's experience, its field presence and the specific nature of its work enable it to take effective action.

In addition, funds from the cooperation budget are allocated to activities carried out by the Belgian Red Cross, often under the auspices of the International Federation and as a non-governmental organization working within the framework of multi-year programmes and emergency operations that receive official subsidies.

Above and beyond this, Belgium also wishes to contribute to enhanced protection for the groups of people who are victims of extreme situations, by promoting the development of humanitarian law. The role of the Interministerial Committee on Humanitarian Law, founded at the instigation of the then President of the Belgian Red Cross, Prince Albert, today His Majesty King Albert II of Belgium, is to ensure that initiatives and studies in this field are coordinated and followed up.

Belgium continues and will continue to work for the universalization and implementation of the Convention on anti-personnel mines. It has renewed its political commitment to do so by including it in the government's declaration to parliament this year. With a view to the Convention's first Review Conference, sustained efforts are required in terms of national programmes to clear mines, destroy stockpiles, prevent the dangers of anti-personnel mines and provide assistance to the victims. The degree to which the humanitarian standard set by this multilateral and legally binding instrument is respected reflects its success and importance. It should be further strengthened and used as an example in other areas of joint endeavour.

During this Conference, Belgium has pledged to support the initiatives taken within the United Nations framework with a view to the adoption of an instrument on the marking, tracing and brokering of small arms.

Lastly, as it and the European Union have said, Belgium is gratified at the adoption of a legally binding instrument on the explosive remnants of war.

The Belgian government has also made a number of pledges at this Conference, both within the framework of the Declaration and in areas relating to the Agenda for Humanitarian Action. Some of these pledges are made jointly with the Belgian Red Cross, illustrating the ties between the two institutions, which nevertheless respect their reciprocal independence.

I mention in particular the pledges to:

- ratify the Second Protocol relating to the Hague Convention of 14 May 1954 on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict;
- develop a training module on international humanitarian law for staff working on the country's foreign relations;
- pursue activities for child soldiers.

On the subject of missing persons, which is covered in the Agenda, we pledge:

- to organize a symposium on the right to information of the families of the missing, as announced by Princess Astrid during the commission meeting;
- to establish the first component of a national information office, namely the military section, to be followed by a civilian section.

On the subject of disasters:

- to focus attention on local emergency aid facilities.

On the subject of AIDS:

- to take account of the fight against discrimination and opprobrium in development work.

These pledges, which concern a wide variety of fields, nevertheless reflect a coherent vision and approach: working together to protect human dignity. That is what brings us together here.

Lt. General (Retd) Jahan Dad Khan, Chairman, Pakistan Red Crescent Society

(Original English)

Mr Chairman,

At the very outset, I would like to say that we derive great strength from the fact that the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has done a commendable job in alleviating human suffering, particularly in the conflicts and calamities that affect us daily.

My first observation concerns the brutal violation of international humanitarian law in Iraq and Afghanistan, where the valuable and innocent lives of so many humanitarian workers have been lost. This loss is very tragic indeed and has rightly been condemned the world over. Part of the question is how to ensure the safety of our Red Cross workers in the days ahead. On the one hand, we have an excellent track record in Sri Lanka and many African countries where our humanitarian workers have rendered commendable services. They also enjoy an enviable image of impartiality in public as well as among the warring

factions. On the other hand, we have had the sad experience of Afghanistan and Iraq. Both these scenarios need a very thorough and careful analysis with a view to drawing conclusions for the future deployment of our workers.

In this respect, some of the points needing special consideration are first, the need for clear realization of the operating conditions, secondly, the importance of careful planning and extensive training, and lastly, the lead role that should be given to the National Red Cross Societies, while outside agencies should play a support role.

My second observation is in the context of violations of international humanitarian law, particularly in reference to the violations of human dignity and human rights. There are instances where certain agencies are involved in acts of terrorism to suppress the voice of human rights and dignity. All these activities are being conducted in the guise of anti-terrorist operations.

People are rounded up and subjected to intolerable torture. In many cases, the bodies of the victims of that torture are handed over to their relatives with the pretext that they died in an encounter with law-enforcement agencies. You can well imagine the agony of the relatives and loved ones.

The violation of those rights and dignity calls for humanitarian action.

Mr Chairman,

Pakistan is a front-line state in the fight against international terrorism and our record in this field is well known. We have also been host to over 3 million refugees since 1979. The economic and social implications for a developing country like Pakistan can well be imagined. However, we will continue meeting our humanitarian obligations in the days ahead.

In conclusion, we can assure this august house of our fullest cooperation in the implementation of international humanitarian law in letter and spirit.

Ms Rachel Brett, Quaker United Nations Office, Friends World Committee for Consultation

(Original English)

The issue of child soldiers is one of the contemporary challenges with a direct relationship to the protection of human dignity.

The Quaker United Nations Office has just completed research jointly with the ILO on why adolescents volunteer for armed forces and armed groups.

What emerge are five major factors: war, poverty, education, employment and the family. All have both "pull" and "push" aspects and they do not operate in isolation from each other. Very few youngsters go looking for a war to fight. Most get involved because the conflict comes to them. However, for adolescents war can also be an opportunity: for employment (formal or informal); for escape from an oppressive family situa-

tion or humiliation at school; for adventure in serving "the cause" or emulating real or fictional military role models. Many boys dream of becoming a hero in battle: relatively few are in a situation which tempts them to try it out in real life. In addition, war often creates or exacerbates the other factors.

Poverty is often cited as the cause of child soldiering. But this is too simplistic. There are many more poor children who do not become child soldiers than who do, even in war zones. What is true is that it is rare for children who are not living in poverty to become child soldiers. The role of poverty is both direct and indirect. Fewer poor children are in school in all situations. By exacerbating family poverty, or causing the death of adult family members, war may cause more children to withdraw from school, either to take over financial responsibility or, especially for girls, to look after younger siblings and free others to work. Lack of education reduces poor children's already limited job prospects. In developed countries, the army may be one of the few employers requiring no educational qualifications; elsewhere it may be one of the few paid jobs of any sort.

School is a dominant influence in children's lives – for good or ill. Lack of education or vocational training restricts choices of employment. For youngsters in neither education nor employment, there is a strong tendency to become involved with armed forces or armed groups where these are prevalent. This may be simply because the youngsters have nothing else to do, or because recruiters see them as being available and thus target them, or because they get involved in violence or crime and joining an armed group becomes a form of protection. Even when education is available, adolescents tend to drop out if it is seen as unlikely to lead to employment or if the educational environment denigrates or humiliates them. If the army or armed groups are perceived as the only "employer", it is not surprising that those who drop out select this alternative, whether by preference or as a measure of last resort. Indeed, for many youngsters, the critical moment of decision arises from the closure of the school, or their own exclusion from it, either because of *force majeure* or as a result of their behaviour. Conversely, schools can themselves be recruiting grounds for the government or armed opposition groups, or serve this function indirectly as part of the ethnic, religious or political dimension of the conflict.

The factor hitherto most underestimated is the family. Whether as "push" or "pull", the family is probably the single most critical influence determining whether or not a child in fact joins armed forces or groups. Where adult family members have been killed or dispersed, children may not only have to fend for themselves, but also take on the responsibilities of heads of households, providing economic and physical protection. Interestingly, this reason for volunteering was often cited by boys but by none of the girls in our study, who spoke more often of the need for self-protection, in particular against rape and sexual violence.

However, many adolescents are running away from an abusive or exploitative domestic situation. There seems to be a very high correlation between domestic exploitation, physical and/or sexual abuse and the decision of girls to volunteer. Such abuse may happen in their own homes, in extended family or non-family domestic situations. This linkage illustrates not only the prevalence of such practices, but also the scarcity of other options for girls who are running away from home. But many boys, too, cite domestic violence as being a factor in their decision. Conversely, the family can be a "pull" factor. Some boys feel pressured into joining because it would reflect badly on their father if they did not; some girls join to assert their equality with brothers who are already involved. It is noticeable how often it is the military family that has military children. This may be because of explicit encouragement by the family, or because the child sees military life as the norm or just because this is an option they consider but others might not.

In conclusion, to counter the problem of child recruitment, it is necessary to address the causes at the level of the key underlying factors identified by our research. These five factors provide a framework for policy and programmatic planning without consideration of which no initiative is likely to have a sustained effect. As the factors are cumulative and mutually reinforcing, any programme to prevent or reduce child recruitment or for demobilization and reintegration which tackles several of them is likely to be significantly more effective than if they are taken separately.

**H.E. Mr Antoine Mindua Kesia-Mbe,
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
of the Democratic Republic of the Congo,
Geneva**

(Original French)

Mr Chairman,

First and foremost, the delegation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo wishes to congratulate the newly elected members of the Standing Commission.

Mr Chairman,

The 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, the first to be held in the third millennium, has adopted a praiseworthy and ambitious theme, protecting human dignity. This theme, which sums up man's entire life, concerns all men and all of man. For the time being, however, it concerns in particular the poorest among us, those being held in prisons, those who are sick with AIDS or any of the diseases that spread death, the victims of natural disasters, in short, all human beings who find themselves in conditions of immense physical or moral suffering.

All these people expect tangible assistance from the society to which they belong. The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement works to attenuate their suffering as best it can. What would happen to

these people if human endeavour had not produced such a mechanism? The war-wounded and shipwrecked would suffer atrociously on the battlefield and in the water. The victims of natural disasters would be left to their unfortunate fate. Prisoners, the sick and the families of the missing would have no one to console them.

It is therefore incumbent on all of us to salute the noble mission carried out by humanitarians throughout the world, especially in regions affected by armed conflict. We must also condemn the attacks perpetrated in various places against Red Cross and Red Crescent members. My country's government, for its part, strongly condemned the killing in Ituri, in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, of Congolese relief workers and an ICRC staff member.

Mr Chairman,

The partnership between the Congolese government and the Red Cross institutions present in the Congo is thriving. The two partners often work together to ease the plight of people in difficulty, for example in 2002 when the Nyirangongo volcano in Goma, in the east, erupted. The victims in the region received substantial aid thanks to the joint efforts of the government, the National Society, the local ICRC and International Federation delegations and the participating National Societies. The partners are involved together in all humanitarian programmes, whether for the demobilization and socio-economic reintegration of child soldiers or to trace missing persons or those separated by war. The latter task will take a long time, given the many people who were displaced on the national territory or sought refuge abroad in the wake of the war in my country.

Mr Chairman,

In order to be as successful as possible in implementing the guidelines and obligations of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, my country is endeavouring to improve its legal framework. In May 2002, the Democratic Republic of the Congo acceded to the Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel landmines. It has set up a national committee against mines and unexploded ordnance. With the end of the war in my country, the government is trying clearly to identify the places where mines have been laid. It will conduct mine-clearing operations and destroy stockpiles of mines. In another legal development, in 2002 the Democratic Republic of the Congo acceded to Protocol II additional to the 1949 Geneva Conventions.

Concerning small arms, firearms remain rife in my country, chiefly in the east and the north. This is not a reassuring situation for the people living in the Congo. My government has pledged rapidly to put a stop to this situation, which is a source of insecurity in the country.

Regarding the impact of HIV/AIDS on Congolese society, my government has promised to strengthen its

programme to combat the disease. It is taking all useful measures to improve access for people living with HIV/AIDS to prevention and quality treatment services. The President of the Republic recently asked the transitional parliament to draw up legislation on the protection of the rights of people living with HIV and of people affected by the pandemic. It is now up to the deputies and senators to give my country the modern legal machinery to do so.

The challenge of protecting human dignity cannot be met without permanent public advocacy. Repetition, it is said, is the best science. This is why a permanent and stepped-up effort must be made to educate the people, to attenuate human suffering.

International humanitarian law, that indispensable aid for spreading knowledge of humanitarian norms, should not be taught only in schools and universities. It should also be taught to all sectors of the population, especially to men-at-arms.

Indeed, we know that insufficient information pushes some of us to commit blindly brutal acts against our fellow men.

I shall conclude by saying that the Latin proverb *homo homini lupus*, man is a wolf for his fellow man, will be disclaimed and truly replaced by *inter arma caritas*, for human dignity is an inalienable right for every human being.

Mr Louis Holié, President, Red Cross Society of Guinea

(Original French)

Mr Chairman,

Regarding the special report presented this morning on the role of the National Societies as auxiliaries to the public authorities, we can say that the documents made available to the National Societies by the International Federation are always very useful. They can help us solve problems that at first glance seem complex, when they are introduced at a high level. I speak in this case of the document entitled "Guidance for National Societies Statutes". Following the broadcast of a radio message, the Red Cross Society of Guinea was confronted with the reaction of public opinion that perceived it to be part of the State apparatus. The communiqué, which was written by a dissident faction of the National Society's national office, asked the government to establish a public welfare committee in the place of the national office. That proposal stemmed simply from the said faction's opposition to the introduction of good governance decided ten months earlier by the National Board. The dissident faction wanted to continue running and managing the Society. I could not, as the President elected by the members of the National Board during the previous Assembly, allow a proposal to take shape that infringed on our National Society's independence and thus compromised its integrity.

The document entitled "Guidance for National Societies Statutes" states: "The President or CEO should not be selected by, for instance, the government. This is only acceptable if the National Society has the right to select the candidate and subsequently recommend him/her to the government and that the government may not appoint a person who was not selected by the National Society".

On the basis of those Guidelines, we explained to the Minister of Public Health, the sponsor of the Red Cross Society of Guinea, that it was incumbent on the 38 local committees of the Society to put in place a new national office. We asked him to keep the government informed. Our message was heard, and we were able to convene a General Assembly at the end of which the 38 local committees underscored the need for and importance of adapting the Red Cross Society of Guinea to existing international rules, in particular with regard to the separation of powers between governance and the executive. A radio communiqué, issued this time by the new national office elected by the General Assembly, cleared up all misunderstandings in public opinion.

Seven months later, the Red Cross Society of Guinea was duly rewarded for all the activities it has conducted since its establishment in 1984 on behalf of both the population of Guinea and refugees. Indeed, the foundation of the President of the Republic, called the Lansana Conté Foundation for Peace, has just taken the following decision:

"We have the honour to inform the Red Cross Society of Guinea that in view of its remarkable participation in global development and for its adherence to international solidarity and respect for cultural diversity, the Lansana Conté Foundation for Peace has selected it to be the recipient of the official testimonial of the *Prix citoyen pour la Paix* 2003".

These are some of the activities: health, social and nutritional assistance for refugees; emergency aid for the victims of the 2000 and 2001 rebel attacks, delivered in spite of the absence of partners in the field; training of community relief workers, school and extra-curricular fellowships, and village midwives; founding of the volunteer blood donor club; creation of alert and first aid groups for people from Côte d'Ivoire – 480 first aiders are mobilized for these activities; measles control campaign, financed by the American Red Cross, which we thank most sincerely, and successfully completed by the Red Cross Society of Guinea at a rate of 99.72 per cent. Lastly, the Red Cross Society of Guinea is a member of the National HIV/AIDS Control Committee and is taking part in the 2003–2006 programme recognized and agreed by the government.

In conclusion, we affirm that the prize attributed to us will stimulate the energies of the members and volunteers of the Red Cross Society of Guinea, so that the ideals and Fundamental Principles of our great international Movement may prevail and services for the most vulnerable be improved.

H.E. Ms Ana María Prieto Abad, Minister Plenipotentiary, Permanent Mission of Colombia, Geneva

(Original Spanish)

Mr Chairman,

I would like to start by joining in the congratulations extended to the new members of the Standing Commission.

Given our vulnerability in the face of the violence generated by illegal organizations in Colombia, it is an honour for us to take part, at the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, in the discussion of a topic of vital importance: protecting human dignity.

We wish to inform the international community of some of the progress we have made in drawing up new norms for and applying international humanitarian law, as part of Colombia's efforts to promote and disseminate the law in difficult circumstances.

The new Penal Code, which entered into force in 2001, introduces a long list of criminal offences concerning conduct that violates international humanitarian law, the aim being to stiffen the penalties for attacks against protected people and objects such as murder, injury, torture and sexual abuse of persons protected by international humanitarian law.

The Code penalizes procedures prohibited by the law, as for example the use of unlawful methods of warfare such as perfidy, acts of terrorism, barbaric acts, inhuman and degrading treatment, biological experiments, acts of racial discrimination, hostage-taking, illegal detention and denial of due process.

The new Military Penal Code marks a major step forward in the process of modernizing the security forces and clearly stipulates that three types of conduct – genocide, forced disappearances and torture – are of the exclusive jurisdiction of the ordinary courts and hence exempted from the military penal system; it also strengthens the rules relating to offences against the civilian population.

The 2002 Single Disciplinary Code applying to civil servants has been amended to include a complete list of offences qualified as serious, including genocide, grave breaches of international humanitarian law, forced disappearance, torture, forced displacement, kidnapping, and unlawful deprivation of liberty.

Colombia ratified the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court via a constitutional amendment in December 2001.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction was ratified by means of the 2000 law.

We will now list the mechanisms for implementing international humanitarian law.

1. The creation in 2001 of the Anti-personnel Mines Observatory, whose aim is to apply and observe the Ottawa Convention by a variety of means: assistance for survivors, prevention and advocacy programmes, humanitarian mine clearance, information management and institutionalization and sustainability of the National Action Plan against mines.
2. Medical missions: the government and the social organizations working in the sector have agreed a strategy for action and a Plan of Action to help protect medical missions, medical workers and medical facilities, and to reduce attacks against protected medical workers and objects.

In agreement with the Red Cross a new emblem was devised to identify the national medical mission.

1. Instruction and training in international humanitarian law is being promoted for health workers, armed groups and the civilian population.
2. Attention is being paid to the medical mission as a whole in its activities and in the development of its social work. The emblem is being massively displayed on the objects protected by international humanitarian law and medical and health workers are being identified.
3. Campaigns are being run using the mass media, written and spoken, national and regional, to heighten awareness of the role of the medical mission, health workers and medical infrastructure, their rights and duties, as a means of dissuading illegal armed groups. Last Wednesday my country held the second national day of respect for the emblem of the medical mission, in which a pledge was signed requiring respect for its humanitarian character.
4. In terms of disaster risk mitigation and assistance, Colombia has adopted a strategy of strengthening the science, technology and education for disaster reduction and assistance, within the framework of the National System for Disaster Prevention and Assistance, and on the basis of the National Plan it has defined a programme line and strategy to establish and consolidate the activities the country should carry out in terms of threats, risks and disasters.

In terms of displaced persons, under the coordination of the Social Solidarity Network, the National System for Comprehensive Assistance for Displaced Persons, which is made up of all the entities carrying out plans, programmes, projects and activities in this field, has been consolidated.

In accordance with the guidelines set out in the 2002–2006 National Development Plan, there will be a National Register of Persons Displaced by Violence; emergency humanitarian aid. The government, through the Social Solidarity Network and on the basis of mechanisms of shared responsibility and complementarity, has decided to assist 100 per cent of the

people who have been forcibly displaced either as individuals, a family or a group.

Regarding the return of displaced families, the guideline aims to create the economic, social and protection conditions allowing 30,000 families that had to leave their land to return to their places of origin. This year, 6,000 families are to return. Between 7 August 2002 and March 2003, 14,779 people, or 3,176 families, returned.

The government is also promoting housing, health, education, psycho-social treatment and socio-economic stabilization policies through local development processes.

In connection with a problem of concern in the country, Colombia pledges to rehabilitate forcibly recruited child combatants.

Our delegation recognizes the important work done in Colombia by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to mitigate the consequences of the internal violence we suffer, and we pay tribute to the Colombian Red Cross and its delegation here today for the worthy initiatives and substantial activities carried out in the country.

Lastly, we would like to inform you about the progress made in protecting the civilian population, as recently indicated by the President of Colombia at the United Nations General Assembly. I quote: "The number of murders has dropped by 22 per cent since 2002. The total of 1,485 kidnappings represents a decrease of 34.7 per cent, the victims of unlawful abductions fell by 49 per cent, massacres and their victims have fallen by 35 per cent and 41 per cent respectively. Other crimes have also dropped off sharply, as can be shown, but the problem remains alarming. No country can accept such circumstances". This is why we hope to continue benefiting from the support of the international community.

**H.E. Mr Samuel Amehou, Ambassador,
Permanent Representative of Benin, Geneva**

(Original French)

Mr Chairman,

The deliberations of the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent are taking place at a time when the world, beset by all manner of conflicts and disasters, needs to enhance the dialogue between human beings both within countries and externally.

The challenges to be met remain daunting, to judge by the violations of international humanitarian law targeting many groups of people who are often innocent victims, and by the spectre of disease and natural disaster from which no one is spared.

This is why my delegation deeply appreciates the fact that the main theme of this Conference concerns

respect for and protection of human dignity. We also appreciate the quality of the documents provided by the ICRC for this session, in particular the draft Agenda for Humanitarian Action.

Mr Chairman,

If we look at the conflicts being waged in our society, it is clear that the tensions between east and west, north and south have given way to non-international conflicts, with insecurity growing both within and beyond national borders. In recent years, the arms industries have expanded considerably and small arms and light weapons have proliferated.

Some national economies, those of the countries producing these "instruments of death", have undoubtedly prospered by these activities. Elsewhere, ruin and poverty have grown worse in the countries or societies that are the scene of clashes and grief. Yet the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, adopted in 1948 in the wake of the Second World War, heralded the advent of a more equitable world of peace, a world in which the people of all nations would work to respect and promote human rights.

Mr Chairman,

Here, at this meeting, we must ask questions about compliance with the international instruments drawn up for that purpose.

In the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, supplemented by the Additional Protocols, the humanitarian aspect and respect for the person and his dignity are clearly mentioned, including "the principle of disinterested aid to be given without discrimination to the victim, to the man who, whether wounded, a prisoner or shipwrecked, is without defences, is no longer an enemy but simply a being who suffers".

We are forced to admit that today field weapons strike without any discrimination whatsoever. Civilians are targeted in the most intimate spheres of their lives.

Mr Chairman,

This is a fitting place to recall the relevant provisions of Article 9 of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, which stipulate:

"The provisions of the present Convention constitute no obstacle to the humanitarian activities which the International Committee of the Red Cross or any other impartial humanitarian organization may, subject to the consent of the Parties to the conflict concerned, undertake for the protection of wounded and sick, medical personnel and chaplains, and for their relief".

My delegation wishes to emphasize the need to protect civilian medical and religious personnel. The civilian population must respect the wounded, sick and shipwrecked, even if they belong to the adverse party. Thus, no act of violence may be perpetrated against them. The civilian population and relief societies such as the

National Red Cross Societies must be authorized, even in areas that have been invaded or occupied, to collect the wounded, the sick and the shipwrecked and to provide them with care, even on their own initiative.

Article 17, paragraph 1 of Additional Protocol I reinforces this point, providing that: "No one shall be harmed, prosecuted, convicted or punished for such humanitarian act".

Mr Chairman,

In recent years Africa has become the scene of perpetual crisis, with the corollary that poverty, misery and illness have worsened.

Through NEPAD, African heads of State and government have focused on efforts to consolidate Africa's capacity to manage all aspects of a conflict, concentrating on the means needed to strengthen existing regional and continental institutions by:

- preventing, managing and settling conflicts;
- seeking, maintaining and enforcing peace;
- fighting the unlawful proliferation of small arms and anti-personnel mines;
- mobilizing enough resources to implement a health strategy.

Mr Chairman,

The government of Benin is aware of the extent of the crises and disasters that spare no country and has long worked with the Red Cross of Benin. The activities carried out by the National Society, usually for underprivileged civilians, the victims of natural disasters, have often aimed to ease and mitigate suffering.

The floods of recent years and several fires in which the Red Cross of Benin was active are proof of this. In spite of the difficulties the Red Cross of Benin is currently encountering in the field, my country would like to see the ICRC and the International Federation provide more active assistance alongside bereft populations that are the victims of all kinds of suffering.

**Ms Ida Ngampolo, President,
Congolese Red Cross**

(Original French)

Mr Chairman,

My delegation wishes to express its deep satisfaction at the work accomplished these past few years by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It appreciates above all the serene and understanding atmosphere that has prevailed throughout the statutory meetings held since 28 November.

This is indeed a far cry from the dissent of 1986, when, for reasons of ethics and universal justice, the African National Societies had to unite with the government delegations from Africa and support their proposal to suspend the government delegation of South Africa, a country which at the time practiced apartheid, flouting

the principle of human dignity. Now, the entire Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement speaks as one and works to meet the challenges set down in different programmes for the decade ending in 2010.

The theme of our 28th International Conference is "Protecting human dignity", mobilizing humanity in order to curb violence and reduce discrimination and vulnerability.

On this theme we could build several programmes that require the mobilization of resources, the skills of the players acting in the field and the solidarity of the Movement's components in bringing together the funds needed to improve the context for action in a climate of positive synergy.

Several earlier speakers underscored the great progress we have made since adopting the Seville Agreement, which defines the role of each of the Movement's components and specifies its humanitarian field of action. My National Society believes that this agreement has brought us closer together. Since 1998, the Congolese Red Cross has been one of the first to put it into practice in the field.

My National Society can now say that it has a relationship of mutual trust with the ICRC and the International Federation.

In that framework, it heads a commission made up of experts from the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Federation. The commission has drawn up draft legislation on the protection of the emblem, thus following up one of the pledges made at the 1999 Conference. The draft legislation has been submitted to the National Assembly, which will, we hope, examine it at its forthcoming session in December.

My delegation believes that no one can set out, in five minutes, all the concerns arising from this judiciously selected topic. I will therefore limit myself to the following proposals, which constitute possibilities for discussion.

Concerning the protection aspect:

- establishment of an institutional framework to fight for human dignity and adherence to the international instruments relating to the protection of women and children;
- spreading knowledge of international humanitarian law by targeting young people and men bearing weapons. From this point of view, we agree with all the delegations that condemned the heinous murder of humanitarian workers, in particular ICRC staff;
- application of the guidelines relating to internally displaced persons, which holds true for countries like ours that have experienced socio-political tension.

We have also focused on what it is termed the assistance aspect:

- multisector assistance for displaced persons, refugees and migrants;

- equitable distribution of national income on the part of States;
 - intensive mobilization to control pandemics.
- In this respect, I praise the efforts of the International Federation which, with the support of the participating National Societies and the donor States, has put together substantial programmes.

I launch an appeal for greater solidarity, for I have observed in recent years that cultural and in particular linguistic diversity is no longer an obstacle to fruitful cooperation among us.

As evidence of this, Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain are all supporting health and development programmes run by our National Society.

To conclude, Mr Chairman, the delegation of my National Society endorses all the resolutions aimed at promoting international *détente* and reducing all forms of discrimination. This is the cost of the absence of confrontation, and this we must bear in mind.

I wish those who have just been elected to the Standing Commission every success. I trust they will pursue the great work done by Princess Margriet and her team.

Ms Marta Ayzvazyan, Representative of the Republic of Armenia, Geneva

(Original English)

Mr Chairman,

First of all, let me join the other speakers in congratulating the newly elected Standing Commission and wishing them all the best in their future work.

Mr Chairman,

The International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent is one of the most important humanitarian fora in the world. It brings together the diverse components of the Movement and formulates our common goals, objectives and actions for the years ahead. The overall theme of this 28th Conference is "Protecting human dignity".

In the philosophy of the United Nations, respect for human dignity is one of the foundations of justice and peace in the world. All human rights and fundamental freedoms derive from the inherent dignity of the human person. According to the Commission on Human Rights, the dignity of the human person is an end rather than one of the rights to be observed as such.

Mr Chairman,

Despite all the internationally and nationally formulated and accepted obligations to protect and safeguard the inherent dignity of the human person, lack of respect for human dignity and human rights is still widespread. The threats are various and becoming

more and more complex and sophisticated; the consequences are always alarming and depressing.

Armed conflicts and internal violence, with their modern complications, continue to cause human loss and suffering, humiliation and grief all around the world. One of the most serious threats to human safety and the security of nations in today's world is terrorism. It does not recognize borders; it is an international problem to which international solutions must be found based on a global political approach. We are convinced that any action undertaken in the name of combating terrorism, including military action, must be conducted strictly within the terms of international humanitarian and human rights law. It is also important to ensure that refugees, asylum seekers and migrants do not become casualties of the war against terror.

One of the saddest legacies of war and internal violence is the number of people who go missing and the torment faced by those they leave behind. In this respect we would like once again to stress the importance of open cooperation between all the parties concerned and call on them to avoid the unacceptable politicization of this subject.

Mr Chairman,

New natural and man-made disasters are more multifaceted and more comprehensive than in the past and they hit the most vulnerable hardest. The stigma and discrimination faced by people living with HIV/AIDS and other diseases is also a direct threat to human dignity. Those who suffer most are often poor and live in areas where conflict, disaster or social marginalization has increased their vulnerability. Poverty and inequality put people at increased risk from diseases and disasters. This makes the issues of sustainable development and disaster preparedness vital.

Finally, there are also disturbing signs that the politicization of humanitarian help is shaking the seven Fundamental Principles of the Movement; this is hardly justifiable and undermines confidence in the Movement.

Mr Chairman,

During the last few decades, Armenia has experienced some of the unfortunate circumstances and devastating events that are on our agenda today. The consequences of terrible earthquakes and conflict, economic crisis and rapid impoverishment have marked the first years of independence, and we know perfectly well the value of humanitarian principles and the cost of their violation.

Armenia believes that protecting human dignity implies taking long-term initiatives. We are also convinced that to uphold the principle of humanity at the global level is our collective responsibility, and that all actions taken by States and other actors, in all circumstances, must be in conformity with the principles of international humanitarian and human rights law.

Taking responsibility for protecting human dignity means that governments, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and civil society in general must be clearly accountable for their actions, or lack of them.

We would like once again to emphasize the importance of this Conference and to express the hope that it will make an essential contribution to strengthening the protection of human dignity in all circumstances and create a sustainable and coordinated framework for the achievement of our goals.

Mr Chairman,

In conclusion, I would like to stress that today our challenge is to ensure that the outcome of this Conference is practical, achievable and a response to the problems that have been identified. I reaffirm the commitment of the government of Armenia to cooperate fully to make our common goals and objectives attainable.

H.E. Ambassador Mary Whelan, Permanent Representative of Ireland, Geneva

(Original English)

Unfortunately my Ambassador could not be here today so I am speaking on her behalf.

First I wish to express the sympathy of the Irish Government to the Movement and to the families of those killed in the heinous attack on the ICRC office in Baghdad last October.

My delegation also wishes to congratulate those elected to the Standing Commission and to wish them success in their important work.

Ireland wishes to associate itself with the statement made by Italy on behalf of the European Union and with that to be made by Switzerland on behalf of the Human Security Network.

The Irish government is strongly committed to the ideals and work of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, which, given the current challenges faced by the international community, are now even more necessary than ever. We would like to thank the Standing Commission for the many thought-provoking documents provided to us for this Conference. The report on international humanitarian law and the challenges of contemporary armed conflicts provides a very useful overview of the current issues in this area. The Irish delegation shares the Movement's view that the main treaties and customary norms of international humanitarian law provide a basic set of principles for the international community, which must be respected fully by all parties to a conflict.

Mr Chairman,

Terrorism is one of the most serious threats to international peace and security and negates humanitarian principles as well as human dignity. My delegation

agrees with the Movement that the overriding legal and moral challenge is to find ways of dealing with terrorism while preserving existing standards of protection under international humanitarian law.

Mr Chairman,

The inauguration of the International Criminal Court is a clear signal of the determination of the international community to bring to justice those who perpetrate genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. The perpetrators of human rights violations must be held to account and their impunity ended. The International Criminal Court will play a vital role in this respect. We strongly share the view of the Movement that the Rome Statute constitutes an effective mechanism for combating impunity.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation believes that we require a new concept of security, centred on human beings, as distinguished from the more traditional approach of State security. This concept is central to the Human Security Network, of which Ireland is a member. As such, Ireland is committed to moving this people-centred approach to the forefront of debate in the international arena. Advancing the human security agenda is essential both because of the imperative to uphold fundamental values such as those enshrined in international humanitarian law and also because it enables us to make a practical and effective contribution to peace and justice throughout the world.

The workshops on children and armed conflict and on small arms, organized in tandem with the Conference by the Human Security Network, have generated ideas which we believe can be taken into account in future work.

Mr Chairman,

My delegation wishes to thank the ICRC for its initiative on biotechnology, weapons and humanity which, we believe, complements the work being carried out within the framework of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and can play an important role in preventing hostile uses of biotechnology.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, Ireland hopes that this Conference will reinvigorate our efforts to enhance the protection of human dignity and will further strengthen the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

Ms Lyudmila Kamenkova, Head of the Legal Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Belarus

(Original English)

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the pleasure to take the floor on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Belarus, the Ministry

of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus and the National Committee for the Implementation of International Humanitarian Law.

The present international humanitarian situation shows us how effective and useful common action by all States can be in ensuring strict and unconditional observance of the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law.

We share the view of previous speakers who stressed that the protection of human dignity is the founding principle not only of international humanitarian law but also of human rights law and refugee law.

Mr Chairman,

The Republic of Belarus is a party to the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols. Belarus has ratified the Second Protocol to The Hague Convention of 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict.

It is my pleasure to underline that my country has achieved positive results in incorporating international humanitarian law into its national legislation.

In 2000, two national laws were adopted: the Law governing the use and protection of the red cross and red crescent emblems, and the Law on the Belarusian Red Cross, which regulates the status of the National Red Cross Society, shares responsibilities between the government of Belarus and the Belarusian Red Cross and stipulates that they shall cooperate in the conduct of National Society activities.

In 2001 Belarus withdrew its reservations to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 on the protection of war victims.

For the last two years Belarus has been revising its penal legislation, which now makes legal provision for the punishment of military offences and other illegal actions that are not compatible with the customs of war.

In 2003 the President of Belarus signed the Law on the amendments of the Criminal Code of Belarus. The amended Criminal Code now reflects the requirements of Article 15 of the Second Protocol to the 1954 Hague Convention.

I would like to stress that my country is one of the first States to have fulfilled its obligation to incorporate the norms set down in the international instruments on the protection of cultural property into its national legislation.

My delegation pledges to incorporate the 1997 Ottawa Convention on landmines into the national legislation and to support the activities of the Belarusian Red Cross.

Mr Chairman,

Let me express the sincere gratitude of the Belarusian delegation to the International Federation of Red

Cross and Red Crescent Societies and to the National Societies of other countries for their support for the implementation of programmes in a number of areas in Belarus, such as humanitarian aid to minimize the impact of the Chernobyl catastrophe.

To sum up, Mr Chairman, I would like to mention that the Belarusian delegation supports all the initiatives of the Movement, including the Declaration and the Agenda for Humanitarian Action, whose aim is to stabilize the humanitarian situation all over the world.

General Salim Layoum, President, Lebanese Red Cross

(Original French)

Mr Chairman,

I would like to start by applauding the efforts made to prepare the deliberations of the International Conference and the documents presented to it, especially in view of the present enormous challenges to humanitarian work. This Conference is the ideal opportunity to exchange views on issues and problems of interest to us as humanitarian workers within the framework of the protection of human dignity.

I take this opportunity to make two fundamental points.

The first concerns the States and societies that have suffered war and crisis, and the assistance provided during the post-conflict period. War and conflict are without doubt a source of real danger for societies and people, in particular civilians. We all know that many forms of material and moral support and aid are offered during wars. But as soon as the war has ended, the aid and assistance cease by virtue of the principle of assistance to the most troubled regions or those in which a conflict is unfolding. I think that this principle should be reconsidered with a view to establishing a period during which urgent and immediate aid continues to be provided to the most underprivileged and support continues to flow, during post-war periods, to humanitarian organizations and bodies or States. The aim is to improve and strengthen the infrastructure for medical and basic services. In fact, suffering persists for a relatively long time after a conflict, especially if there have been collective or forced migrations and forced disappearances, and if basic services are fragile. The consequences of mine operations and the psychological impact of war must also be taken into account.

The second concerns the emblem. We are pleased at the efforts undertaken to solve the problem and we call for those efforts to be pursued with a view to applying the Movement's principle of universality. In addition, we affirm the importance of working under a neutral emblem guaranteeing protection to those whose task is to protect human dignity.

We would nevertheless like to recall that during the deliberations of the Council of Delegates, we made a reservation to the draft third additional protocol

concerning permission to incorporate, as distinctive signs, emblems with a military or political significance in the neutral protective sign proposed. We reiterate that reservation today before the International Conference.

**H.E. Mr Ransford Smith, Ambassador,
Permanent Representative of Jamaica, Geneva**

(Original English)

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation, which includes representatives of the Jamaica Red Cross, offers its congratulations to the newly elected members of the Standing Commission. To the Swiss Government, we offer our appreciation for its kind hospitality in facilitating and hosting this very important Conference.

The 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, which has as its theme "Protecting human dignity", could not be more timely and appropriate, as one of its aims is to review and agree on a new strategy for international humanitarian assistance. The meeting is taking place at a time when our world is experiencing new challenges to international security, with the potential for and increased abuse of basic human rights. And even where there is no open conflict, we remain susceptible to natural and other disasters that threaten our livelihood and the very existence of the human person. In addition to international terrorism, which has emerged as one of the newest challenges facing the globe and to which not even this organization has been immune, HIV/AIDS, as a potential threat to social and international security, has forced the international community to focus on the issue of health.

The work of the ICRC therefore remains as important today as it was at its establishment so many years ago.

The ICRC has reiterated the Fundamental Principles upon which its work is based, that is *humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality*. Its determination not to be influenced by political and other considerations that could prevent it from reaching out to the most vulnerable, at their most desperate moments of need, makes the Red Cross a unique organization whose work must be supported and encouraged. I use this opportunity to pay tribute to all those who have lost their lives in the execution of their work with the organization.

The gathering of such a large number of government officials and National Societies, including my own National Society – the Jamaica Red Cross – at this assembly is a positive indication of the international commitment to supporting the work and future of this valuable organization. Jamaica associates itself with that commitment. We fully support the principles and intentions of international humanitarian law in promoting and protecting civilian populations, and this is reflected in our status as a State party to the Geneva

Conventions, their Additional Protocols and other international legal instruments, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Protocols, including on the involvement of children in armed conflict, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, the Biological Weapons Convention and others.

Mr Chairman,

The Caribbean has remained a relatively peaceful region, in terms of occurrences of armed conflict, but we continue to face other humanitarian emergencies and I wish to remark briefly on just two – the onslaught of HIV/AIDS and the issue of small arms.

Our region records the second highest rate of HIV/AIDS infection in the world. During the opening session of this Conference, we heard firsthand, from an individual living with HIV, about the importance of having access to the life-saving drugs that have allowed him to live with the disease for over fifteen years. But many people in our region are at a distinct disadvantage, as they are unable to access affordable anti-retroviral drugs that are so important to their existence. And so in addition to treatment, we firmly believe that greater efforts should be placed on prevention. In this regard, we recognize the work of the Jamaica Red Cross, which provides invaluable support to the Government in its education campaign to stem the spread of the disease. We are pleased to inform you that recent statistics now show a levelling off of the rate at which HIV/AIDS is spreading, particularly from mother to child. We hope to continue in this positive direction and to achieve even greater success.

Mr Chairman,

As a centrally located zone, the Caribbean continues to grapple with the problem of the illegal entry into our countries of small arms in support of narco-trafficking activities. In Jamaica, the ready availability of illegal guns that support the drug trade has wrought havoc in some inner-city communities, as young people are lured into criminal activities. We feel that one of the most effective ways of combating this scourge is through the introduction of legislation by producers and exporters of small arms, in order to ensure that guns and ammunition are not illegally distributed. We have articulated our position at other international fora and use this opportunity to promote our message of curtailment at the point of production and distribution.

Mr Chairman,

I thank you for this opportunity to share the concerns of my country and to join in solidarity with the International Red Cross in formulating its long-term plan to alleviate the pain and suffering of vulnerable populations all over the world. In this regard we look forward to the adoption of the Agenda for Humanitarian Action and pledge our continued support to the work of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

Mr Omer Osman Mahmoud, Secretary General, Sudanese Red Crescent

(Original Arabic)

Allow me to start by saying that the Sudanese Red Crescent conducts intensive activities to support and protect displaced persons and refugees affected by wars and armed conflicts. It provides services to more than one million displaced persons and refugees in various conflict zones. These groups of conflict victims are the most vulnerable in the community, because they have abandoned their homes and properties and do not have the means of making a living. This is why they are the most susceptible to diseases such as malaria and AIDS.

Our National Society has been able, with the help of God, to achieve good results in the fields of protection and assistance for those victims and the most vulnerable in the community. Assistance is now being provided in the form of clothing, food, drinking water and first aid. The number of beneficiaries is over one million.

The National Society's services are provided by the branches and thousands of young volunteers, men and women. It is worth mentioning that the beneficiaries of these services participate in the effective management of the programmes and projects by which the services are rendered. In the field of humanitarian assistance, we also cooperate with the government, with the Movement's components and with other international organizations.

Our National Society runs a programme to exchange letters between prisoners of war and their families. Every year more than 50,000 family letters are exchanged between the prisoners and their families. This programme is the largest of its kind run by any National Society in Africa. The importance of this activity is that it alleviates the suffering of the families. It also lessens the animosity felt by the belligerents and eases the fighting between them. It is an efficient means of building confidence between the warring parties. This, from our perspective, paves the way for peace.

Sudan is now moving towards a phase of peace. This programme helps us and we have felt that the results are concrete in this field. We also thank the ICRC for its cooperation in this area. We support the interest in the subject of missing persons. This Conference has made this subject an important part of its agenda and of the sessions. We are also aware of the plight of the families of the missing, who are in need of information about those who are unaccounted for. We reaffirm our commitment to make every effort possible to assist missing persons and to cooperate in providing them with information, support and care.

Our National Society has also played a role in the establishment of Sudan's National Commission for international humanitarian law. This Commission is significant in that it is an important mechanism for the implementation of international humanitarian law through dissemination and by bringing national legislation in line with the law.

Cooperation and coordination between the Movement's components are among the Movement's main objectives. The Strategy for the Movement is intended to enable the Movement's components to work together. The Seville Agreement is also important, although it does contain some flaws. What the Agreement says about the lead role of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is in contradiction with their lead role and missions in their countries.

For example, it is not reasonable that other components of the Movement have a lead and sovereign role that goes beyond that of the National Society, which is the leader and has sovereignty in its country. This is something that should be changed.

Finally, we stress that serious violations of humanitarian law in many areas, including Palestine, such as killings, displacement, the destruction of houses, the confiscation of land and violations of human rights, are acts of disregard for human dignity which are in all cases unacceptable.

The International Movement is going through a difficult and complex time that is a real test of its credibility and coherence. This situation is also a challenge for unity and cooperation in the international community. We must move swiftly to protect human dignity before it is too late.

Mr Chris Moraitis, Senior Legal Adviser, Department of Foreign Affairs, Australia

(Original English)

First of all, Mr Chairman, may I express Australia's condolences to the families of all ICRC staff who have lost their lives in the pursuit of the ICRC's ideals around the world, and to pay tribute to all their efforts.

Mr Chairman,

The challenges facing the world today require more than ever strong collaborative efforts by the international community to support those whose lives and livelihoods are at risk due to disaster, conflicts and disease.

Australia is committed to working with the most effective agencies, including the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and National Societies, to promote adherence to international humanitarian law. Australia will work to ensure the protection and physical and psychological dignity of civilians affected by conflict – particularly women and children – and to empower communities to reduce their vulnerability to disasters and health crises.

International humanitarian law continues to evolve in response to the new challenges posed by contemporary conflicts, including internal strife. In this context, the Australian Government congratulates the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement for its work in promoting its initiative on the missing. This emerging component of peace-building focuses on a group of victims – the families of those who have disappeared as a result of conflict – who traditionally have been overlooked in reconciliation processes.

Mr Chairman,

Australia will continue to promote the widest possible adherence to international arms control and non-proliferation treaties. In recognition of the devastation that indiscriminate effects weapons can have on civilian populations, Australian funds have been directed to heavily mine-affected countries in South-East Asia, notably Cambodia, Laos and Viet Nam. We also welcome the adoption of a new international protocol for dealing with explosive remnants of war. The remedial measures agreed will help protect civilians against injuries from unexploded munitions left behind after conflicts end. The Australian Government is also currently finalizing the internal procedures required to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

Australia also welcomes the release of the report by the International Committee of the Red Cross on customary international law. Given the special role of the Movement in the promotion of international humanitarian law, this report will be a valuable and influential source of authority in the field. Accordingly, it will contribute to the Movement's efforts to ensure observance of and respect for international humanitarian law.

Mr Chairman,

As we seek to make the world a better, safer place for all, it is essential for the international community to focus on improving the flow of timely information between relevant agencies and to ensure coherence and coordination in our humanitarian approaches and programmes. This Conference provides an important venue to exchange views and to reach a common understanding on a number of global challenges. But there is much more we can do within and between our organizations to provide more efficient and effective support to those most in need of our help. To meet and overcome the humanitarian challenges of today requires all of us to work to share goals and to adopt coherent and coordinated practices.

In closing, Mr Chairman, Australia's support for the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, and our recognition of the role of the Red Cross Movement in upholding these, have formed the basis of an even closer engagement between Australia, the ICRC and National Societies in recent years. Our commitment to these issues is demonstrated by Australia's current membership of the ICRC Donor Support Group, and the enhanced collaboration between the ICRC and Australia in the Asia-Pacific region to focus even greater attention on protection, conflict prevention and local capacity-building. We look forward to advancing this collaboration, and to further discussions on international humanitarian law and protection issues, when Australia hosts the ICRC Donor Support Group next year.

**Dr Rudolph Seiters, President,
German Red Cross**

(Original English)

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Dear Colleagues and New Friends,

I am honoured to take this opportunity to share with you some observations prompted by the discussions and deliberations of the past three days.

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is holding its 28th International Conference at a time when fundamental humanitarian values are being deliberately violated and the Movement as a whole targeted.

Each and every attack on one component of the Movement constitutes an attack on the whole Movement. The German Red Cross most strongly condemns the attack of 27 October on ICRC headquarters and similar acts. Such acts deliberately target the principle of humanity. The perpetrators of these attacks can have no justification and must be brought to justice. We call on all those responsible for such acts to renounce further violence and to respect and protect the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. In this situation, the Movement has to base its political and operational decisions on the principle of unity and to act accordingly. In particular, I appeal to you to take the opportunity and to reiterate the right of the victims to receive assistance and the obligation of the international community to respect and protect humanitarian operations and personnel.

At the same time, the attacks that took place on 27 October and before, as well as any attack on relief workers, demonstrate how vigorously observance of international law must be promoted. I urge us not only to respect, but also actively to defend international humanitarian law wherever and whenever it is violated. I call on all members of the Conference to support the approach taken by the draft final documents with a view to strengthening international humanitarian law and the fundamental principles incorporated therein. The German Red Cross is convinced that our joint pledge with the German Government on the issue of small arms and light weapons contributes to solving a problem of utmost importance, effectively reducing the vulnerability of civilians and combatants alike.

Today natural and technical disasters as well as complex emergencies create immense vulnerabilities. An international regime providing the legal framework for those receiving and those providing assistance will improve the effectiveness of humanitarian relief. The German Red Cross welcomes the initiative on international disaster response law. It has contributed actively to the preparatory studies and it appreciates the recognition the initiative has received by the international community. We strongly encourage the International Federation

Secretariat to reinforce its efforts in this area, and we are ready to support these efforts in any possible way in order significantly to enhance the protection of relief operations and personnel.

The field of international disaster response is only one area in which National Societies are fulfilling their mandate as voluntary aid societies auxiliary to the public authorities in the humanitarian field. We express our thanks for the study of the implications of that auxiliary role. It is hardly surprising that the results of the study present a multifaceted and in parts vague and still unclear picture. The German Red Cross strongly recommends that the study be taken further. We encourage the Movement's components and governments to include National Societies in the implementation of their mandates and tasks. We encourage our sister National Societies to actively develop this auxiliary status further. The German Red Cross's pledge to develop a supplementary medical service for national and cross-border crisis situations constitutes one such element.

An additional aspect of auxiliary status is the cooperation between National Societies and armed forces, in particular in the field of humanitarian assistance. This aspect raises difficult questions in terms of our Fundamental Principles. It is our mandate and responsibility to respect and protect these principles. It has become evident that National Societies have an essential role to play in this field and are in a specific situation where often very difficult questions have to be answered. The criteria on which their decisions are based need further elaboration.

**Mrs Leda Koursoumba, Law Commissioner,
Republic of Cyprus**

(Original English)

Mr Chairman,

The protection of human dignity is the theme of our Conference. As the President of the ICRC has said, it is a simple objective. Yet it presents us with a staggering challenge.

Cyprus attaches the greatest importance to protecting human dignity by reinforcing the international legal regime, including by further developing and strengthening the norms of international humanitarian law and ensuring respect for them.

One of the main issues dealt with by this Conference, one which is directly linked to the protection of human dignity, is that of missing persons. Ascertaining the fate of each missing person in Cyprus is one of the main priorities of the Government, both at home and in international fora.

We strongly support all efforts aimed at alleviating the suffering of the relatives of missing persons; they have a fundamental right to know the fate and whereabouts of their loved ones.

The European Court of Human Rights has ruled that the failure of the authorities involved to conduct an effective investigation in order to ascertain the whereabouts and fate of missing persons who disappeared in life-threatening circumstances constitutes a continuing violation of the right to life, which is enshrined in Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights; moreover, that such failure to investigate the genuine concerns of the relatives of missing persons can only be categorized as inhuman treatment and therefore contravenes Article 3 of the Convention. I remind you that these articles are equivalent to Articles 6 and 7 of the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The government of Cyprus is fully committed to restoring and respecting the human rights and dignity of missing persons and their families, both at home and globally.

We are heartened by the renewed emphasis being placed on this issue internationally and are certain that the outcome of the international conference organized by the ICRC last February and of this Conference will undoubtedly contribute towards this goal.

Mr Chairman,

Cyprus was one of the first signatories of the Ottawa Convention. As a concrete demonstration of our commitment to the Convention's objectives, the Government has taken the unilateral initiative to clear, in cooperation with the United Nations, all the mines laid by the National Guard in the buffer zone, and has undertaken to destroy its entire stockpile. It is also proceeding to clear mined areas under its control.

At a ceremony held last Wednesday in Nicosia to mark the destruction of the first batch of anti-personnel mines, senior government officials were joined by Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Jody Williams and the President-Designate of the First Review Conference (the Nairobi Summit on a Mine-Free World). The ceremony launched the Review Conference process.

Mr Chairman,

We welcome and commend the active engagement of the Red Cross Movement in the fight against AIDS. Cyprus considers this issue to be one of its top priorities. We are currently drafting a new strategic plan, based on developments, that will include multilevel and inter-sector collaboration.

On 28 November 2003, a campaign run under the auspices of the First Lady of Cyprus was launched by the Youth Section of the Red Cross Society together with other partners to promote public awareness about HIV/AIDS.

The government of Cyprus is determined to preserve an active interest on a national and international level, in order to maximize the efficacy of our action.

Mr Chairman,

The government of Cyprus has fulfilled the pledges it made at the 27th International Conference. Furthermore, I have the honour to make today, at this Conference, a pledge for the ratification of another three international instruments of international humanitarian law.

Furthermore, Cyprus aligns itself with the European Union common pledges and with the joint pledge of the National Societies of the Union's Member and Acceding States, and fully adheres to their content.

Mr Chairman,

Finally, Cyprus would like to pay tribute to the work of the Red Cross Movement. Having ourselves benefited greatly from the Movement's unique mandate and expertise at a time of need, we strongly advocate the importance of protecting and strengthening its role even further. Such work makes a major contribution to the establishment of a more human and respectful world.

Cyprus is fully committed to the respect, promotion and enhancement of human rights law and international humanitarian law and thus places the protection of human dignity at the very top of its agenda.

H.E. Mr Nabil Ramlawi, Permanent Representative of Palestine, Geneva

(Original Arabic)

Mr Chairman,

I would like to refer to the statement made by His Excellency the Ambassador of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, who spoke this morning on behalf of the Arab Group. The delegation of Palestine fully supports that statement.

Mr Chairman,

The International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent brings hope to the victims in all parts of the world, especially the victims of violations of international humanitarian law. Grave and ongoing breaches of the law are being committed to a serious degree in many parts of the world, particularly in the Palestinian territories occupied by the Israeli army, which occupies land and destroys life – all sorts of life, be it human life or trees.

Hopes are triggered because of the appreciation and respect earned by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement among the world's peoples and States thanks to the great humanitarian role it plays in armed conflicts and elsewhere. Sometimes the Movement's delegates are harmed by those who do not care about not respecting the rules of humanitarian law, those who exult in oppressive force, impunity and lack of accountability for the crimes they commit against man and mankind. The violations they commit run counter to the rules of international humanitarian law and the principal human rights.

This is a challenge to human dignity. It is as if the world had gone back to the law of the jungle, to the times when military might prevailed over the rule of law. Occupation and foreign dominance, which are defined as crimes of aggression by international law, have become the rule, and the way to impose justice and democracy in the world. The murderer has become the terrorist. The principles of international law cannot cope with the reality imposed by force. The most dangerous challenges faced by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement are not limited to violations of the Fundamental Principles and the Movement's objectives here or there, as for example in occupied Palestine. This reflects a well-thought-out plan to undermine those principles and objectives, to justify those violations, on the pretext that the rules and principles of justice and equity and the laws to preserve human dignity agreed by the international community in the past are now obsolete and need to be modified.

Thus, those who rely on the use of force do not hesitate to deal with States, communities and peoples today, to criticize the principles of international humanitarian law and the four Geneva Conventions. They call for new laws so as to turn their values and interests into new legal rules they impose on the peoples and States of the world. This is a challenge, the denial of humanitarian law principles and the ongoing suffering of peoples, in particular the Palestinian people whose human and national rights have been flouted every day for years. This requires that the States and the International Movement, including its components such as the National Societies, defend the Movement's Principles and objectives, and honour them without fail in order to meet the present challenges and those to come.

I say this so that the Movement and its components may live up to the aspirations of the peoples of the world, who have placed their trust in them.

Mr Renaud Muselier, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France

(Original French)

Mr Chairman,

My first visit to Geneva was to meet the President of the ICRC, Mr Kellenberger. It was the first time a member of the French Government travelled to Geneva after Jacques Chirac's re-election.

My second visit took place in sad circumstances when I returned to pay tribute to Sergio Vieira de Melho and the international civil servants killed in a terrorist act. At the time I referred to the incident as the 11 September of the United Nations.

My third visit to Geneva takes place today, on the occasion of your Conference. I am fully aware of the importance of this exceptional moment in the life of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It brings together all those who, around one ideal, work

unstintingly in the field every day to provide relief to those whose situation is desperate.

It is a signal honour for me to represent France on this solemn occasion. I bring you my country's support, its encouragement and its feelings of solidarity with the Movement's work throughout the world.

While I fully associate myself with the statement of the European Union, I would nevertheless like to express France's attachment to respect for international humanitarian law, its concern in the face of the attacks against humanitarian workers, and its conviction that it is absolutely necessary to do more to prevent the human consequences of natural disasters.

France cannot accept that civilians should become the primary victims of armed conflicts. In the face of this unacceptable fact, we must start by strengthening the protection of the victims. France anticipates that the entry into force of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court will mark considerable progress in the fight against impunity and the prevention of the most serious crimes.

France is pleased at the agreement recently reached by the Disarmament Conference on the explosive remnants of war and commends the ICRC for what it did to heighten the awareness of the international community about the dangers such devices pose.

The universality of the instruments of protection, whether the Rome Statute or the Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions, must be our objective. France looks forward to the forthcoming publication of the ICRC study on customary international humanitarian law.

In an increasingly complex environment, in the face of never-before-seen kinds of conflict, it has been suggested in some quarters that international humanitarian law be developed. France is eager to participate in reflection on this topic. However, it is convinced that the principles of existing international humanitarian law are relevant and would only consider developing the law in the sense of strengthening and consolidating the rules it contains and their application.

On all these points, we are fully confident that the ICRC will contribute both within countries and externally to the discussions, in which the States must participate.

We can but be satisfied that our Conference has given us the opportunity, through its workshops, to reflect on the painful issues of missing persons and children in armed conflicts.

Lastly, in the face of repeated violations of international humanitarian law, it seems to me that it is especially important to promote enhanced dissemination of the rules: soldiers in all countries must receive better instruction, and the States must be made aware of the role of international humanitarian organizations, which thereby become major players.

Second essential point: the protection and security of humanitarian workers is today a matter of serious concern for France.

The protection of humanitarian workers must be among the States' paramount obligations. This is a primary responsibility in any humanitarian crisis.

It is particularly worrisome to observe that the protective nature of the emblem is being flouted more and more often. We are revolted by the heinous crimes perpetrated against those who came to provide assistance to suffering people.

France solemnly condemns the numerous attacks of which the ICRC has been a victim this year.

I do not forget the members of other humanitarian organizations, such as UNHCR. On behalf of France, I would like to pay a special tribute to the men and women who are performing their humanitarian mission for the sake of vulnerable populations in Iraq and Afghanistan with great courage and exemplary perseverance.

As the Security Council firmly recalled, such crimes cannot go unpunished.

Lastly, I salute the initiative of the International Federation to focus on reducing the vulnerability of people in the face of natural and technological disasters.

There is no such thing as zero risk, but the number of people exposed to the consequences of a disaster can and indeed must be reduced to a minimum.

The means of preventing disasters exist. They must now receive the strong commitment of us all. In Europe, the forest fires that ravaged several Mediterranean countries last summer, last year's floods in Central Europe, the Boumerdes earthquake and the current situation in the south of France, have brought the point cruelly home.

France therefore pledges, before you, specifically to prevent such disasters and to mitigate their consequences.

As put forward by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the principal objective is to reduce the natural and technological risks to which people are exposed. By furnishing preventive information, education and training, by sharing knowledge and experiences, and by enacting appropriate legislation, we think it is possible to mitigate the human and environmental consequences of disasters.

The establishment of risk prevention plans in the most vulnerable sectors is becoming an imperative necessity.

Mr Chairman,

The current international situation requires all of us to make a determined political commitment and to show greater solidarity and generosity towards the most

vulnerable. Along with the ICRC and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, France is convinced this goal can be met.

**Mr Anders Milton, President,
Swedish Red Cross**

(Original English)

Mr Chairman,

In the fight against terrorism we have to take a strong stand based on international law, but we also have to analyse and address the political circumstances that lead to terrorism. This is only the way to succeed and to build the future.

It is an intellectual and humanitarian duty to try to understand the causes of terrorism, but we also have a moral humanitarian obligation to condemn it. Terrorism can never be accepted. We believe that international humanitarian law is adequate to address the challenges of contemporary armed conflicts.

Some ask whether international humanitarian law is also adequate to address the challenges posed by terrorism. The Swedish Red Cross is convinced that, if it is correctly applied, international humanitarian law is a strong tool in the fight against terrorism.

No law is perfect and there is always room for improvement. However, before starting to re-examine existing laws we need to determine whether it is the law that is lacking or the political will to apply it.

The protection of human dignity requires the complementary application of international humanitarian law, human rights and refugee law. The common underlying purpose of international humanitarian and human rights law is to protect the life, health and dignity of human beings. The guiding principle is that individuals have the right to be protected from arbitrary treatment and abuse just because they are human.

This idea has revolutionized international law and had a lasting impact on international relations. We are all born equal in dignity and rights regardless of where on earth we were born and what gender we have.

Humanitarian law and human rights law have a number of overlapping fundamental guarantees, including the prohibition of arbitrary killing and torture, judicial guarantees and respect for one's religion, religious practices and family life.

Humans detained as a result of armed conflict are protected by international humanitarian law and should be treated accordingly. If a person is alleged to have committed an illegal act, that person has a right to be tried by an impartial, independent tribunal and should not be kept in prolonged detention.

The mission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is to prevent and alleviate human suffering. Our task during and after conflicts is to protect and support the most vulnerable, the better to succeed,

especially in cooperation with women's organizations, at addressing humanitarian challenges, at alleviating suffering during and rebuilding society after an armed conflict. Women around the world are in many cases discriminated against. Women's groups have the knowledge and experience of what is needed to lessen violence in society. We need to use that knowledge and cooperate with them. I would also like at this point to thank the ICRC and welcome the study on women and war.

HIV/AIDS is a preventable infectious disease that today is one of the greatest threats to the well-being and future of the global population. It is very important that the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has now tackled the epidemic head on. In the North we have prevention and treatment; in the South we do not. It is our duty, together with other partners, to see to it that all peoples of the world have the right to prevention and treatment.

When addressing prevention we have to look at the underlying causes, the underlying structures that drive the epidemic, regardless of whether in our country this is intravenous drug use, men who have sex with men or heterosexual transmission. We have to remember again that in the case of heterosexual transmission the gender imbalance is one of the major causes of the epidemic.

Another contemporary challenge that increasingly affects women is the negative aspect of migration. Women are increasingly migrating alone, which often puts them in a vulnerable situation. Families are split and traffickers sometimes abuse their vulnerability.

Contemporary migrants may be asylum seekers, refugees or people seeking a better life. When they are not accepted in their country of destination, when they are put in camps or in shanty towns, or when they are forced into prostitution, drug abuse or crime, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has to be there to assist them and to help them improve their situation and their future.

Finally, Mr Chairman, let me take this opportunity to give special thanks to Mrs Christina Magnuson for her work as Chairman of the Working Group on the Emblem, for all the dedicated work that she has done and for the commitment that she has shown to the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in helping us achieve unity, enabling all Societies to participate and allowing us all to help those in need.

**H.E. Mrs Naéla Gabr, Ambassador, Permanent
Representative of Egypt, Geneva**

(Original French)

Mr Chairman,

Our delegation endorses the statement made by the delegation of Algeria on behalf of the Arab Group and wishes to express its appreciation for the theme of the 28th International Conference, "Protecting human dignity". Dignity is that authentic trait that makes man a superior being, and man's protection is the goal of all

the customs and laws drawn up by humanity to guarantee the protection of rights and respect for obligations. The significance of this choice is especially clear in the face of the unprecedented rise, everywhere in the world and in the occupied Palestinian territories in particular, in the number of acts and practices that constitute violations of human dignity and the denial of international humanitarian law. Surely one of the main reasons for the growing seriousness of these violations is the international community's disregard for its obligation to respect and ensure respect for the law. Therein lies the importance of this International Conference, which enables us to work together on the means of guaranteeing the protection of human dignity and on the establishment of practical mechanisms of application.

Mr Chairman,

Our primary responsibility at this Conference is to pinpoint the dangers threatening human dignity and to determine effective means of facing them. In this context, we would like to emphasize the following priorities.

1. Occupation by armed force of territories belonging to another party is one of the main affronts to human dignity. Occupation leads to violations of the fundamental rights and freedoms of the civilian population and its communities and deprives them of the right to communicate with the national authorities. This undermines the very foundation of international humanitarian law and international human rights law.
2. Respect for existing law is the prerequisite for protecting human dignity. To this end, we have to define and promote the application mechanisms and decide what needs to be added, emphasizing in all cases the need to refer to the provisions and customary rules of international humanitarian law, not to modify them and not to oppose them in any case or on any pretext.
3. The total applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, and the need for the international community to reaffirm respect for the Convention, to give effect to the content of the Final Declaration of the Conference of High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, held in December 2001, and to plan regular meetings between the parties. These meetings would make up for the absence of mechanisms to supervise application of the Convention, on the basis of Article 1 of the Convention and in accordance with paragraphs 11 and 17 of the Final Declaration.
4. We reaffirm the need for all States to abide by the principles and provisions of international humanitarian law, which are part of general international law.
5. The need to promote protection and assistance for vulnerable groups, including civilians living under occupation, and protection for those fighting foreign occupation, in keeping with Article 1 of Additional Protocol I.
6. One of the chief means of protecting human dignity from disasters and disease is to intensify international cooperation via supplementary aid initiatives aimed at building the local capacities of developing countries to deal with disasters and disease. We insist on the following priorities: access to medicines at affordable prices, the strengthening of health systems and basic infrastructure for disaster prevention and relief, and an arsenal of legal weapons and international, regional and local procedures for combating disasters and disease. We also reaffirm the importance of closer cooperation between the Movement and specialized international agencies in these areas, in particular WHO, UNAIDS, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Aid and the International Civil Defence Organization.

Mr Chairman,

Egypt is in the regional and international advance guard when it comes to international humanitarian action and the promotion of international humanitarian law. Its role is grounded in the distant past and in its authentic cultural and religious heritage; the result has always been clear positions as expressed in the external policy and international contribution of Egypt and those who govern it. Egypt is deeply involved in the activities of the ICRC as they relate to the study of the compatibility of national legislation and international humanitarian law and other aspects of cooperation with the National Committee on International Humanitarian Law and the other Egyptian agencies concerned, be they governmental or civil society institutions. On the basis of those achievements, prompted by the desire to continue providing support for the efforts made to protect human dignity everywhere in the world, we will do all in our power to contribute to the success of this Conference and to the fulfillment of its goals.

**Mr Jaime Ricardo Fernández Urriola,
Chairman of the Conference**

(Original Spanish)

We shall now turn to the reports on items 7 and 8.

7. Special report: Customary International Humanitarian Law

**Ms Anne Petitpierre, International Committee
of the Red Cross**

(Original English)

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In December 1995, the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent invited the ICRC to prepare a report on the customary rules of international humanitarian law applicable to international and non-international armed conflicts.

The ICRC accepted the invitation and started to work in 1996. Now, after much hard work involving wide consultation with experts from around the world, I am happy to report that the study is being concluded. We have already submitted Volume II, the summary of State practice, for publication by Cambridge University Press. Volume I, on the rules of customary international law with comments on each rule, is going through a last series of consultations with the Steering Committee and the Group of Experts before being finalized. We hope – and I am sure – that this is the last round. As soon as the study is published, the States will be convened at ICRC headquarters where it will be presented to them. At the same time, ministries and National Societies will receive a copy. This has been a collective effort. Some 250 people have contributed in terms of research and advice, and many National Societies have been instrumental in finding and funding these people. We wish to thank them. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all those who have been involved in this unique project. You will find a complete list in the report that has been distributed.

Why was the need felt for this study? While more information is available in the report which has been distributed to all the delegations, let me recall briefly the two main reasons that prompted the need for this study. First, the lack of ratification of some humanitarian law treaties. A number of treaties have not yet obtained universal adherence. Thus it is vital to establish which rules apply when a State that is party to a conflict has not ratified the relevant treaties.

For example, Additional Protocol I does not apply to a conflict between States that have not ratified it. Yet many of its provisions appear to belong to customary international law. This includes the obligation to take precautions in attacks and against the effects of attacks. The same is true for Additional Protocol II, which does not apply to an internal armed conflict taking place in a State that has not ratified the Protocol. Yet many of its provisions are applicable under customary international law, including such important rules as the prohibition of the starvation of civilians as a method of warfare and the prohibition of forced movements of civilians.

The second reason for this study is that there are few substantive rules for non-international armed conflicts. The study has identified rules of customary international law that apply equally in non-international armed conflicts and that go beyond what is provided for in treaty law. In particular, Additional Protocol II contains only a few rules on the conduct of hostilities and lacks basic rules on the principle of distinction.

State practice has filled this gap. It has created rules of customary international law that apply equally to non-international armed conflicts. In particular, the principle of distinction, the prohibition of indiscriminate attacks, the principle of proportionality and the obligation to take precautions in attacks and against the effect of attacks apply in non-international armed conflicts under customary international law.

In the nature of things, differences remain, of course, with respect to occupied territories, combatants and prisoner-of-war status and the State's obligation to implement international humanitarian law. But in the main, the basic rules on the conduct of hostilities and the treatment of civilians and persons *hors de combat* are the same for international and non-international armed conflicts under customary international law.

What conclusion can we draw from this? In addition to the clear legal advances that this study represents, we believe it also has huge significance in terms of the signal it sends to all those engaged in armed conflict. International humanitarian law, whether treaty-based or customary, represents a clear line in the sand in terms of humanity in war. When the law is sidestepped or ignored, that line is crossed and the most vulnerable will suffer. Such suffering is most often caused by those who feel untouched by the law if not above it, or unaccountable for their actions during war.

This study sends a clear message that whenever there is a war, and however it is classified, the protagonists, whether States, the military or armed groups, are accountable for their actions under the law. The study represents a common code of rules applicable to all parties in armed conflicts. It clearly states what rules are universally binding regardless of ratification. It establishes a level playing field as far as the law applicable in armed conflicts is concerned.

We look forward to presenting this breakthrough study to States and National Societies and to engage with them on how it can best be made to resonate among all those the law serves to protect and those responsible for waging war. The ICRC believes that the study greatly strengthens the effort to minimize the human costs of war and we hope that it will encourage everyone gathered here to reaffirm their commitment to respect and ensure respect for the law of armed conflict.

8. Special session on *International Volunteer Day*

**Mr Jaime Ricardo Fernández Urriola,
Chairman of the Conference**

(Original Spanish)

We shall now move on to item 8, the special session on International Volunteer Day.

It is an honour for me to open this special session on International Volunteer Day, held to pay tribute to those who represent the power of humanity and who so often protect human dignity. I hope we will also consider problems relating to voluntary service.

Before continuing, I would like to express the deep sadness all of us in the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement felt on learning of the death, on 4 November, of the Executive Coordinator of the United Nations Volunteers Programme.

Ms Sharon Capeling-Alakija was a marvellous person and deeply committed to promoting and strengthening voluntary service. I have heard that the Secretariat has organized an act of special commemoration, to take place today in New York, and I wish to dedicate this working day to the cause to which Ms Capeling-Alakija devoted body and soul.

I have the honour to introduce Jonathan Roux, who represents the volunteers of the Geneva Red Cross Youth, and some of his colleagues who also represent the volunteers from Geneva.

Mr Jonathan Roux, representative of the Geneva Red Cross Youth

(Original French)

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very honoured to take the floor on the occasion of International Volunteer Day. My name is Jonathan Roux and I am 17 years old. If I stand before you today, it is not because I am better than any other volunteer. I am simply one volunteer from the Geneva Red Cross Youth, one of many Swiss Red Cross volunteers.

International Volunteer Day is a very important day for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, because we, the 97 million volunteers throughout the world, are the very foundation of the Movement. The network we form and our ability to act at the heart of local communities gives the Movement its strength. We all have different cultures, religions and mentalities. To all appearances, we have nothing in common, and yet we share the same values: the seven Fundamental Principles. We all believe in the universality of those Principles and we apply them in our daily lives.

It is not just the purely theoretical Principles that bring us together. We act. Taken individually, our actions are a drop in the ocean. But there are so many of us, in the four corners of the world, that our united action makes the difference.

Allow me to impose on you and present myself as an example. I have been a volunteer with the Geneva Red Cross Youth for one year. I was taught about the Movement's Principles and values by more experienced volunteers, which allows me now in turn to train new volunteers. I took part in a week of international meetings of Red Cross Youth from Central and Eastern Europe. This summer I went to Serbia and Montenegro to carry out, together with the local Red Cross, a holiday camp for institutionalized children. In Geneva, I help non-French-speaking children with their homework, for our city has about 40% foreigners and their integration starts with learning the language. What I have learned and experienced through these activities helps me deal with my day-to-day problems.

You must be wondering what makes one become a volunteer. It is hard for me to describe the feeling that made me take the decision. I think I can say that I

wanted to use my free time constructively, by doing something useful for our society.

However, when I joined the Red Cross I soon learned that I got as much as I gave, if not more. I wanted to give my time and energy and, in the end, I learned so many things and met so many fascinating people that I tell myself it was well worth the small personal investment I made.

For example, the international encounter organized by the Geneva Red Cross Youth allowed me to rub shoulders with young volunteers from Central and Eastern Europe and to exchange experiences with them while launching a campaign against the stigmatization of people living with HIV/AIDS.

The realization that my peers from around the world shared the same ideals made my personal action worthwhile and even gave me a certain pride in belonging to the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

You may also wonder why I chose the Red Cross and not another organization. I do not want to hold the organizations up to competing lights, but I can say this: in a world in which young people are often discriminated against because of their age, the Red Cross and Red Crescent trust us and give us the chance to show what we can do by entrusting us with responsibilities.

We are Red Cross volunteers because we believe in the Movement's humanity. We believe in its impartiality. We believe in its neutrality. We believe in its independence. We believe in its voluntary service. We believe in its unity. We believe in its universality.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Mr Chairman,

I ask you to applaud not me, but the astounding work of all Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers.

Mr Jaime Ricardo Fernández Urriola, Chairman of the Conference

(Original Spanish)

At this point the volunteers who have worked here in the past few days will enter the room. Let us give them a warm round of applause.

(Applause)

Thank you. On behalf of all those present I would like to thank Jonathan and all his fellow volunteers for their support during the Conference.

Mr Juan Manuel Suárez del Toro Rivero, President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

(Original Spanish)

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would also like to thank the representative from the Geneva Red Cross Youth who spoke before me. Some

time ago now, I, like him, was a youth volunteer, with the Spanish Red Cross. It is therefore a great honour for me to be here now, representing in some way the interests and aspirations of millions of Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers around the world.

Let me share some of the things that I learned over my years of involvement as a volunteer with the Red Cross/Red Crescent. I learned to respect individuals and to care for the well-being of others. I learned not only the value of tolerance but also to celebrate diversity. I learned to listen to others, to value their opinions, and to work with them towards a common goal. In short, I think I can say that I learned to be a better person through volunteering.

Above all, I learned that every person, regardless of their situation or circumstances, has something to offer to humanity. Every individual has the capacity for caring and for working in solidarity to alleviate human suffering and contribute to human dignity.

We all know that the tasks of protecting human dignity and achieving noble goals such as eradicating poverty and hunger, intolerance and discrimination, and other threats to human dignity would be impossible to perform without the energy and dedication of volunteers.

But, as I said in my opening statement to this Conference, those tasks go beyond merely protecting human dignity. We need to actively promote human dignity. I can think of no better way to do so than through volunteering. Volunteering plays a vital transforming role in society.

The videos we have seen show volunteers from vulnerable communities offering care and support and inspiring others through their dedication. This reconfirms that vulnerable people are never just "victims" – they have so much to offer in our efforts to promote human dignity. We should look for socially-inclusive means of allowing and encouraging their involvement and participation in reaching that goal. Volunteering can be one of them.

By fostering a sense of cohesion and solidarity within society, volunteering builds social capital, because it converts individual action into collective action directed towards a social end. It allows for social mobilization and organization within the community. It also offers a means for people to demonstrate their worth and to reaffirm that they have an important place in society. It can build a sense of self-worth, and stimulate true feelings of pride in their contribution to creating a better world. These points highlight something that is not often acknowledged about volunteering: it is a key function in strengthening civil society.

The International Federation has worked hard to fulfil the pledge it made at the 1999 International Conference to promote voluntary service and improve our mechanisms for supporting volunteers within the Red Cross/Red Crescent network.

We have also worked in close partnership with the United Nations Volunteers programme and the Inter-Parliamentary Union to follow up on the International Year of Volunteers in 2001.

I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the outstanding efforts of Sharon Capeling-Alakija, the former Executive Coordinator of the United Nations Volunteers programme, who recently passed away. I knew Sharon personally, and admired her energy and commitment to volunteerism. She was a good friend to the Red Cross and Red Crescent, and she will be missed, but her vision will continue to guide the continued relationship between the International Federation and UNV.

One outcome of the International Year of Volunteers was United Nations General Assembly Resolution 56/38, which outlined a number of ways in which governments could support volunteering. I would like to commend governments that have taken action to improve their support to volunteering, and encourage you all to do more.

But I would like to ask the governments represented here today to continue to work with the Red Cross/Red Crescent and volunteer organizations everywhere to create a more conducive environment for volunteerism. In particular, we need to ensure that legislation promotes and safeguards volunteers, rather than impedes and discourages voluntary service. We especially need to ensure that volunteers engaged in humanitarian activities are afforded the respect, dignity and protection they deserve.

Today, International Volunteer Day, we can begin with a simple, if only symbolic, gesture towards that objective: to value, acknowledge and celebrate the work of volunteering, and to that end honour them through our applause.

I would like to ask ALL delegates here to convert this gesture into reality when we return to our homes, to transmit to the volunteers that work in our countries, not only that we have applauded their efforts here today, but that we recognize and value the work that they do every day.

And to the millions of volunteers that every day put our humanitarian principles and values into action, I give my sincerest thanks. Without every single one of you, the dream of human dignity for all would be impossible.

Ms Deborah Verzuu, Representative of the United Nations Volunteers Programme, Geneva office

(Original English)

Mr Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,

Today is International Volunteer Day. It is indeed a great honour to address the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent on this day. The

willingness and ability of individuals to contribute their knowledge, skills and energy for the good of their communities is crucial for society at large, and the subject of my remarks today.

It is with some degree of sadness that I address this assembly, following the passing away of Sharon Capeling-Alakija, Executive Coordinator of the United Nations Volunteers programme. Sharon was a strong advocate of volunteerism all her life, and a remarkable human being. As a leader she was inspiring, charismatic and a visionary. As a person, she radiated warmth, compassion and boundless energy. She will be sorely missed by all of us.

Mr Chairman,

The volunteering agenda was moved forward significantly as a result of the International Year of Volunteers in 2001. As mentioned by the President of the International Federation, Resolution 56/38 of the United Nations General Assembly contains recommendations on ways in which governments and the UN system can support volunteering. Moreover, Resolution 57/106 on the follow-up to the International Year of Volunteers made an explicit link between volunteering and reporting on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration.

In this regard I would like to draw your attention to one Millennium Development Goal that is of particular relevance to this Conference. I refer to the one relating to HIV/AIDS.

UN volunteers, like Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers, are working hard to support government efforts to halt and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS. For example, the Government of Zambia is working closely with our volunteers to develop sustainable and replicable models of community-oriented prevention, care and support systems for HIV/AIDS affected people and to ensure that home-based care becomes a sustainable and viable option for individuals and communities. This is just one of the many examples of government and civil society cooperation that is making a difference in the lives of vulnerable people.

However, the relationship and cooperation between civil society and government does not happen spontaneously. It needs an appropriate environment to grow. Action taken in other policy areas can, unwittingly, create conditions that make it difficult for communities to build their own volunteer strength. For volunteering to flourish it needs an enabling legislative, fiscal and administrative framework. There must be a will to eliminate obstacles.

This was recognized by parliamentarians at the 168th session of the Inter-Parliamentary Council, in Havana in 2001, which adopted a resolution urging parliaments around the world to establish legislative frameworks supportive of voluntary action.

With that as the background, I am pleased to tell you that the United Nations Volunteers Programme, along

with the International Federation and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, are undertaking a study on the current status of volunteer legislation in a select group of countries. One of the outcomes of this study will be the identification of the basic principles for creating an enabling volunteer environment through the establishment of a legislative framework. The plan is to present this report to parliamentarians at the 110th Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, to be held in April 2004.

During and just after the International Year of Volunteers, laws were adopted in a number of countries aimed at promoting volunteering. In other countries new laws are currently under active consideration. I would like to congratulate those who have taken action. More can be accomplished, and I would like to call on governments, perhaps most usefully with the support of members of their parliaments, businesses and organizations involving volunteers, such as the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, to undertake a systematic examination of the current state of the volunteer environment in their country.

I call on governments to include in that examination all aspects of law and regulation which might have an influence on the development and growth of volunteerism, including tax legislation, labour laws, competition rules, liability, legal protection for volunteers and laws encouraging training.

There is a great deal being done in this field today. Together, here with our partners, I call on governments to join in the effort and share our determination to build a volunteer-friendly environment, in every country around the world.

5. General debate on contemporary humanitarian challenges and protecting human dignity *(continued)*

Mr Jaime Ricardo Fernández Urriola,
Chairman of the Conference

(Original Spanish)

We shall now return to item 5, on which we have new speakers.

H.E. Ambassador Türkekul Kurttekin,
Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission
of Turkey, Geneva

(Original English)

Mr Chairman,

Let me first commend and congratulate the Standing Commission for having chosen a very pertinent and important theme for the 28th International Conference, since in today's anxious and even nervous world, a very solemn value, human dignity, has become more vulnerable to multifaceted threats. It is therefore very timely for the international community clearly to express its determination to protect and uphold human dignity. The Declaration and the Agenda for

Humanitarian Action to be adopted at the end of our deliberations will constitute an important contribution towards achieving this goal.

The basic pillar in our efforts to uphold and protect human dignity is existing international humanitarian law. Compliance with international humanitarian law constitutes an absolute prerequisite. The shortcomings we have seen at global level in this respect must be urgently rectified.

Mr Chairman,

The threats to human dignity are no doubt not confined to the four topics we address in the Agenda for Humanitarian Action. Those topics are nevertheless in the forefront. I will briefly elaborate on them.

In view of the proliferation of conflicts victimizing increasing numbers of human beings, more effective ways and means should be sought of preventing and resolving conflicts at the same time as efforts are redoubled to protect the victims.

The question of missing persons constitutes a very important humanitarian problem with particularly devastating effects on the families concerned. No effort should be spared to resolve such problems wherever they may exist in accordance with humanitarian principles and free of political considerations. One such issue exists in Cyprus, where the missing include 500 innocent Turkish-Cypriot civilians who went missing between 1963 and 1974. We urge both sides in Cyprus to cooperate with the United Nations and ICRC support mechanism, the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus, in order to resolve this tragic issue.

The widespread proliferation of weapons and disregard for rules concerning their use cause human suffering and pose a threat to the application of international humanitarian law. One dimension is the human suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines. The Ottawa Convention lays the groundwork for cooperation. Turkey, concurrently with Greece, has deposited its instrument of accession to the Convention. We hope that the number of States parties will further increase both regionally and globally so that the Convention achieves universality.

Minimizing the impact of natural disasters is yet another challenge. The United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction constitutes a framework for efforts to meet this challenge. General Assembly resolution 57/150, Strengthening the Effectiveness and Coordination of International Urban Search and Rescue Assistance, submitted by Turkey and unanimously adopted, underlines the importance of international and regional cooperation in these efforts. In this context, the Joint Hellenic Turkish Standby Disaster Response Unit established in 2002 in a memorandum of understanding signed between OCHA, Turkey and Greece constitutes an encouraging example.

While communicable diseases such as tuberculosis and malaria have not yet been fully eradicated, we are faced

with HIV/AIDS, which has devastating effects on human health and poses a serious threat to human dignity. This situation requires a united stand by the international community to avoid stigmatization of and discrimination against victims of this disease.

Mr Chairman,

Many references have been made to the scourge of terrorism. Let me say a few words on this. Terrorism is not a threat confined to the place where it strikes. No matter where in the world they occur, acts of terror target the values and ideals we share. Terrorist attacks against United Nations agencies and humanitarian workers, which can in no way be condoned, should leave no doubt about this reality. I would like to underline once again that not only must terrorism be condemned, it must be fought more seriously, with greater determination and in an effective collective fight. There should be no question that this fight must be conducted in line with international humanitarian law.

Mr Chairman,

Our deliberations have shown the magnitude of the multifaceted challenges, which are not confined to those we address in the Agenda, faced by the international community in these difficult times. The important question, which requires a clear answer, is whether we can meet these challenges. My delegation's conviction is that the answer is yes.

We will succeed in meeting these challenges by building on the collective conscience of humanity and by making use of our collective wisdom.

**H.E. Mr Mohamed-Saleh Dembri,
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of
Algeria, Geneva, speaking on behalf of the
African Group**

(Original French)

Mr Chairman,

Our 28th International Conference is being held in a particularly troubled context characterized by attacks against humanitarian law that have become almost systematic over the years. The exacerbation of new forms of violence with transnational ramifications, whose causes and symptoms the international community has apparently subjected to a no more than superficial examination, without looking for the underlying reasons, is an additional challenge for the humanitarian movement.

It is in this light that we must consider the step taken by African leaders in October 2001 in Abuja, Nigeria; acting in solidarity, they agreed to take the fate of the continent into their hands by launching the "New Partnership for Africa's Development", or NEPAD.

This highly responsible step aims to consolidate Africa's capacity to manage all aspects of conflict through partnership and by reinforcing regional and continental institutions. It covers the following four key areas:

- prevention, management and settlement of conflict;
- peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace enforcement;
- post-conflict reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction;
- combating the unlawful proliferation of small arms and landmines that hinder work on vast swaths of agricultural land in Africa and cause numerous civilian victims, in particular among the most vulnerable, women and children.

Mr Chairman,

There is no need to remind you that in today's globalized world, abject poverty has become a tangible reality, whereas a few short decades ago the term was almost unknown. Poverty has progressed with the advance of what are often unfettered market economy policies that are an offence to human conscience and dignity. It might be useful to recall that 34 of the 49 least developed countries are in Africa and that the United Nations Development Programme, UNDP, is pessimistic about the possibility of cutting poverty in half, a Millennium Development Goal whose implementation the international community has fixed for 2015.

In this respect, the African Group commends the initiative of the World Health Organization to implement a strategy to treat three million people with HIV/AIDS by 2005, the 3 x 5 Initiative.

Faced with sweeping global changes, citizens are contesting the way in which the world is governed in no uncertain and at times violent terms. Their protests are the work of movements, some of them rational, others radical, that want to make themselves heard by any means. The gap between the rich and powerful, on the one hand, and the weak and poor, on the other, is growing wider every day, reducing human development to relative insignificance, as UNDP, ILO, UNCTAD and civil society alterglobalist circles have pointed out with great perspicacity.

Mr Chairman,

International humanitarian law, whether treaty-based or customary, is the object of unremitting attack in the four corners of the world. Belligerents from all parts once seemed reluctant to transgress it. Today, they appear relieved of all constraints and deliberately and openly flout the law. The universal peace man has patiently sought to construct over the years is being swept aside by the savagery of men. Unfortunately, civilians, who in the past were largely protected and spared from attack, are today unacceptably exposed, in a way that runs counter to all aspects of international humanitarian law.

Mr Chairman,

The African Group is aware of the problems terrorism poses for the humanitarian movement and its components. It condemns terrorism, but considers that it must be fought with respect for the rule of law and the norms on which it is based.

It calls for a global and concerted response to this scourge.

Mr Chairman,

So long as human dignity is not a tangible reality for the majority of humans, our world remains threatened by all manner of perils. It is up to those who bear responsibility for international peace and security to enable the majority of people to accede to the dividends of progress and development.

Mr Yong-Hoon Rheem, Director of the International Relations Department, Republic of Korea

(Original English)

Mr Chairman,

We live in a world of events and happenings that are pleasant or unpleasant, happy or sad, small or large. From the mass media and other means of communication we learn about endless humanitarian tragedies, about the humanitarian consequences of disasters and conflicts around the world and about the humanitarian solutions they require. Unless we meet these humanitarian challenges properly, at the right time and in the right place, these calamities will harm our way of life and cause human suffering.

Protecting human dignity appears easily achieved if we respect one another and empathize with other people's circumstances. However, factors beyond our control may intervene and aggravate those circumstances, making the people concerned vulnerable with no proper protection for their human dignity.

As the years go by, people are slowly losing confidence in the prospect of a better future owing to the deteriorating humanitarian situation. Even though they are strong of will and have every intention of doing everything they can to build a better future mentally and physically, the prevailing circumstances and many complex factors, including political considerations, may not allow them to make their dreams come true.

There are many people around the world living on the borderline of qualifying for humanitarian assistance. The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement should have more concrete programmes and tools enabling them to cope with their difficulties, whatever they are, for the sake of humanitarianism and regardless of political considerations.

In this sense, there may be a need for the Red Cross and Red Crescent and the government authorities to accept more specific rules and regulations. We should do more to reduce and ultimately abolish violence, racial discrimination and vulnerability.

As you know, Mr Chairman, most plans and projects should be implemented by the actors themselves. However, in some cases a joint approach, undertaken in the same spirit and in the same manner, is needed to

meet humanitarian challenges and protect human dignity. The Republic of Korea National Red Cross would like to promise that all activities to protect human dignity will be carried out in close cooperation with and the full support of the components of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Accordingly, it will seek more tangible means of solving the humanitarian challenges that are beyond the control of the people concerned.

**H.E. Mr Ali Mohamed Osman Yassin,
Minister of Justice, Chairman of the National
Commission for international humanitarian
law, Sudan**

(Original English)

In the name of God, the most compassionate and the most merciful.

Mr Chairman, Mr President of the ICRC, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This important Conference is convened at an opportune moment for civilized humanity, whose dignity and pride are threatened. Our conviction is that the quest for human dignity will never be fulfilled unless all members of the international community pledge strictly to observe international humanitarian law.

Despite its signal achievements and successes, international humanitarian law still faces serious challenges. Some examples are the daily suffering of the Palestinian people and the deaths of innocent Palestinians in the occupied territories, the atrocities committed in civil wars in different parts of Africa, and the recent dismaying and deplorable attacks on humanitarian workers. These are but a few examples of suffering in the world.

These challenges require immediate action on the part of the international community.

Mr Chairman,

It is well known that Sudan has experienced civil war and natural crises. However, my government's genuine desire for peace has been met after the recent breakthrough in peace talks held under the auspices of the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD) with the SPLA/SPLM. We are also hopeful and optimistic that by the end of this year the parties to the long conflict will reach a final and just settlement for peace that will eventually enhance ongoing efforts to implement international humanitarian law at national, regional and international level.

As you may be aware, during the last two years Sudan has cooperated extensively with United Nations agencies and other national and international humanitarian NGOs with a view to securing free and unimpeded access for relief and food delivery to the needy population in all war-affected zones in the Sudan. This cooperation will continue, especially now that Sudan is on the brink of a new era, and fresh, tangible progress

will be made in the ongoing peace talks. Humanitarian action will be further enhanced and sustained.

Mr Chairman,

In response to the recommendation made by the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on the Protection of War Victims and subsequently endorsed by the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in 1995, Sudan this year established the National Commission for international humanitarian law, which will serve as the national mechanism for the supervision and implementation of international humanitarian law in accordance with Sudan's 1998 Constitution, other Sudanese statutes and the international humanitarian conventions to which Sudan is party. I would like to convey my thanks to the ICRC for its generous and continued support to the Sudanese National Commission and for its help in setting up an academic network to disseminate and teach international humanitarian law in military and police academies and in law faculties in all Sudanese universities.

In further evidence of our ongoing commitment, it is worth mentioning that since October 2003 Sudan has ratified and acceded to many international conventions, inter alia:

- the 1997 Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-personnel Mines;
- the 1948 Genocide Convention;
- the 1972 Biological (Bacteriological) and Toxin Weapons Convention.

By acceding to the Biological (Bacteriological) and Toxin Weapons Convention of 1972, my government reaffirmed its commitment to eliminate all weapons of mass destruction. We will continue to work tirelessly to ratify and accede to all other international conventions that we consider necessary for the direct implementation of international humanitarian law.

Mr Chairman,

The Red Cross and Red Crescent are doing their noble best to perform their humanitarian tasks. The Sudanese Red Crescent Society is one of the most active humanitarian organizations in Africa. As a member of the Sudanese National Commission for international humanitarian law, it is working with other governmental and non-governmental institutions to champion the humanitarian cause. The Sudanese Red Crescent has provided protection and assistance to the victims of armed conflict and support to the poorest, those who are affected by natural disasters and calamities. It is discharging its mandate in full cooperation with the members of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and with other humanitarian organizations. This close cooperation should assure you that humanitarian work will be carried out jointly by the official government and civil society.

Mr Chairman,

In our view, human dignity cannot be promoted and protected unless we eradicate both poverty and the

epidemic diseases threatening the very existence of the human race, such as AIDS, malaria and other infectious diseases. Too much focus has been put on the plight of HIV/AIDS victims; we must not lose sight of the gravity of other fatal infectious and epidemic diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, leprosy and river blindness, which are rampant in most of sub-Saharan Africa and Asia.

**Mr Jaime Ricardo Fernández Urriola,
Chairman of the Conference**

(Original Spanish)

I will now ask the Vice-Chairman of the Conference, Ambassador Biké of Gabon, to take the chair and continue the debate.

H.E. Ms Yolande Biké, Vice-Chairman of the Conference

(Original French)

Good evening. I have the pleasure to give the floor without further delay to Mr Khan, representing the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society.

**Maj. General Zahirul Amin Khan, Chairman,
Bangladesh Red Crescent Society**

(Original English)

Madam Chair,

First, I wish to echo all my colleagues who have extended their deepest sympathy to the families of those who give their lives for the cause of the Movement.

Next, I would like to congratulate those who won the election held this morning and to concede defeat. I also want to reiterate that I remain committed to the Movement and to its continued progress. It is indeed heartening to note that the world at large and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in particular attach special importance to uniting missing families, preventing human rights violations and ensuring that international humanitarian law is respected.

When it comes to violations of international humanitarian law and human rights, we are not doing enough to protect the dignity of the children who form a major part of the population. I believe that this aspect of human rights and the protection of human dignity is not adequately attended to. We are also aware that children seek protection in social support networks, but these are being undermined by new political and economic situations.

Conflict and violent social change have deeply affected the social welfare network between families and the community. Unbridled attacks on civilians and rural communities have provoked mass exodus and displacements of populations who flee in search of elusive sanctuary within and outside their national borders. Of these millions, it is estimated that 80 per cent are women and children. Sadly, in this environment children are being enrolled as soldiers by insurgents and at

times by the government as well. Some are conscripted, others are press-ganged or kidnapped and still others are forced to join armed groups to defend their families. In some countries the government can legally conscript children who are under-age, but even where the minimum age is 18 the law is not necessarily a safeguard.

As a result, violations are widespread, with partial immunity in countries where conflicts persist, economic and social conditions are deteriorating and educational opportunities are more limited or at times even non-existent. In such circumstances, increasingly younger children tend to be recruited. In countries where large numbers of children do not have access to school the proportion of soldiers who are under-age is thought to be 40 to 50 per cent. In some societies military life may be the most attractive option and a military rank glorified. While children of both sexes might start out in indirect support functions, it does not take long before they are placed in the heart of battle.

It is there that inexperience and lack of training leaves them particularly exposed to all sorts of violations. The youngest children rarely appreciate the perils they face. Their involvement in acts of extreme violence incites them to provoke suffering and gives them the need to commit more and more acts of violence.

When arrested, they are treated brutally by their adversaries, almost to the same degree as adults. There are stories of how children, in their exuberance, even leap into minefields to help open safe passages for their comrades. Children like these are sometimes even employed as scavengers to clear the minefields.

I therefore suggest that governments should be more concerned to ensure that such acts cannot be committed and to take definite action. I would suggest that governments pay close attention to how young children are recruited; they must in particular denounce the practice of forced recruitment of children.

Secondly, governments should ensure that children are registered at birth and proper records kept, so that children reach the age of 18 before they are recruited into the armed forces.

Thirdly, governments should frame legal remedies and sufficiently strong constitutions to tackle abuses. I recommend that governments always be willing to monitor such violations and should not allow anybody to perpetrate them with impunity.

**Dr Abdel Baset Turki,
Minister of Human Rights, Iraq**

(Original Arabic)

In the Name of God,

We would like to congratulate those who have been elected to the Standing Commission. We would also like to thank the members of the outgoing Standing Commission for the efforts they have made. They will not be forgotten.

Madam Chair,

At the end of the Cold War, in the last century, hopes ran high that we had reached a turning point and that peace would prevail in the world. But the political reality has been fraught with international and local conflicts, sweeping away hope and making it necessary, albeit late in the day, to promote the principles of international humanitarian law and their implementation in order to guarantee human dignity. That necessity is clearly perceived not only by the people suffering from oppression and violence but also by those who want a world of greater peace and greater security so that all humans may live in dignity.

Madam Chair,

I would like above all to apologize to those who are concerned by AIDS treatments and by the mitigation of the health and social effects of that disease, and to those interested in mobilization in the face of natural disasters. My country, as you know, has gone through three wars in the past three decades, and they have left in their wake an enormous number of victims, missing people, refugees and people without the means of living a decent life. My country has known violence and the dictatorship of a political regime that entirely deprived its people of freedom, dignity and security, a regime that left us mass graves, millions of forms for reporting on citizens, tens of thousands of missing persons and a catastrophic economic situation.

Madam Chair,

Our people hoped that the change of regime and the events of last April would bring a glimmer of hope for the construction of the future and would mark the beginning of the end of this tragedy, which has already outstripped even what Chekov or Gabriel Garcia Marquez might have imagined.

When the Governing Council set up Iraq's first ever Ministry of Human Rights, it wanted the philosophy underpinning the Ministry's goals and procedures to result from a balance between the development and administration of Iraqi civil society institutions and those in power in Iraq, in order to guarantee the rights of Iraqi citizens and to prevent the mechanisms of dictatorship from continuing to operate and being reconstituted. This cannot be done without eliminating the heritage left by the previous regime in terms of violations of rights and human dignity, disappearances and displacements, and without redefining and reconstructing civil society institutions on democratic foundations guaranteeing human dignity, human rights and a remedy for any new violations thereof.

Madam Chair,

I would like to give you and this assembly some details about the task we face. The Ministry's first project – to trace missing persons – aims to solve the problem of persons unaccounted for as a result of the wars or of planned political disappearances. Although the Ministry, which was recently created, does not yet have accurate statistics on the number of missing persons, initial estimates are of

hundreds of thousands. The Ministry has therefore hastened, in spite of its extremely limited means, to distribute throughout the State special forms to collect data on missing persons. It is nevertheless aware that the inquiry into the fate of a missing person does not stop with the collection of information and must be extended to discovering what happened. This requires efforts, material means and major services that it is beyond the Ministry's current possibilities to provide. The Ministry has therefore adopted a two-pronged approach to its work to shed light on the fate of missing persons. The first is to identify the victims in the mass graves, which implies protecting the graves and acquiring technical and medical know-how in respect of chemical experiments. The second concerns the archiving and filing of the individual surveillance dossiers established by the previous regime. At present, several million files are in the hands of NGOs. It is for this purpose, to process those files, that the Ministry plans to create a technically advanced document and archives centre, especially since the documents could be a reliable source for the repression of abuse. As for the fate of the people who went missing during the Iran-Iraq war, attempts are being made, together with our brothers from Iran, to ascertain the fate of citizens of both countries.

If we manage to do all this, the next stage will of necessity require the strengthening of democracy and the guarantee of human rights, which must be the social goals of all civil society institutions (within and outside the Governing Council).

Madam Chair,

Some people may object that these projects are too ambitious or that they are a reaction to a period marked by the reign of the irrational. However, we affirm that the humanitarian situation in Iraq obliges us to adopt these positions. This is our vision of the treatment and rehabilitation of society and the State in Iraq. We are nevertheless perfectly aware of the many difficulties awaiting us, first and foremost the situation of our finances and the needs in terms of support, funds and technical experience.

I will conclude with this message so that you can share with us the responsibility and the reality of the humanitarian tasks faced by a people that has suffered so much: human dignity in Iraq, now and in the future, cannot be guaranteed if we do not seize this opportunity to establish a free democratic and absolutely sovereign system controlled by a civil society whose institutions are aware of the importance of defending the society and of ensuring that no one violates its rights.

H.E. Mr Nugroho Wisnumurti, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Indonesia, Geneva

(Original English)

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The central theme of this Conference, namely "Protecting human dignity", is an appeal to defend

human dignity and protect the safety and security of all individuals, especially in the situations which accompany armed conflict and terrorism. Indeed, this is an important goal of international humanitarian law. This theme is also propitious in that the Conference is taking place at a time when the global community is faced with many new issues and problems that have engendered, or may engender, serious challenges in the context of international humanitarian law. Today, in the face of rapid technological advances in the latest methods of warfare and of a simultaneous expansion of non-traditional armed conflicts, defending human dignity should indeed be at the core of any discussion involving international humanitarian law.

In the face of a constantly changing international context and of unabated and serious humanitarian challenges, this Conference provides us with a timely opportunity to renew our collective determination to uphold the principles and values of humanity. Among the various old and new challenges undermining human dignity, the scourge of terrorism has become one of the most serious threats to international peace and security today. Such heinous criminal activities totally disregard humanitarian values and are an affront to human dignity. As such, the fight against terrorism is becoming part of a new "war" in the context of international humanitarian law.

Madam Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen,

My delegation commends the ICRC for its apt study on women and war. It is an undeniable fact that war inflicts not only physical harm but also deep suffering on innocent victims, particularly women and children. Indonesia is a State party to the Geneva Conventions, and the protection of women and children in conflict situations is therefore of primary concern to the Government of the Republic.

My delegation would also like to use this opportunity to pay tribute to all sectors of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in particular those people working in the field, for their invaluable contribution to the humanitarian cause, in many cases under very trying conditions and at considerable personal risk.

All governments and parties concerned should make the necessary efforts to ensure both the safety of humanitarian workers and their absolute ability to function in strict compliance with the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality. At the same time, all humanitarian work and functions should adhere fully to the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity of any given State, and of non-interference in the State's domestic affairs. Needless to say, politicized humanitarian workers jeopardize the humanitarian objectives of their operation.

The Indonesian Government, for its part, continues progressively to disseminate international humanitarian law to members of the armed and police forces and to civilians, in close collaboration with the National Red Cross Society, the International Committee of the

Red Cross and other relevant national and international partners.

We are heartened to note that our National Red Cross Society has played a long-standing humanitarian role in our sprawling archipelago. Indeed, our National Society has been an integral and important member of the Indonesian Interministerial Committee on International Humanitarian Law, which is in charge of coordinating and formulating policies for the dissemination, implementation and application of international humanitarian law.

To conclude, Madam Chair, the contemporary environment has presented us with many obstacles and has not been without setbacks. I nevertheless tend to share the optimism of other speakers to the effect that this situation is not insurmountable. My delegation is fully confident that our complete and renewed commitment to protect human dignity will bear fruit if we are determined to work together in a genuine partnership and in full compliance with the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality.

**Mr Paek Yong Ho, Executive Vice-Chairman,
Red Cross Society of the Democratic People's
Republic of Korea**

(Original English)

Madam Chairperson,

First of all, I would like to express our deep appreciation for the tremendous and excellent work done by the outgoing Standing Commission and congratulate the newly elected Standing Commission members.

Since all the points on the agenda have been touched on in one way or another by the previous speakers, I would like to limit myself to two points.

The first point: partnership and cooperation with the government.

In overcoming the new challenges we all face in the new century, close partnership with governments and external humanitarian actors is of great importance for the success of our work. While the protection of human dignity is our common denominator, each party has its own specific responsibilities and priorities.

In keeping with the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and in line with the Strategy for the Movement, the Red Cross Society of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has defined disaster preparedness and response as one of its core activities and developed its cooperation and coordination with the Government in that respect.

We have set up a Disaster Management Working Group with the participation not only of the National Society, but also government institutions such as the Ministry for Protection of the Environment and the National Disaster Rehabilitation Committee. The Working Group enhances the opportunities for

coordination and joint action in the field of disaster preparedness and response in time of peace.

It is fairly indisputable that no National Society can fulfil its mission to protect human dignity without the full support and cooperation of the government. But this does not mean that we, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, should sacrifice the Fundamental Principles, in particular those of independence and neutrality.

My second point concerns Red Cross cooperation between the North and the South of Korea.

The important progress that has been made since the last International Conference can be seen in the cooperation of the Red Cross Societies in the North and in the South. Since the publication of the historic North-South declaration in June 2000, radical changes have taken place in relations between the North and the South.

Within this context, Red Cross cooperation was developed to solve long-standing humanitarian issues. I will not go into detail, since this information is contained in our annual report and was also previously mentioned in this hall.

On this occasion, I would like to say that we are doing everything possible to develop Red Cross cooperation between the North and South of Korea, and that this will eventually contribute to the independent and peaceful reunification of the country.

H.E. Mr Peter Maurer, Ambassador, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Switzerland

(Original English)

Madam Chair,

I am honoured to speak today on behalf of the member countries of the Human Security Network, namely Austria, Canada, Chile, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Mali, Norway, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Thailand and Switzerland, as well as South Africa as an observer.

The Human Security Network aims to promote human security issues in various international fora, contributing thereby to the preparation of new norms and principles and to the implementation of existing standards relevant to human security. By putting the security of people and communities at the centre of policy shaping and by mobilizing political will through its unique and interregional perspective, the members of the Human Security Network are committed to strengthening human security approaches, both freedom from fear and freedom from want, in order to enhance the safety, dignity and well being of people worldwide.

The overall theme of the Conference, "Protecting human dignity", indicates that many objectives of the Conference overlap with the objectives of human security. Strengthening respect for international

humanitarian law and international human rights law is a key human security objective. Many issues discussed at this Conference are on the agenda both of the Human Security Network and humanitarian actors, in particular the protection of civilians affected by armed conflict, children in armed conflict, gender and conflict, the safety and security of humanitarian personnel, the problem of small arms proliferation, the global elimination of anti-personnel mines, the struggle against HIV/AIDS and the mitigation of the impact of natural disasters.

The Human Security Network has therefore engaged in an intensive dialogue with the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in order to identify synergies and complementarities in its ongoing activities. Ministers, State Secretaries and Special Envoys of the Network have met with representatives of the ICRC, the International Federation and OCHA to discuss issues related to human security and humanitarian action.

The Human Security Network members have agreed to cooperate on their initiatives and the national pledges they make during the Conference and to support each other wherever possible. They take this opportunity to collectively reaffirm their commitment to international humanitarian law and its full implementation, and also to stress the importance of opposing attempts to dilute the standards and principles of international humanitarian law.

The effective protection of civilians in armed conflict remains one of the primary concerns of the Movement, as well as of the international community. In relation to this, the Human Security Network welcomes the speed with which the 1998 Rome Statute has entered into force, establishing the International Criminal Court in 2002. The Network hopes that the Court will help bring an end to impunity.

The issue of people who are unaccounted for as a result of armed conflict or internal violence is a harsh reality and highly distressing for the families concerned. The Network acknowledges the right of families to know the fate of disappeared family members.

The Human Security Network expresses its deep concern about the increasing number of attacks on humanitarian personnel working in conflict and post-conflict situations and stresses the importance of furthering the implementation of humanitarian principles by all parties to conflicts, governments as well as armed non-State actors.

Natural disasters cause enormous damage throughout the world and have a devastating impact on human security. This is of great concern to the Network. Integrated risk reduction strategies are required that involve all actors, including governments, international institutions and civil society.

The Network also recognizes that HIV/AIDS poses a major threat to human security and requires the full

attention of the international community. Concerted efforts are urgently needed at the local, national, regional and international levels to prevent this deadly disease from spreading further, to care for people with HIV/AIDS, and to address, in a multisector and coordinated manner, the problems associated with the disease.

The Network is of the view that civil society involvement is crucial for enhancing human security worldwide. The Network recognizes the value of civil society initiatives and participation in promoting dialogue, conflict resolution and respect for international humanitarian law and in addressing the human costs of armed conflicts, natural disasters and deadly diseases.

By undertaking joint action at this Conference, the Network underlines the importance of cross-regional cooperation. In this spirit, the Network is co-sponsoring two workshops, namely those on children in armed conflict and small arms proliferation, in order to identify options for action by both the international community and the Movement. The workshops were organized in cooperation with the Canadian Red Cross and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, respectively.

The Network will continue to give priority attention to the promotion and protection of the rights of children affected by armed conflict, in line with the Human Security Network Support Strategy in this field, which the Ministers adopted in May 2003 in Graz. This strategy identifies a set of operative principles that include strengthening, monitoring, reporting and training, and an alarm function in cases of child rights violations.

The Human Security Network agrees to further explore ways to follow up on the Conference's results and to work closely with the Movement in order to improve the framework conditions for humanitarian work. The Human Security Network also agrees to maintain close contact, mainly through its missions in Geneva and New York, in order to put humanitarian concerns on the agenda of the relevant UN organizations, agencies and programmes. Ministers of the Human Security Network will meet again in Bamako and Timbuktu in May 2004, under the chairmanship of Mali.

**Staff Colonel Gregorio F. Fariña Florentin,
Head of the Human Rights and International
Humanitarian Law Department, Ministry of
Defence, Paraguay**

(Original Spanish)

Madam Chair,

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Paraguay, I would like to express my sincere and deep appreciation and congratulations to all the organizers of this extraordinary International Conference, which has adopted the theme of "Protecting human dignity".

By way of introduction, I would like to draw the distinguished delegates' attention to the aim of the relevant authorities in my country, which can be summed up as follows: "Disseminating, respecting, protecting and applying international humanitarian law: a universal commitment".

As the head of the Defence Ministry's International Humanitarian Law Department and of the Interministerial Committee, I reaffirm the commitment of my country, the Republic of Paraguay, which is a State party to the Geneva Conventions, to respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law and to reduce the risks arising from armed conflicts, disasters and disease, especially HIV/AIDS.

We are currently supporting and strengthening direct cooperation with public and private institutions for compliance with and protection and application of international humanitarian law.

One of the Interministerial Committee's basic roles is to cooperate with academic training institutions for armed forces personnel on the application of international humanitarian law.

In connection with the dissemination of the law, I would like to recall the words of the distinguished Argentine professor, Juan Antonio Travieso: "The violation of fundamental human rights starts with lack of knowledge of the rules".

As a first premise, therefore, we should work for broad and constant dissemination of those rules, in order to fulfil an overriding objective, namely to enhance awareness and application of international humanitarian law. This, for the institution I represent, is the first challenge, dissemination at national level.

This implies coordination and communication between all governmental and non-governmental institutions working to protect humanitarian laws.

Paraguay pledges to extend this activity to all other public, private and civil society institutions in general (including in the most remote areas, i.e. in the most vulnerable communities). This initiative will be included in the Interministerial Committee's schedule of activities for this year.

I should also mention the pledge to stimulate arrangements for the study, approval and implementation in the National Penal Code of the international humanitarian law instruments ratified by the National Congress. Those instruments include the 1980 Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects and its three Protocols, and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on their Destruction.

My delegation thanks you for this invaluable opportunity to make an active contribution to the

deliberations of the Conference. I would like to convey the following message to all participating delegations: may the work we have to do in the future be the object of a joint effort, of coordination and permanent communication, focused on getting it right and learning from the past so as to avoid mistakes, so that we can give tangible form to a legitimate universal right: the protection of human dignity.

**Ms Felicita Nanuse, Speaking on behalf of
Ms Razia Essack-Kauaria, Secretary General,
Namibia Red Cross**

(Original English)

Madam Chair,

The Namibia Red Cross pledges to protect human dignity in a focused, responsible, responsive and accountable manner. We pledge to continue working in partnership with vulnerable people and as a public auxiliary to reduce the impact of disasters and HIV/AIDS and other diseases and to intensify the dissemination of international humanitarian law.

We are grateful for the partnership we share with vulnerable communities, our governments, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the United Nations system and other civil society organizations. We advocate a comprehensive response to combat the impact of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. The World Health Organization's 3 x 5 Initiative, the treatment model of the International Federation and the Masambo Fund all deserve our wholehearted support.

The provision of anti-retroviral therapy is urgent and necessary to save lives. The Red Cross and Red Crescent, with its global network and community-based reach, can certainly have an impact in alleviating suffering and protecting human dignity. We believe that it is possible to develop sustainable solutions in a participatory approach by building local capacities and enhancing traditional coping mechanisms. We acknowledge that multiple factors such as poverty, migration, wars and conflicts, cross-border movements, substance abuse and the status of women and girls fuel the AIDS pandemic.

National Societies are credible, competent partners, with the scope and capacity to make an impact at household level. By massively scaling up programmes we can have a life-saving and meaningful impact and turn the tide against suffering and disease. We call on the International Conference to recognize and support National Societies as auxiliaries and to seek partnerships with the Red Cross and Red Crescent. We urge governments to make the promised contributions to fund the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. We call for an increase in consultation and the promotion of dialogue in order to prevent wars and conflicts.

We call for respect for international humanitarian law and urge that we work as a global community to erad-

icate poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Finally, we recognize that wars and conflicts and HIV/AIDS have a disproportionate and devastating impact on women and girls. We therefore urge urgent and appropriate action and advocacy to protect human dignity.

**H.E. Mr Pierre-Yves Simonin, Permanent
Ambassador, Sovereign Military Order of Malta**

(Original French)

Madam Chair, Distinguished Delegates

For nine centuries, the Order of Malta has been providing humanitarian and hospital services to those in greatest need. Faithful to its original mission, it presently allies tradition and modernity. About ten years ago, the international community recognized its past and present contributions by granting it permanent observer status. Its ties with the Red Cross are older still, for the Order was represented at the International Conference held in Berlin in 1869.

At present, the Order is active in 132 countries, in almost half of which it has its own assistance structures. Its emergency action corps, the ECOM (Emergency Corps of the Order of Malta), can be mobilized in the event of a natural disaster or an accident, or during an armed conflict. ECOM has worked *inter alia* in Africa, in the Balkans, in Afghanistan and in northern Iraq. Another body – the CIOMAL (International Committee of the Order of Malta) – works especially to combat leprosy and AIDS. In today's troubled world, the Order and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement have many things in common: it is therefore hardly surprising that our concerns focus on people in distress and in need.

The draft Declaration before the Conference deals with man's most precious attribute: his dignity. The principles it contains are in harmony with the objectives of the Order, whose mission is to provide care and assistance without consideration of origin, race, religion or ideology. The Declaration lists principles and establishes priorities that, even though they relate to international humanitarian law, are nevertheless intolerably and frequently violated. This is the case, for example, of civilians targeted in military operations, of prisoners of war who do not benefit from all the rights guaranteed by international treaties, and of the humanitarian workers whose activities are hindered and whose security is directly threatened. We must continue to be extremely preoccupied by the fact that such workers are increasingly the victims of often deliberate acts of violence. In this respect, I would like to mention the ICRC which, in the recent past and on 27 October in particular, has paid a heavy toll. To the Committee and all its staff, who do their duty and most admirably, I express our grateful appreciation and encouragement.

The Agenda for Humanitarian Action aims to enhance protection in armed conflicts. Its four major objectives

are indeed "clear, measurable and realistic". They require the participants in the Conference to make specific contributions able to guarantee that the Agenda will be comprehensively implemented. The Order of Malta wholeheartedly adheres to the objective of working to ensure respect for the law and to mitigate the vulnerability of people confronted with armed conflict, disasters and disease. The same holds true for the measures set forth in the Agenda.

It is of crucial importance to mitigate the risks of disasters and their impact on vulnerable groups marginalized by poverty, discrimination or exclusion. The Order is fully aware of this and endorses that objective, even though most of its work is usually carried out "after the fact".

The Order has spoken out in other fora in favour of international disaster response law and search and rescue operations. I would also mention, in this context, that one of its national bodies that has NGO status recently signed the Code of conduct for disaster relief operations.

We know that human dignity is especially vulnerable to the devastating effects of infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS. For several years the Order has been helping to combat this terrible disease. The International Committee of the Order of Malta (CIOMAL) is providing support for programmes to control the vertical transmission of AIDS from mother to child. These programmes, which are being run in Mexico and Argentina, do far more than detect cases and provide preventive care at birth; they also encompass advisory and educational services and different kinds of medical and social-economic help for the mother and her child.

Madam Chair,

The Order of Malta wishes to express its support for the untiring efforts made by the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, which it often encounters in humanitarian operations, during armed conflicts or disasters. The humanitarian organizations and agents have to meet numerous challenges together.

In conclusion, I would like to express the hope that closer cooperation within the entire international community will help enhance respect for international humanitarian law and alleviate the suffering of the victims and thereby restore their stolen and violated human dignity.

Mr Kalevi Kivistö, President, Finnish Red Cross

(Original English)

Madam Chair,

For over a hundred years the Red Cross and Red Crescent emblems have been, and luckily still are, signs of protection, help and assistance. People all over the world rely on the support and services provided by the Red Cross and Red Crescent. One of the cornerstones

of the Movement is the recognition of the protective function of the emblems, which also deliver the humanitarian message of impartiality and neutrality. It is under the protection of the emblem that humanitarian aid workers worldwide have been able to carry out their work.

Unfortunately, during the last decade, and increasingly during these last few months, we have seen a decline in the protective function of the emblems. The sad events that we have witnessed in Afghanistan and in the Middle East are of great concern to us all. Many of our colleagues, who have been assisting people in need and working under very difficult circumstances, have been killed while carrying out humanitarian work.

The increased politicization of humanitarian aid and the decline of respect for our humanitarian work are issues that need to be addressed at all levels of the Movement. We are all aware that there is no simple solution to this very complex problem and we therefore cannot overemphasize the importance of safeguarding the protective function of the emblem. Consequently, the Finnish Red Cross strongly supports the resolution on the emblem (Resolution 5) adopted by the Council of Delegates.

It is of the utmost importance that we continue to carry out our dissemination work, which includes respect for the emblem. Dissemination efforts have to continue targeting military forces and armed groups at all times, but we should not forget the importance of having an open dialogue with all members of civil society. This includes official and unofficial political, religious and community leaders, whose roles as opinion leaders in society cannot be underestimated.

The promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination is the key to peaceful co-existence. Humanitarian work can only be carried out when there is enough tolerance. It is therefore also very important that there be strong cooperation between government authorities, schools and other relevant institutions. Engaging in dialogue with new partners is particularly relevant when it comes to the dissemination of international humanitarian law.

We see a need for a global plan for a worldwide dissemination campaign to restore respect for and the value of the emblems. The Finnish Red Cross would like the Movement to strengthen its efforts to promote respect for and recognition of the emblems. We believe that National Societies can play an even more significant role in disseminating Red Cross and Red Crescent values and principles by engaging in dialogue with other partners in civil society and with government authorities.

Madam Chair,

The Finnish Red Cross, together with the Finnish government, is committed to improving its activities in relation to the implementation of international humanitarian law. In this regard, we have made a

pledge at this Conference to strengthen our cooperation in tracing and to establish a national information bureau.

We also would like to endorse the statement made by the Finnish government concerning the status of persons captured or detained in the context of the ongoing war on terror. It is of the utmost importance that the status of those detained or captured be defined in accordance with the criteria set out in international humanitarian law and that the detainees be treated as stipulated under international humanitarian law and human rights law.

**H.E. Mr Shehab A. Madi, Ambassador,
Permanent Representative of Jordan, Geneva**

(Original Arabic)

Madam Chairman,

Allow me to congratulate those who were elected to the Standing Commission this morning. May God help you in the discharge of your great and noble responsibilities.

Madam Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is four years since our last Conference and over 50 years since the adoption of the four Geneva Conventions and their two Additional Protocols, which were later followed by international instruments and national legislation to protect the world's children, women and elderly people. But these instruments have not prevented the armed conflicts of recent years from taking their toll of the victims, affecting them and their achievements, their houses and farmlands, their hospitals and schools. Those armed conflicts did not even spare the international institutions and organizations which come to assist and protect the victims.

Our recognition of the content and instruments of international humanitarian law does not suffice to have the law implemented, as we agreed during our meeting. The efforts we made were not enough to stop the breaches committed in different parts of our world. Courage requires that we recognize that humanitarian law has not enjoyed the respect it deserves or been implemented in such a way as to protect human dignity. Courage also requires that our efforts should be interwoven in order to ensure respect for and implementation of the law globally and in conformity with respect for human dignity.

Madam Chairman,

In recent years, Jordan has not been a bystander to world events. Jordan has been at the heart of the harshest of these events and worse. It has borne the brunt of what it could of its economic and social burdens. It has borne these burdens profoundly convinced of the validity of the humanitarian principles we advocate. In so doing, Jordan has responded in conformity with its responsibilities and its conscience to the world and humanity. Jordan has participated in all international

peacekeeping operations throughout the world, in Kosovo, Sierra Leone, East Timor and Afghanistan. More than that, Jordan has set up field hospitals in the Palestinian Authority areas, Afghanistan and Iraq. The services provided by those hospitals involved the transfer of the wounded in Iraq to Jordanian hospitals for treatment.

Jordan has become the centre for relief and assistance operations conducted by governments and local and international bodies in the Palestinian occupied territories, Iraq and Afghanistan. This has encouraged international humanitarian organizations and NGOs to make Jordan a base for their operations and their campaigns of relief and humanitarian assistance in the region.

Jordan pays respectful tribute to the members of these international humanitarian organizations who were killed while carrying out their humanitarian mission. It also remembers with appreciation and gratitude its nationals who were killed alongside with their colleagues in different humanitarian missions. With their blood, they reaffirmed Jordan's commitment to these principles.

In this context, it must be highlighted that Jordan has done and still is doing a great deal by fulfilling its humanitarian responsibilities towards refugees and the displaced despite its lack of resources and economic capacity. In terms of its own population and domestic income, Jordan has received a higher proportion of refugees than any other country.

Madam Chairman,

With regard to national legislation, the government of Jordan has enacted and revised its legislation in order to strengthen implementation of and compliance with international humanitarian law. One of the most important modifications is that of the Statutes of the Jordanian National Red Crescent Society with a view to enhancing respect for the red cross and red crescent emblems. The Jordanian Military Penal Code has been modified and its applicability reinforced by incorporating articles pertaining to the Geneva Conventions and international humanitarian law instruments. Special legislation has been enacted in connection with the National Committee for the Implementation of International Humanitarian Law, endowing the Committee with special authority to carry out its tasks as a national independent body. The government of Jordan has also enacted legislation on a national commission that includes official institutions working in disasters alongside the Jordanian National Red Crescent Society in response to natural and non-natural disasters. The aim is to provide relief as quickly as possible and to alleviate the effects of such disasters on the population.

Madam Chairman,

Jordan has made great progress in the implementation of humanitarian law and in ensuring the law is respected. It is convinced of the principles inherent in the

law, to which it is committed despite the difficult conditions it faces in the region and its scarce national capacities. International humanitarian law is a topic of great interest in the Kingdom, and Her Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah has played a prominent role in this field, especially in terms of supporting international efforts to protect women in times of war. We are convinced that much remains to be done. We are also convinced of the need to uphold the principles we agree on and meet the goals we have set.

Mrs Tatiana A. Nikolaenko, President, Russian Red Cross Society

(Original English)

Madam Chairman, Dear Colleagues,

The priority package of human dignity announced at the Conference as the main ideal of the Movement is a very important issue. As you know, many international instruments exist to provide human rights protection, including international humanitarian law and the international human rights covenants as basic documents.

The unique mandate of the Red Cross and Red Crescent gives us a chance to assist all vulnerable people throughout the world, and we should always think of those who are in an emergency situation or in a conflict.

As many speakers have said, the Movement has enough experience to organize different types of support, including social, medical, psychological and legal assistance. The International Federation's structure has to be influenced by these high priorities. It has to be very professional, but at the same time not so bureaucratic.

Both the International Federation and the ICRC should pay special attention to developing and strengthening the National Societies. The protection of human dignity in Russia goes hand in hand with the strengthening of civil society there. People participate more and more actively in public affairs, including the activities of the Russian Red Cross.

The Russian Red Cross, with the help of National Societies, the International Federation and the ICRC, is paying increasing attention to the social and humanitarian problems in almost all the regions of Russia. In this respect, I want to express my sincere gratitude to the International Federation and to the National Societies of other countries for their support in the implementation of programmes in a number of areas in Russia, such as assistance to internally displaced persons and local populations in the northern Caucasus and southern Russia, the international humanitarian law committee, first-aid programmes and many, many others which we have in Russia. We know that there are still many problems facing the international Movement today. But we know that if we can just work together we shall contribute greatly to the protection of human dignity.

Mrs Alicia Hunt, Counsellor, Representative of Belize

(Original English)

Madam Chairman, Distinguished Delegates of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Dear Colleagues,

The work being accomplished here in Geneva during these few days is of great significance to the world at large.

I wish to take this opportunity to emphasize that it is up to us, as government representatives, to ensure that our governments do their utmost to protect our Red Cross and Red Crescent colleagues in the execution of their extremely vital and valuable actions – the least the governments can do, as our Conference's motto goes, is "to serve those who serve the world".

Over the years, the government of Belize has enjoyed a very positive relationship with its National Red Cross Society and, needless to say, has undertaken all necessary measures to assist it in its work. My government recognizes the significance of the auxiliary services the Society has provided to Belize, as we have been the victim of several natural disasters during the past few years. In Belize we have been first-hand recipients of Red Cross and Red Crescent assistance and have witnessed the important role played by the National Society. Our special gratitude goes not only to the Red Cross Society members who have undertaken extremely difficult tasks for our country but also to the women who have voluntarily and generously given their time and energy to help, along with Red Cross Society members, not only in my country but wherever there has been a natural catastrophe or a tragedy.

Furthermore, it is my government's fervent desire strongly to encourage the development of National Societies. We call on all governments that are party to the Geneva Conventions to sustain, in every manner possible, the respect due to National Society independence, neutrality and impartiality. It is also our hope that the Red Cross and Red Crescent delegates continue their work to enable National Societies to promote and advocate adherence to international humanitarian law. And, most importantly, the present perilous state of the protective sanctity of national movements, as prescribed by the Geneva Conventions, must be reversed.

With this said, the government of Belize calls on all government representatives present at this Conference to communicate to their colleagues the great need for all governments to assist their National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in advocating their mission to uphold and protect human dignity.

In conclusion, as my government's representative at this Conference, I would also like to reiterate our aim to advance social justice by promoting and enhancing opportunities for women to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security

and human dignity. These conditions are vital to improving the social standards of all nations. Moreover, I personally believe that women should be encouraged, to the greatest extent possible, to become more involved in their societies and that it should be an integral part of government programmes to promote women to become more politically active and present on the world scene.

**Mr José Luis Nogueira de Brito, President,
Portuguese Red Cross**

(Original English)

Madam Chairman,

I would like to express our deepest sympathies to the families of the Red Cross and Red Crescent personnel killed in Iraq.

Bearing in mind that the Conference theme is "Protecting human dignity", I would like to turn to "prevention" as a basis for this intervention.

In our opinion, of the different tools available to us for creating a favourable environment for human dignity, "prevention" appears as the main and most effective one.

The worst consequences of natural disasters are generated by serious climate changes, such as the major fires suffered by my country, other countries in Europe and the United States last summer. One of the main causes of regular emergency situations, road accidents, epidemics, HIV/AIDS and related diseases, social degradation and, lastly, intolerance and conflicts, is no doubt the absence of preparatory action based on well structured and appropriately timed programmes.

The States are responsible for creating conditions to protect their citizens. At the same time, our Movement has a humanitarian mandate to protect the human being.

Madam Chairman,

It seems we have a powerful synergy in that we, the National Societies, are auxiliaries to the public authorities.

Prevention starts by educating the youngest segments of the population in fundamental values. Information, alerts and dissemination for the middle and senior generations will come in time!

Such a culture is possible only if there is a strong political commitment and the necessary resources. There can be no doubt it would save millions of human beings, stopping possible social degradation and having a major positive impact on national economies.

Madam Chairman,

I would like to conclude by reiterating the pledge that the Portuguese Red Cross has presented to this Conference. In accordance with that pledge, we are

committed to preparing and training, within four years, 3,600 young people for social activities like home care and care for the elderly. Preventing the consequences of disasters and dealing with the consequences of social emergencies is a sure way of improving respect for human dignity.

**Sir Kenneth Keith, President, International
Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission**

(Original English)

Madam Chair,

The International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission has had several valuable opportunities in the course of this week to make itself better known, at a workshop, at a session at lunch yesterday, in bilateral meetings with several delegations, especially from Africa, Asia and Central America, and in many less formal discussions in the corridors.

We have also been very encouraged by the positive references made to the Commission in many statements, beginning with the speech at the opening of the Conference by Federal Councillor Micheline Calmy-Rey, and in the Conference documents, notably the ICRC study of international humanitarian law, including its reporting on the regional seminars, and in the draft declaration and resolutions to be considered tomorrow. Many of you will have picked up copies of that brochure, and I can therefore be brief. I make four points.

The first is to recall the emphasis throughout the Conference on the crying need for better implementation of international humanitarian law. That law is largely accepted as being satisfactory in substance. It is its implementation that is the real problem.

Secondly, much national and international practice shows the great value of inquiries and good offices. Our statutory mandate under Additional Protocol I provides the means of resolving controversies and enhancing implementation of the law. Consider the role in a number of countries of national truth and reconciliation commissions and recall again from the opening of this splendid Conference, the emphasis which Visaka Dharmadasa placed on finding the truth.

My third point is about the legitimacy of the Commission. The Commission was established by the international community, initially at the Diplomatic Conference of 1974-77, which was held in this very room, and now by the 161 States party to Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions. The members of the Commission have been elected by the now 65 States which have accepted its competence. The Commission's functions and rules have been established and its 15 members have a wide range of relevant experience.

Fourth and finally, the Commission stands ready to do its part to protect human dignity and to promote compliance with international humanitarian law. We urge

all those present to support the Commission and to consider referring disputes about breaches of international humanitarian law to it. If I may make a final reference to the opening speeches, I quote Princess Margriet: "we, and in this case that means the Commission, must move beyond words to deeds".

H.E. Mr Zacharie Gahutu, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Burundi, Geneva

(Original French)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we know, the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent has, since the first time it met in 1867, been a wonderful forum for dialogue on the humanitarian issues and challenges of common interest to the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and the States. It is a compelling example of the permanent and constantly renewed momentum to promote international humanitarian law. It affords the States and the National Societies an opportunity to renew their commitment to apply the provisions of international humanitarian law and to work to develop it.

In this regard, we would like to salute the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, which is Burundi's main if not essential partner in protection and assistance activities for the victims of armed conflicts. Witness the ICRC's activities in Burundi, in particular to spread knowledge of international humanitarian law, to implement drinking water supply projects in partnership with the water and electricity board, to visit detainees and restore family ties, and to distribute assistance to hospitals in the form of medicines and medical material.

My country, Burundi, is infinitely grateful to the ICRC, especially during the present 10-year period of crisis.

In the face of the crisis wracking our country, the ICRC, as an independent and impartial organization, has not only protected the life and dignity of the victims of the war and violence, it has also and above all provided humanitarian assistance.

In addition to working directly with the victims of armed conflicts, the ICRC has promoted the development of and respect for the rules of international law that aim to limit and prevent the suffering caused by war.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year's theme, "Protecting human dignity", could not have been chosen at a more appropriate time. In spite of the praiseworthy efforts already made, the road ahead is long, difficult and sinuous. Indeed, the huge challenge that arose between the 27th and 28th International Conferences, namely the blatant disrespect for human dignity that is poisoning armed conflicts and compromising efforts to reconcile the bel-

ligerents in the wake of the hostilities, remains unchanged. The threats to human dignity represented by disease and disaster, which affect first and foremost the most needy, those without access to services or the means of influencing the decisions that concern them, are still with us.

This is why it is urgent to reaffirm that international humanitarian law has lost none of its relevance. Today more than in the past, the entire world and my country specifically must meet the obligations arising from human rights in general and international humanitarian law in particular. This necessarily implies enhanced knowledge on the part of all players on the international and national scenes. The two spheres of responsibility defined by this Conference, respect for the law and decreased vulnerability to disease and the effects of disasters, must shape future programmes and, if such is not already the case, serve as guidelines for promoting, protecting and safeguarding international humanitarian law in the States and the National Societies.

As you may recall, at the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, Burundi made three major pledges:

- to draw up national legislation on the non-applicability of statutory limitations to war crimes and crimes against humanity, including genocide;
- to ratify the Ottawa treaty banning anti-personnel mines and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court;
- to launch new health programmes on behalf of AIDS victims and social programmes for street children.

Concerning national legislation on war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, the Transitional National Assembly of the Republic of Burundi voted a law to that end during its ordinary session in February 2003. That law must now be promulgated by the head of State.

Burundi ratified both the Convention on anti-personnel mines and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court in April 2003.

As for the launch of new health programmes on behalf of AIDS victims and social programmes for street children, Burundi has carried out multiform programmes to control HIV/AIDS from four major angles, i.e. prevention, detection, treatment and care.

Since the establishment of the Transitional Government of National Unity on 1 November 2001, special attention has been paid to the problem of HIV/AIDS in Burundi. In addition to the Ministry of Public Health and its many missions, which run projects such as the health and population project, the national programme to control AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases, and the strategic plan to fight HIV/AIDS and STD, a Presidential Ministry was established almost three years ago and has been in

charge of HIV/AIDS control ever since. It has a National AIDS Control Council and provincial committees which are in turn made up of communal and hillside committees against AIDS.

In terms of social programmes for street children, Burundi has conducted a variety of activities via the sector policies of ministries directly concerned by the matter.

Several projects and centres are taking care of street children and other vulnerable children with the support of protection programmes carried out in cooperation with UNICEF.

In addition, the post-conflict programme called the Child-Soldier project, which basically looks after demobilization, disarmament and social and occupational reintegration, is up and running.

The ceasefire agreement recently concluded between the government of Burundi and the former main rebel movement, Pierre Nkurunziza's CNDD-FDD, and the establishment of the government born of that agreement will no doubt help Burundi fulfil its objectives with the backing of its partners, including the ICRC.

This is why Burundi launches a solemn and urgent appeal to Rwasa's Palipehutu-FNL rebel movement to join the others at the negotiating table. There is no military solution for Burundi. Burundi's salvation lies in negotiation.

Long live human dignity.

**Dr Janez Remškar, President,
Slovenian Red Cross**

(Original English)

Madam Chair,

The Slovenian National Society is working in special conditions characterized by transition, lack of experience working in a competitive field, and the knowledge gained during the conflict in the Balkans. This all influences the traditional activities and working methods of the Red Cross. To be faced with changed circumstances, with competition on ideas, competition in projects, competition in funding – all these factors present new and different working conditions for the National Society.

These are big challenges for our National Society, especially for the new leadership elected in April this year, meaning that we have to put additional efforts into building the relationships which influence and determine the position of the National Society: relations with the government, with donors, the media and our interior public on the local level.

We welcome the search for and consideration of new steps, tolerant advocacy of the National Society's goals, the building and not destroying of bridges with other NGOs, the search for common strategic directions

with the government, all of which will reposition the National Society in the changing social environment.

For the new Slovenian Red Cross leadership, this International Conference presents a unique opportunity to make, together with the government and on its own, pledges for the future. It is even more important in that we have established promising bilateral and multilateral contacts and partnerships, which will help to position the National Society as the main humanitarian organization at the end of the transition period and in terms of Slovenia's full membership in the European Union and NATO. Both are big challenges for us.

Ladies and gentlemen, please allow me to introduce the pledges that we made in cooperation with the government and those we made on our own. We trust the government will recognize them as important and assist us in becoming an effective, properly functioning National Society.

Together with the government, we pledge to formulate and adopt all relevant regulations on the use of the red cross emblem, to recruit qualified personnel on the basis of Article 6 of Protocol I additional to the Geneva Conventions and to educate and train this personnel. We further pledge to take all possible measures to strengthen the auxiliary role of the National Society, and to integrate dissemination activities in all Red Cross training and education programmes.

**Mr Gabriel Ontsira, Director of Disaster
Management, Ministry of Humanitarian
Action, Republic of the Congo**

(Original French)

Madam Chair,

I should like to congratulate the members of the Standing Commission on their brilliant election.

Madam Chair,

My delegation agrees wholeheartedly with the statement made by the delegation of Algeria on behalf of the African Group.

The situation in my country, Congo-Brazzaville, is a clear example of the many subjects being considered at this Conference.

Indeed, for over a decade the people of the Congo have been subjected to a number of natural and man-made disasters whose effects, when taken together, have resulted in the loss of dignity and pride.

Between 1997 and 2001 the Congo was wracked by the most destructive armed conflicts of its history: countless lives were lost and the number of widows, widowers, orphans and amputees grew; over 800,000 people were displaced within the country; about 40,000 were forced to seek refuge in Gabon, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and elsewhere; family homes and public buildings were destroyed, and the list goes on.

The effects of the war were compounded by the floods that, in the north of the country, affected all humanitarian sectors and destructured the economic, school and health systems in villages that were prisoners to the forces of nature.

On top of the floods we had the Ebola virus, a terrible hemorrhagic fever that first appeared in 2002 and again in November 2003 and whose causes are as yet unknown. Ebola kills and adds many orphans to the list of abandoned children. And it would be remiss of me not to mention our old friend, malaria, which is in fact the biggest killer in the history of Africa, and the terrible AIDS pandemic.

The Congo has made huge efforts to overcome the fatality of its history, and in this it has had the decisive support of the agencies of the United Nations system, NGOs and the Red Cross, which are always present and willing to help.

Allow me, Madam Chair, to express the gratitude of the people and government of the Congo to the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and to our National Society.

We cannot talk about the humanitarian problems in the Congo without mentioning the situation of the almost 150,000 refugees living on our territory, many of whom have been abandoned to their sorry fate.

Madam Chair,

Today Congo is struggling to manage post-conflict problems. It is fighting to restore the dignity of its citizens, which has been severely shaken in the past ten years.

It therefore wholeheartedly endorses the principles on which the Declaration and the Agenda for Humanitarian Action submitted to this Conference are based.

The Congo, for its part, pledges to:

- arrange for the return of those displaced by armed conflict, in accordance with the principles of free will, security and human dignity;
- set up a national framework for the dissemination of international humanitarian law, the wellspring of the great principles on which human dignity is based;
- help, by drawing up national instruments, to enhance the value of and implement international disaster response law, which is still in the embryonic stage.

Madam Chair,

My country is pleased at the healthy cooperation between the various partners during the trials it has endured. It is well aware that this cooperation has been effective thanks to the help of the humanitarian workers who, unfortunately, are increasingly the target of grave acts of violence, especially in armed conflicts.

My country unreservedly condemns these unacceptable acts of violence which undermine the human ideal, for the main victims are not just humanitarian workers but also the most vulnerable groups.

Lastly, my country takes this opportunity once again to call for the help of the international community, in particular the humanitarian movement, in attaining its goal of restoring human dignity on the territory of the Congo.

**Mrs Maria Letizia Zamparelli, Head,
International Department, Italian Red Cross**

(Original English)

Madam Chairman,

Speaking on behalf of the Italian Red Cross, I would like to underline that my National Society is participating in this International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent fully aware of the dangers which human dignity is facing both in the reality of armed conflicts and in the social-welfare crisis which many countries are experiencing because of the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases.

The fact that breaches of international humanitarian law are becoming increasingly commonplace demonstrates misunderstanding or neglect of the principles and values underpinning this legal system.

Civilians in particular continue to be the object of violence and displacement; civilians are often deprived of the basic goods they need to survive.

The rights of prisoners and of those detained for reasons relating to war, and the rights of the wounded and sick are often abused.

The fight against terrorism has given rise to a debate that has brought to light fresh challenges to international humanitarian law.

In the present situation, the Italian Red Cross gives its full and unswerving support both to Resolution 1 and to the contents of the Agenda for Humanitarian Action. In so doing, the Italian Red Cross strongly reaffirms its firm belief that the international humanitarian law now in force is adequate to meet the challenges posed by contemporary armed conflicts.

In dealing with new forms of violence it is necessary to adjust the humanitarian response while preserving all existing standards of protection under international humanitarian law.

The Italian Red Cross therefore renews its commitment to promote at all levels – in cooperation with the national authorities – respect for the principles and rules of existing international humanitarian law, which are based on the wide concepts of tolerance, non-discrimination and respect for diversity among people.

In particular, the Italian Red Cross is committed to continuing all efforts to improve knowledge of international

humanitarian law, recognizing the importance of spreading such knowledge, especially among young people.

Moreover, the involvement of the national authorities in dissemination work represents, on their part, an important reaffirmation of their duty to "respect and ensure respect" for international humanitarian law in all circumstances.

Armed conflicts are often the cause of collapse in human societies, and such a collapse may provide the breeding ground for other social calamities.

Infections, diseases and HIV/AIDS in particular have taken great advantage of the social crises caused by armed conflicts. These diseases have spread much more quickly than the social institutions have reacted.

It is therefore necessary to reinforce the strategy of reaction to such diseases, accompanying prevention with immediate action in favour of those who are in actual danger.

The lives of six million people are at risk in the next two years. The Italian Red Cross is willing to support all suitable action – including free access to medicines – in order to avoid such a holocaust.

**H.E. Mr Ousmane Camara, Ambassador,
Permanent Representative of Senegal, Geneva**

(Original French)

Madam Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the humanitarian players who, in a world deeply scarred by daily violence and conflicts of all kinds, undertake with faith and conviction to uphold, protect and even promote human dignity wherever it is threatened.

I would like to mention in particular the work of the ICRC, which is anchored in international humanitarian law. As the guardian of the law, the ICRC endeavours to obtain compliance by all the parties to a conflict, whether governments or non-State actors, in strict conformity with the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (neutrality, independence, humanity, unity, universality, impartiality and voluntary service).

Through its presence in over 90 countries, the ICRC has established a dialogue with all the protagonists of violence for the purpose of forging a relationship of trust, of obtaining the practical implementation of humanitarian law and of gaining access to all the victims of armed conflicts with a view to protecting and assisting them.

In this task, the ICRC is honourably seconded by the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies which act, within their borders, as auxiliaries to the public authorities. What is more, the activities they carry out undoubtedly help ease the plight of thousands of people affected by war and its consequences and by disturbances and disasters of all kinds. My government salutes this devotion and encourages all humanitarian

practitioners to pursue their noble work to alleviate suffering, in particular of civilians.

I would also like to endorse the statement made on behalf of the African Group by Algeria and share its analysis of the challenges of humanitarian work in today's new conflicts.

These new wars, because they are asymmetrical, because they do not target just military objects, destructure the lives of millions of men, women and children throughout the world. Entire families are uprooted, and vast swaths of farmland lie fallow as a consequence of these wars. To this we must add the scourge of endemic diseases such as AIDS, the natural disasters that uproot many people, the uncontrolled circulation of small arms and the challenge of mines, munitions and other remnants of war. In this respect we commend the ICRC for the eminently political role it played in the adoption of binding legal instruments on anti-personnel mines and, more recently, remnants of war by the Disarmament Conference.

Madam Chair,

You must admit, as I do, that of all the continents, Africa is the worst hit by war, illness and disaster, which are increasing its economic and social vulnerability. This is why the continent's new leaders have decided to tackle the evil at the roots by adopting a new plan to protect and promote the dignity of African peoples. This plan, called the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), adopted in July 2001 in Maputo, sets as a prior condition the restoration and consolidation of peace on the continent, for without peace nothing lasting can be done.

This partnership implies the participation of the entire international community in the effort to turn the situation around, including the humanitarian practitioners who work directly with the population. In other words, they must use NEPAD to guide their work in Africa. We hope that the 28th International Red Cross and Red Crescent Conference will give intense attention to this.

Mr Utoni Daniel Nujoma, Chairman, Inter-Ministerial Technical Committee on Human Rights, Namibia

(Original English)

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, whose theme is "Protecting human dignity", is taking place against a backdrop of increased violence and repression against women and children in armed conflicts in Africa, the Middle East and other parts of the world by States and non-State actors in pursuit of territorial ambitions, occupation and naked terrorism.

This sad state of affairs poses a serious threat to peace and stability in the world, where we see the continuous

serious erosion of fundamental human rights and human dignity. This is a direct result of insufficient or no political will to adhere to international law and international humanitarian law by States.

International treaties in the humanitarian sphere will only achieve their purpose when they are executed fully and in good faith by all parties. In other words, the implementation of international humanitarian law must be fully guaranteed by the international community.

Madam Chairperson,

In accordance with Article 1 common to the Four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and 1977 Additional Protocol I, the States Parties undertake to respect and ensure respect for the provisions of these international legal instruments. This common obligation constitutes the main legal basis for the application and observance of the provisions of international conventions aimed at providing protection to the victims of armed conflicts.

The government of the Republic of Namibia is of the view that there is no need to develop new rules of war. The existing mechanisms are sufficient and adequate to address the current violations. The International Criminal Court and various ad hoc tribunals are a welcome means of addressing the issues of impunity, grave breaches of international law, genocide and international humanitarian law.

In conclusion, the Republic of Namibia would like to reiterate its commitment to its obligations under the various international treaties it has acceded to and pledges its support for the principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and international humanitarian law.

**H.E. Gyan Chandra Acharya, Ambassador,
Permanent Representative of Nepal, Geneva**

(Original English)

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are presently witnessing changes that have far-reaching consequences on the scientific, technological, economic, social and political fronts. The progress being made in these fields has the potential to eliminate human suffering and misery from the world. And yet we live in the Dickensian world of paradox. It is an irony that there is so much human suffering and misery around us. Armed conflicts triggered by the easy accessibility of weapons, violence fuelled by intolerance and hatred, persistent and grinding poverty, disasters and diseases continue to haunt humanity, thus posing a challenge to our progress and development.

Each year, hundreds of thousands of people all over the world, but mostly the poor, perish in conflicts and are affected by violence. Many more deaths and destruction occur as a result of disaster and diseases. The HIV/AIDS pandemic continues to create yet another profound challenge for all of us. These challenges have

severely tested our capability in the search for peace, protection and stability. Efforts to protect human dignity have also been rendered increasingly difficult.

Madam Chairman,

The 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent could not have come at a more appropriate time. As a unique forum for bringing together States and the components of the Movement, it offers an opportunity for all of us to forge greater solidarity and partnership. We need to inject vigour into that spirit now more than ever before.

In that context, the draft declaration and the Agenda for Humanitarian Action, presented for the consideration of the Conference, contain many important elements. Together, they constitute a roadmap for the international community to tackle the persistent challenges to humanity and human dignity. We believe that, with active commitment and effective implementation, the four objectives identified in the Agenda for Humanitarian Action can go a long way towards addressing a number of humanitarian concerns.

In my own country, Nepal, we face a number of problems, most prominent among them being the insurgency. Even in such a difficult time, His Majesty's government has consistently called for a negotiated settlement to the problem. Nepal is fully aware of and committed to upholding the principles of international humanitarian law while defending the life, liberty, security and freedom of its people, especially those who are most vulnerable. We firmly believe that the dignity and the right of the people to lead a peaceful and secure life should be protected and promoted by all. It is in this context that we deplore terrorism and terrorist acts.

Madam Chairman,

Recurrent natural disasters are yet another bane my country suffers, because of its geographical and geological characteristics and for various other reasons. In order to be better able to cope, and also to reduce the risk and vulnerability of people, we have set up a permanent institution under the chairmanship of the Minister of Home Affairs. Known as the Central Disaster Relief Committee, it provides policy guidelines and directives to the department dealing with disaster management, the main implementing agency. The department functions in close cooperation with the Nepal Police, the Royal Nepal Army, the Nepal Red Cross Society, and other social organizations to conduct rescue and relief operations, and also on disaster preparedness, mitigation, reconstruction and rehabilitation.

We attach great importance to the work of the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. In my own country, the Nepal Red Cross Society has always remained at the forefront and performed admirable rescue and rehabilitation activities during emergencies. It is also actively engaged in launching

programmes on disaster prevention, management, risk reduction, awareness generation, public education and many other areas, in close cooperation with the government. These efforts have helped to further develop the national and community capacity to respond effectively to disasters and the related risks. We believe that to further develop their responsive capacity and to make their work sustainable, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies around the world should be provided with greater support and cooperation from the international community.

The recent establishment in Nepal of a delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross is a clear recognition of the importance we attach to its work. We hope that the delegation will be able to further contribute to humanitarian work in a more effective and coordinated manner. His Majesty's government has extended its cooperation to the delegation's noble humanitarian objectives.

In today's world, humanitarian workers have to work in a difficult, dangerous and often extremely hostile environment. The growing number of casualties among humanitarian workers is a cause of great concern to my delegation as well. We also join in paying tribute to those who have lost their lives and call upon everyone to respect and protect humanitarian aid workers, who play a vital role in preventing and alleviating suffering, at all times and in all circumstances.

In conclusion, Madam Chairperson, let me stress here that protecting human dignity requires committed efforts and an enhanced level of partnership among States, the Movement's components, civil society and all those concerned with it. That partnership should ensure the protection and promotion of respect for human beings, the application of humanitarian principles and values, and the enhancement of tolerance and non-discrimination. These are indeed challenging tasks for all of us, but they are also worthy tasks that we should all commit ourselves to in a spirit of partnership, understanding and dedication to making a better and just world.

H.E. Mr Habib Mansour, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Tunisia, Geneva

(Original French)

Madam Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

I am confident that our Conference will be beneficial and that its results will enhance the protection of human dignity, in particular of the most vulnerable. I can assure you of the full cooperation of the Tunisian delegation and of its willingness to work for the Conference's success.

I should like to thank the depositary of the Geneva Conventions and the organizing committee for their efforts throughout the process of preparing this Conference and for the relevant documents they have made available to us.

Madam Chair,

Our 28th Conference, the first in the new millennium, is based on a theme of special significance given the present international situation and the role played by action for peace in achieving worldwide stability, well-being and prosperity and in strengthening relationships of fellowship and partnership between States and peoples.

Although the international community has taken great strides forwards in various fields, it has not been able to put a stop to the situations of tension and violence that persist everywhere in the world; the number of conflicts is growing and their effects on the spread of poverty, hunger and epidemics increasing. More than ever before, the world needs cooperation, solidarity and partnership.

It is in this context that President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali proposed that the international community set up a global fund of solidarity to reduce poverty. The aim is to reinforce international action to eliminate poverty and accelerate the pace of social and human development in the poorest countries, enabling millions of human beings to lead better lives based on dignity and well-being.

Madam Chair,

The failure to respect human dignity in armed conflicts must be a source of major concern to the international community today. Civilians, in particular the most vulnerable sectors of the population, namely women, children and the elderly, are often the most exposed to the violence.

The past few years have also been marked by a series of disasters and illnesses that has caused the deaths of millions of human beings. Most of the victims were among the most vulnerable who live in poverty and do not have access to basic services.

We deplore the effects these tragedies have had on human dignity and underscore the need to do everything possible to strengthen protection and safeguard the people affected and to enable humanitarian workers to provide help and comfort to the victims and people in distress. It is also essential to take the measures required to mitigate the effects of conflicts and disasters, by attacking their underlying causes and the problems of poverty and inequality.

Madam Chair,

In the face of these challenges, we need to consolidate and strengthen the partnerships between components of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and other members of international society in the assistance operations conducted to alleviate the suffering of vulnerable groups.

It goes without saying that such partnerships must be based on humanitarian values and the Movement's Fundamental Principles, and conducted in accordance with international humanitarian law.

**Mr Okhna Ouk Damry, Vice-President,
Cambodian Red Cross Society**

(Original English)

Madam Chairman,

Today, and particularly now, I feel very comfortable and confident, having listened to most of our speakers express strong support for the mandate of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Obviously, this Conference is one of the most important humanitarian fora in the world. It provides National Societies and governments with a unique opportunity to translate our commitments into action, to protect human dignity by mobilizing all our efforts to alleviate the suffering of people.

We are very pleased to report, in the light of the challenges we have discussed, that the Cambodian Red Cross Society has reviewed its vision and mission, adapting them to the needs of the country's most vulnerable people. It was guided in doing so by the Strategy for the Movement and the International Federation's Strategy 2010, and more recently by the united action stipulated in the Manila Action Plan; it also received support from the International Federation and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Guided by the new vision, whose goal is to contribute to poverty reduction and the protection of our unique Movement's humanitarian values, we aim to be a leading humanitarian organization, assisting the vulnerable in the fields of health, education, disaster response, disaster preparedness, emergency relief and the promotion of humanitarian values. We are streamlining all programmes for better service delivery. In terms of the promotion of humanitarian values, we wish to share the global concerns expressed at this Conference.

Madam Chairman,

Although Cambodia is now at peace and continues to develop, we still have many challenges to overcome. We wish Cambodia to be free of landmines, we wish Cambodia to be free of all kinds of arms and weapons, free of drugs, of acts of violence, trafficking of women and children and the psychological trauma caused by war and armed conflict. We are making every effort to promote peace, stability and the safety of mankind. By contributing to these goals, we are working to maximize the promotion of the Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values of the Movement, which since its inception has helped to relieve the suffering of those in need.

We therefore pledge to promote ongoing training for all of our Board members, staff, youth and volunteers on the Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values of the Movement; to ensure that all core programme areas conduct their work in accordance with the Fundamental Principles and values of the Red Cross Movement; to strengthen knowledge,

understanding and respect for the red cross and red crescent emblems, in both conflict and non-conflict situations, so that the integrity of the Movement is respected by all. We wish to share our "best practices" on the communication of humanitarian values with other partners in the Movement. We pledge to maximize our efforts to mobilize our resources to alleviate the suffering of the most vulnerable in order to protect the dignity of human beings.

Madam Chairman,

We commit ourselves to maximizing all our efforts to promote humanitarian values and protect human dignity. We firmly believe that we are not alone, that we stand together as a unique Movement, and that we will continue to receive support from our partners and our stakeholders. We wish to take this opportunity to thank the Standing Commission and in particular Princess Margriet, for her commitment and devotion to ensuring harmony and coherence among the Movement's components.

We wish to thank all of our partners and stakeholders for their strong support and to assure you of our readiness to maintain our joint efforts to improve the life of the most vulnerable.

I wish to thank the Secretariat staff and volunteers and the commissions for their hard work and excellent arrangements and wish us good luck and success in our common approach to assisting the most vulnerable and keeping our world in peace forever.

**Dr Patricia Michaële Amédée Gédéon,
President, Haitian National Red Cross Society**

(Original French)

Madam Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Haitian National Red Cross Society, which I have the honour to preside, I would like to pay a respectful tribute to the organizers of the 28th International Conference. This Conference brings home, once again, the worldwide scope of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and allows us to appreciate the extent and quality of the solidarity that exists or can exist between the Movement's components and between them and the vulnerable communities in which it is our mission to improve living conditions, the conditions of existence.

Madam Chair,

Having carefully read the draft Declaration and the draft Agenda for Humanitarian Action and followed the ensuing intense debate, I can inform you that the Haitian Red Cross fully endorses those documents. As of this moment, protecting human dignity presents us with both a challenge to meet and a duty to be done each day.

With respect to the major concerns expressed in the Agenda, the Haitian Red Cross proposes to take the

following measures *inter alia*. First, together with the ICRC and the International Federation, it will train a large number of its members and volunteers in the administration of first aid in the event of conflict or internal violence. Haiti is witness to growing violence in working class neighbourhoods and to the emergence of all kinds of intolerance towards people who are seen to be different, the reason being the increasingly tense political situation.

Secondly, in terms of reducing the risks relating to natural disasters, the Haitian Red Cross, which is determined to see to it that disasters cause the loss of fewer and fewer human lives, will, in the coming four years, train communities in disaster preparedness and risk management. It will also work to provide non-stop information to the public in general and the groups most at risk in particular.

Thirdly, regarding the reduction of the risks relating to HIV infection, since Haiti is the Caribbean country most severely affected by this illness, the government has adopted a wide range of measures aimed at stopping the disease from spreading. The Ministry of Public Health has drawn up a strategic control plan and the government has submitted a national HIV/AIDS response project to the Global Fund, which has accepted it. The project, which is up and running, will in the next four years provide various services relating to prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV, by making antiretroviral drugs available to AIDS sufferers in general and pregnant women in particular, with a view to preventing mother-to-child transmission. The project also has components promoting risk-free sexual behaviour and the production of whole blood and blood products free of the risk of infection. The emphasis is on training young people and reintegrating women into society.

Madam Chair,

The Haitian Red Cross is closely associated in this project thanks to its excellent relations with the Haitian government. I take this opportunity to thank the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria. It has already approved the project to fight tuberculosis submitted by Haiti, which the Haitian Red Cross will also help implement.

I would also like to thank the international organizations who participate in these projects and in so many others for the benefit of the people of Haiti. My heartfelt thanks go to the participating National Societies of Norway, the Netherlands, France and Spain for their help, and to the ICRC and the International Federation for the remarkable support they give our Society.

Madam Chair,

I would like to pay tribute to and warmly thank our volunteers, for today is their day.

Dr Djura Inomzoda, President, Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan

(Original English)

Madam Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to start by congratulating the new members of the Standing Commission on their election and their task of protecting human dignity. I also thank the outgoing Standing Commission for what has been done with Princess Margriet, which laid a good foundation for further work.

This period is not simply the beginning of a new millennium; it has been separated and marked by the events of 11 September, so that we now have two periods: before and after 11 September. A look at our agenda shows that it is the wish of all the Movement's components to act within the framework of our Principles, but in a flexible manner to protect human dignity. I thank the Standing Commission and the International Federation for taking into account the views of National Societies in preparing this Conference, particularly the meeting they had here with National Societies early in September.

The rapidly changing environment means that we are working in different dimensions and with States and intergovernmental entities, including the United Nations. Let me refer to one project being implemented by the Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan. A year ago, Tajikistan was the first among National Societies in the former Soviet Union to inform the population, in close cooperation with the government and local communities, about the hazards of anti-personnel mines and how to provide assistance to those who had the bad luck of encountering one. We have thus treated over fifty persons and are now training volunteers who are working very well. The structure of the programme, particularly an prosthetic/orthotic centre, has been set up with the assistance of the Red Cross. Of course, we could say that this is exactly what you are supposed to do and stop at that, but no. We go beyond what has been established and continue to inform the population and the international community via the mass media and other channels. We contribute to training and to financial and physical assistance for the elimination of mines and for mine clearance. The programme has actually set up a centre to discard anti-personnel mines and the Red Crescent has been involved. In addition, the entire stock of anti-personnel mines has been destroyed.

On behalf of our government, I express gratitude to the Swiss Foundation for Mine Action, the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, the government of the Canton of Geneva, the governments of the United Kingdom and Canada, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and various United Nations agencies. In conclusion we fully agree with all the delegations that have agreed on the Declaration.

H.E. Ms Yolande Biké, Vice-Chairman of the Conference

(Original French)

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have just heard our last speaker. The Second Plenary Meeting has therefore come to an end. I would like to thank all the participants who contributed to this fruitful debate and informed us about their many concerns, which will obviously be taken into account. I would like to point out that over 120 participants took the floor during the general debate we have just ended, the theme of which was

“Contemporary humanitarian challenges and protecting human dignity”.

I would like to thank in particular our interpreters and the staff members in the room and those running the audio-visual equipment; they were extremely flexible and have done an outstanding job. Thank you for your patience throughout this very long day. Before closing the meeting, I would like to remind you that we will meet tomorrow morning at nine for the Final Plenary Meeting, which will sum up the Conference deliberations and adopt the principal outcomes. Does the Secretariat have any announcements to make? I see that that is not the case. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I now close the meeting and thank you once again for your patience.

State authorities and other actors concerned, in particular National Societies and the ICRC, take effective measures to ensure that families know the fate, including the whereabouts, of their missing relatives.

Agenda for Humanitarian Action, Final goal 1.2.1

Thorkell Thorkelsson / International Federation / Jordan, 2003



4.8 WORKSHOPS

For further information, please refer to the overview of the workshops presented by Ms Marie Gervais-Vidricaire, Rapporteur of the Conference (section 4.9).

3 December 2003

5 p.m.

International humanitarian law and the challenges of contemporary armed conflicts

Organizers: *Government of Switzerland, International Committee of the Red Cross*

Children and armed conflict: protecting and rebuilding young lives

Organizers: *The Human Security Network: Austria, Canada, Chile, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Mali, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, South Africa (observer), Switzerland, Thailand in cooperation with the Canadian Red Cross*

National Societies in Civil-Military Cooperation – Questions, Challenges, Opportunities and Prospects

Organizers: *Danish Red Cross, German Red Cross, the Netherlands Red Cross, Governments of Germany and Denmark, Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict (IFHV), Bochum, Germany*

Biotechnology, weapons and humanity

Organizer: *Canadian Red Cross*

Co-organizers: *Government of Canada, Norwegian Red Cross*

4 December 2003

5 p.m.

Small Arms and Human Security – Humanitarian Impacts and Options for Action

Organizers: *the Human Security Network (Austria, Canada, Chile, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Mali, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, South Africa (observer), Switzerland, Thailand and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue*

Health and HIV/AIDS – Prevention, care and treatment, stigma and discrimination – four years of action against HIV/AIDS by the Red Cross and Red Crescent

Organizers: *Swedish Red Cross, Ethiopian Red Cross, Kenya Red Cross, French Red Cross, Italian Red Cross, Spanish Red Cross*

Domestic implementation of the Statute of the International Criminal Court

Organizer: *Dutch Government*

The role of Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies in disaster risk reduction and the relevant links with governments and other key actors

Organizers: *Nepal Red Cross, Uzbekistan Red Crescent, International Federation, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), ProVention, International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR)*

5 December 2003

5 p.m.

Civil society participation in international public-private health partnerships. Challenges and lessons learnt

Organizers: *Sierra Leone Red Cross, American Red Cross, Danish Red Cross, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*

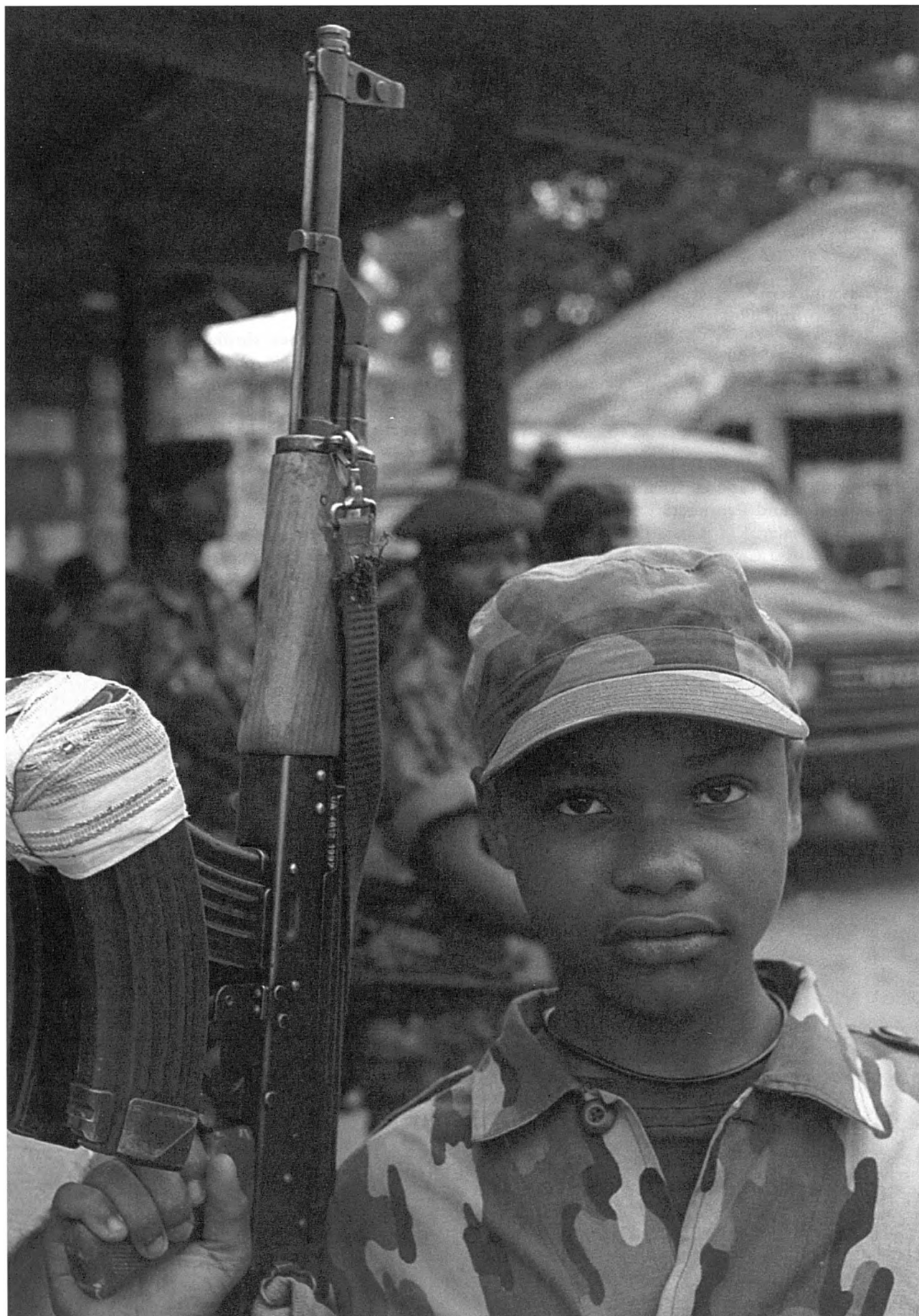
Where disasters meet: similarities and distinct factors involved in NS preparedness to respond in contexts affected by both conflicts and natural disasters

Organizers: *British Government (DFID), British Red Cross, Uganda Red Cross Society*

Co-organizer: *Government of Uganda*

Operational challenges in carrying out humanitarian activities in a changing environment

Organizers: *International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, International Committee of the Red Cross*



In recognition of States' obligation to respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law, controls on the availability of weapons are strengthened – in particular on small arms, light weapons and their ammunition – so that weapons do not end up in the hands of those who may be expected to use them to violate international humanitarian law.

Agenda for Humanitarian Action, Final goal 2.3

Jean-Patrick Di Silvestro / ICRC / Democratic Republic of Congo, 2000

4.9 THIRD PLENARY MEETING

6 December 2003

9 a.m.

**Mr Jaime Ricardo Fernández Urriola,
Chairman of the Conference**

(Original Spanish)

Before turning to the first item on the agenda of the Third and Final Plenary Meeting, I should like to inform you that the new Standing Commission met for the first time yesterday afternoon. Mr Al-Hadid was elected Chairman and Ms Janet Davidson was elected Vice-Chairman. We wish them every success and good luck. I think they deserve a round of applause.

(Applause)

Turning now to the Third and Final Plenary Meeting, we shall start with item one, which is a report on the workshops. I invite Ms Gervais-Vidricaire, Conference Rapporteur, to present her report.

1. Overview of the workshops

**Ms Marie Gervais-Vidricaire,
Rapporteur of the Conference**

(Original French)

Mr Chairman,

The workshops were first organized during the 27th International Conference, and they met with immediate and enormous success. This new form of dialogue at the International Conference served to create a space for debate in an informal framework and to discuss the Conference topics in greater depth.

It is in that context that the co-organizers of the 28th International Conference again invited the participants to set up a series of workshops. Of the many proposals made, the Standing Commission chose eleven.

Before presenting the specific content of the discussions, I should like to underscore that the level of participation in the workshops was exceptional and the interest aroused in the topics dealt with immense.

Although they are intended to supplement the official deliberations of the Conference, the workshops do not aim to reach a consensus or to produce a resolution. The brief report I will now make on the outcome of the workshops is therefore purely informative and reflects the main points raised during the debates.

This year, six workshops dealt with topics relating to armed conflicts and the implementation of international humanitarian law. The five other workshops discussed matters of internal interest to the Movement.

Workshop 1 dealt with international humanitarian law and the challenges of contemporary armed conflicts. The

main points of discussion were the relevance of international humanitarian law in both internal and international armed conflicts and its complementarity with other branches of the law protecting the human being, even in situations pertaining to the "war on terror". It is now accepted that most of the rules relating to the conduct of hostilities are part of the international customary law applicable in non-international armed conflicts as well. The study prepared by the ICRC will help clarify the scope of these rules and furnish a reply to the questions being raised. Statements were also made concerning the search for mechanisms able to ensure enhanced respect for the rules applicable to armed groups. The inquiry and monitoring mechanisms provided for in existing instruments were reviewed, in particular the mandate of the International Fact-Finding Commission and the role it could play.

The workshop on children and armed conflict identified new challenges and opportunities relating to the protection and rehabilitation of children involved in armed conflicts, notably through a more streamlined and better coordinated effort by the humanitarian community. The achievements and limits of the efforts made to deal effectively with child protection issues were discussed, the participants pointing to the need on the one hand to train humanitarian personnel accordingly, and on the other to develop operational strategies incorporating criteria for staff selection and responsibility. It was acknowledged that humanitarian action and a rights-based approach were complementary. All the participants recognized that for rehabilitation programmes to be successful, the local communities had to be closely involved and technical assistance provided for programmes and for the development of national legislation. Lastly, the participants explored the reasons for which adolescents volunteered for armed groups, namely war, poverty, lack of education and jobs and household violence.

Biotechnology was discussed during a workshop that highlighted the risks and responsibilities linked to advances in the life sciences, and the relevant rules of international humanitarian law. The measures required to prevent the life sciences from being used for hostile purposes were identified. The participants applauded the initiative of the ICRC, which had suggested that a web of prevention be established to alert governments and make them aware of the risks, rules and responsibilities in this field, including by proposing the adoption of a ministerial declaration. The specific measures put forward include, in addition to those I have already mentioned, disease surveillance to facilitate prompt detection, the promotion and dissemination of the rules of humanitarian law within the life science community, and professional codes of conduct. The workshop participants were unanimous in recognizing that the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has a major role to play in this field. The workshop also discussed the need to

review weapons in the light of international humanitarian law by putting in place effective review mechanisms and national implementing measures.

The workshop on small arms and human security covered three main topics: the role that the Movement and other humanitarian players can potentially play to limit the availability and misuse of small arms, the progress made in this respect and the possibilities for action in the coming years. The direct – the number of persons who died violent deaths, for example – and indirect – such as domestic violence – impact of small arms availability were also discussed. A series of very sophisticated studies have been conducted in this field and it is urgent to translate their conclusions into action, in particular by adopting legal norms, removing arms from circulation and controlling arms transfers. The impact of the availability of small arms on the security of humanitarian workers was discussed, and the agencies invited to support the work of organizations such as the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and the Small Arms Survey. Tangible measures were proposed, and the discussion concluded with the crucial need for political will to act and for partnership between civil society and governments to address all dimensions of the problem.

The domestic implementation of the Statute of the International Criminal Court was discussed during a workshop that examined the obligations arising from the Statute that had to be incorporated into the internal legal order. The experiences of a number of countries were presented, in particular the Netherlands, Canada, Germany and Slovenia. Representatives of the Prosecutor provided an update on the establishment of the office and underscored the importance of the principle of complementarity with national jurisdictions. The ICRC reminded the participants of the technical assistance it provides to encourage the national implementation and promotion of the Statute. Another point discussed was the immunity of humanitarian workers. Lastly, it was observed that the Statute's implementation was complex but achievable and that a wide range of possibilities existed in terms of technical assistance and the exchange of information.

(Original English)

The workshop on the operational challenges in carrying out humanitarian activities in a changing environment pointed out that independent humanitarian space has been reduced as State actors take advantage of political and military crises to position themselves while delivering humanitarian assistance. The independence of the Movement is being challenged. Radical non-State actors are rejecting humanitarian assistance and taking humanitarian organizations as soft and visible targets. The Movement needs to give a coherent and coordinated response to these challenges. It also needs to uphold the independence of its humanitarian action. National Societies should operate within the Fundamental Principles both in the national and international context.

Furthermore, the Movement must improve its communication and develop a better dialogue with the players in conflict and disaster situations.

The workshop on National Societies in civil-military cooperation focused on assistance for and protection of the victims of armed conflicts, internal violence and disasters. The current state of discussions on this topic was reviewed in the light of case studies, which revealed that the key players involved had different ways of approaching and understanding this issue. The participants identified the need for training and clarity on the respective roles and interrelations of civil-military cooperation. The possible effects of the changing environment on the auxiliary status of National Societies were also discussed. Furthermore, the workshop revealed that the Movement's operational priorities were not the same as those of military players. During the plenary discussion, the participants emphasized the importance for the Movement to act in a coordinated way. They also pointed out the need to provide training for both military and Red Cross and Red Crescent personnel in order to guarantee mutual understanding and respect for their respective mandates and functions. The discussion showed that there is room for improvement in civil-military cooperation, by means of dialogue and the exchange of information.

The workshop on HIV/AIDS identified four key issues:

- the need to build on the strong progress made in the past two years and for HIV work to become part of the Movement's core business;
- the Movement's need for long-term donor commitment if it was to get involved in treatment delivery and support (thanks to its grassroots presence the Movement can ensure that the marginalized are not left out);
- the need to match prevention to the type of epidemic occurring within a country. People living with HIV/AIDS should be included in this process. This means, for example, that a harm reduction approach for work with injecting drug users is required in many countries;
- the need for National Societies to explain their humanitarian work to the general public and to fight their own stigmatization as a result of their involvement.

The workshop on the role of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in disaster risk reduction provided a key opportunity to share views and experiences on the importance of disaster risk reduction and of the relevant links with governments in the work of the Movement's components. Case studies were presented to illustrate the experiences of, opportunities for and obstacles to more effective risk reduction. During the workshop, the participants reached a consensus on key issues of disaster reduction and the generation of greater commitment at the local, national, regional and international levels. A number of recommendations came out of the workshop.

The workshop entitled, "Where disasters meet: similarities and distinct factors involved in National Society preparedness to respond in contexts affected by both conflict and natural disasters", reviewed the challenges and opportunities faced by National Societies. Using case studies and examples from participants, the workshop identified priority areas for helping National Societies to face the challenges of meeting the needs of the most vulnerable in these situations. The priorities identified were:

- a harmonized preparedness strategy to equip National Societies most effectively;
- clarity and openness in addressing the need to maintain both independence and the role of the National Society as an auxiliary to the public authorities in their humanitarian services;
- the need for a flexible response from donors and from the Movement's components to ensure an effective and harmonized response.

Finally, the workshop on civil society participation in international public/private health partnerships discussed partnerships and how to reduce vulnerability to disease and disasters. The participants stressed the importance of involving all stakeholders in the development of a common strategy. The Movement can be a leader in public health and the International Federation can serve as a channel between the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations and NGOs in countries where country coordination mechanisms are not in place.

(Original French)

Mr Chairman,

I would like to conclude by thanking and congratulating the organizers of the eleven workshops, both the governments and the National Societies and observers, for the topics they proposed and the outstanding work accomplished.

(Applause)

**Mr Jaime Ricardo Fernández Urriola,
Chairman of the Conference**

(Original Spanish)

Thank you, Ms Gervais-Vidricaire. We know how much work and effort went into the workshops. I now invite the Vice-Chairman of the Conference, Mr Hisham Harun Hashim, to take the floor on the second item, the presentation of the pledges recorded.

2. Overview of the pledges

**Mr Hisham Harun Hashim, Vice-Chairman of
the Conference**

(Original English)

Your Excellencies, Fellow Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Following on the initiative taken during the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and

Red Crescent, the components of the Movement, governments and observers have been asked to make specific pledges in order to turn goodwill into specific humanitarian commitment. The pledges have been sorted under the four main themes of the Agenda for Humanitarian Action and under the general themes carried out in pursuance of the objectives of the 1999 Plan of Action.

An initial review of the pledges shows that 124 National Societies, the International Federation and the ICRC, 66 governments and seven observers have submitted a total of 367 distinct pledges. This represents an increase in participation since 1999, since 60 of these pledges were prepared jointly; most are national in scope, underlining a greater commitment to working together towards a common goal.

Pledges made in the context of the Agenda for Humanitarian Action are as follows:

Firstly: to respect and restore the dignity of missing persons and their families in armed conflict or internal strife. Most of the commitments made by Conference participants are joint national or regional pledges, which clearly reflects the direct and critical link existing between domestic action on behalf of missing people and their families, and the need to work internationally actively to support efforts by State authorities, the ICRC and sister National Societies on behalf of missing persons. These initiatives are directed towards preventing persons from becoming unaccounted for, resolving the problem when this occurs and responding to the needs of families of missing persons. We welcome the joint national pledges and that of the ICRC on this topic and would like to underline one joint pledge made by fourteen participants that demonstrates good cooperation in an area where it is especially needed.

Secondly: to strengthen the protection of civilians from the indiscriminate effects and use of weapons and the protection of combatants from abhorrent forms of death and injury, through controls on weapons development, proliferation and use. The pledges include adherence to the relevant treaties, including the 1980 United Nations Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Protocols and the 1997 Ottawa Convention on Anti-personnel Mines, assistance to mine-victims, mine-awareness and clearance programmes, the review of national legislation and arms transfer policies, and strengthened control of small arms and light weapons.

Thirdly: to minimize the impact of disasters by implementing disaster risk reduction measures and improving preparedness and response mechanisms. The States Parties have committed themselves to building or strengthening the capacity of and working in cooperation with National Societies in order to reduce the vulnerabilities of local communities to disasters and to better prepare those communities for such challenges by establishing disaster preparedness and response mechanisms and formulating national contingency plans.

Lastly: to reduce the increased vulnerability to disease arising from stigma and discrimination. The pledges indicate a high awareness of the urgency of addressing the issue and focus on the need for advocacy to prevent transmission and protect the dignity of those affected, and on better access to medication and treatment. Concerning this topic we would particularly stress the joint pledges made by the regions of southern Africa, East Africa and the European Union.

The pledges made in pursuance of objectives contained in the 1999 Plan of Action relate to three main areas.

The first is the promotion and dissemination of international humanitarian law, the Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values, with special emphasis on youth and the armed forces. Often these pledges are jointly proposed by the National Societies and governments.

The second area relates to the strengthening of National Societies through capacity building, with most of the pledges concerning revision of National Society statutes and national Red Cross/Red Crescent legislation. Other pledges concern closer cooperation between National Societies and governments.

Another theme of particular concern to Conference participants is the national implementation of international humanitarian law in peacetime. Indeed, a number of participants have pledged to raise public awareness of the proper use of the emblem as a protective device, and to adopt national implementing measures for the protection of the red cross and red crescent emblems. Other participants have pledged to create a humanitarian law commission, or to strengthen an existing commission; such commissions are responsible for providing advice on and coordinating all matters relating to the implementation of the law at national level, and for promoting compliance with and the development of the law.

All the pledges have been recorded in an Honour Book. Each Conference participant is responsible for implementing and reporting on its follow-up action. The pledges and reports on follow-up can be consulted on the ICRC's website.

The pledges afford the Conference participants a means of providing support for the implementation of the Agenda for Humanitarian Action and facilitate their reporting on follow-up action. In the report on the follow-up to the Plan of Action for the Years 2000–2003, we heard that the pledges made at the 27th International Conference were used by numerous States and National Societies as a basis for their reports on the concrete steps they took on issues such as anti-personnel landmines, national disaster plans, and efforts to fight the spread and consequences of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases. The Agenda and supporting pledges should reinforce and complement this work.

(Applause)

Mr Jaime Ricardo Fernández Urriola, Chairman of the Conference

(Original Spanish)

Thank you, Mr Hashim. We shall now move on to point three. I invite Ms Gervais-Vidricaire, Conference Rapporteur, to report on the work of the Commissions.

3. Report on the work of the Commissions

Ms Marie Gervais-Vidricaire, Rapporteur of the Conference

(Original English)

Mr. Chairman,

It is an honour for me to report on the meetings of the Commissions of the Conference, which took place on 4 December. At the outset, I would like to thank the rapporteurs of the Commissions for their contributions, which have allowed me to prepare this report. I hope that this report will adequately reflect the quality of the discussions in the Commissions.

Commissions A2 and A3 met under the chairmanship of Mrs Amina Mohamed, Ambassador of Kenya.

Commission A2

The theme for Commission A2 was “Enhancing protection in armed conflicts: Humanitarian aspects of the issue of persons missing in connection with armed conflict”. The work of Commission A2 started with introductory presentations made by three panellists and was followed by a discussion which involved 26 government and National Society delegations.

The first panellist described the grave trauma suffered by the families of missing persons and spoke of their psychological, social, economic and legal needs and of the importance of the families' right to know.

The second panellist spoke about the existing mechanisms and the legal framework with regard to the missing. He emphasized five key areas: the need for coordination and cooperation between the mechanisms and the authorities; the involvement of the families; the identification of remains; the need for effective prevention; and the need to provide information to the families so that they harboured no illusions.

The third and last panellist spoke about the four phases of the process started in 2002 by the ICRC: 1) the definition and collection of best practices; 2) a governmental and non-governmental Expert Conference held in Geneva on 19–21 February 2003, which adopted observations and recommendations; 3) the current 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent; and 4) the implementation of the Agenda for Humanitarian Action and pledges.

It is worth noting that during the ensuing discussion, all the speakers expressed their support for the components of the Agenda for Humanitarian Action

pertaining to missing persons. Several delegations, from both governments and National Societies, pledged to support the ICRC initiative and implement the Agenda. The following points were raised:

- the need to strengthen tracing services;
- the primary responsibility of governments with regard to the missing;
- the importance of disseminating information and of training armed and police forces and young people;
- the need to place the issue of missing persons on various international agendas;
- the need for capacity building;
- the suffering and specific needs of families;
- the special needs of children;
- the right of families to know what happened;
- the inclusion of internal strife in the Agenda for Humanitarian Action;
- the importance of resolving the issue of missing persons in the context of peace and reconciliation procedures.

The participants called for increased efforts by the international community and increased cooperation between States, National Societies and other stakeholders. Lack of means and resources were cited by some delegations as presenting challenges.

Several delegations stressed that the problem of missing persons was not limited to conflict situations.

Commission A3

The theme for Commission A3 was "Enhancing protection in armed conflict: Confronting the human cost of weapons availability, use and misuse". In her introduction, the Chairman stressed that the recent prohibition of landmines, the ban on blinding laser weapons and the agreement on the explosive remnants of war demonstrate that international humanitarian law can provide a common ground for progress in relation to weapons issues. The Chair then reminded the participants of the issues on the Commission's agenda:

- anti-personnel landmines and the First Review Conference of the 1997 Ottawa Convention, to be held in Nairobi in 2004;
- explosive remnants of war and the new Protocol to the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons addressing the human costs thereof;
- small arms, light weapons and the control of their availability;
- biotechnologies and the efforts required to ensure that advances in life sciences are not turned to hostile ends;
- the obligatory review of the legality of all new weapons and methods of warfare.

The Commission heard two panellists. The first panellist highlighted the fact that, despite the impressive success of the past decade in bringing humanitarian concerns to bear on the arms control agenda (notably with regard to landmines, for example), much work

remained to be done. The new Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War is a significant development, but the Protocol needs to be implemented in good faith. The panellist stressed that inadequate control of the transfer of small arms and their frequent use in violation of international humanitarian law result in more civilian deaths than all other weapons in current conflicts. The issue requires a comprehensive approach.

The second panellist spoke about the ICRC's Appeal on Biotechnology, Weapons and Humanity, which was launched in September 2002. He mentioned in particular:

- the risk that new technologies in life sciences might be subverted for hostile use if not properly controlled;
- the importance of a ministerial declaration by States, as proposed by the ICRC, and of implementing adequate national legislation;
- a web of prevention to be woven among the scientific and medical communities and the pharmaceutical and biotech industries.

During the ensuing discussion, many delegations welcomed the adoption of the Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War and urged States to adhere to it. The participants expressed support for the 1997 Ottawa Convention, especially in the light of the upcoming First Review Conference, to be held in 2004, and for the ICRC's initiative on biotechnology, weapons and humanity. The initiative should be viewed as complementary to the work being undertaken in the context of the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention.

The following points also emerged from the discussion:

- concern about developments in biotechnology that might lead to new biological weapons;
- the need to control the proliferation of weapons and to ensure that humanitarian law norms are respected when producing new weapons;
- the need to increase public awareness of these issues.

Several delegations spoke about small arms and light weapons. The following points were mentioned:

- the relationship between small arms and child soldiers;
- the relationship between small arms and regional security;
- the need for a comprehensive approach which addresses both demand and supply;
- the role of National Societies in raising awareness;
- the need to put in place control mechanisms.

The participants also mentioned the importance of work on cluster bombs and other submunitions, and expressed satisfaction that these weapons were referred to in the Agenda for Humanitarian Action.

Disappointment was expressed regarding the way in which some weapons issues were being treated in the

Drafting Committee. For example, one participant regretted that many government delegations approached these issues from a disarmament rather than a humanitarian perspective.

Finally, the need for weapons reviews was also discussed.

Commissions B2 and B3 were chaired by Mrs Martine Letts from the Australian Red Cross.

Commission B2

The theme for Commission B2 was “Reducing the risk and impact of disaster and disease: Reducing the risk and impact of disaster and improving preparedness and response mechanisms”. The Commission covered two main topics: 1) risk and impact reduction, and 2) the Federation project on international disaster response law.

The discussion started from the premise that disasters are increasingly affecting a disproportionate number of the most vulnerable in our world. The poor, migrants, displaced people and other marginalized groups are particularly affected, creating a challenge for governments and civil society, including the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

Most of the participants focused on four themes: the involvement of the most vulnerable; community-based participatory approaches; the need for a holistic approach to disaster management, and international disaster response law.

The main points made with regard to the involvement of the most vulnerable were:

- disasters affect development;
- greater involvement of the most vulnerable is a critical element in disaster management;
- local volunteers affected by a disaster also need disaster relief, including psychological and social support;
- National Societies, which have ties to the communities, need to work more closely with their governments and be an integral part of their national disaster response plans.

The following points were highlighted regarding community-based participatory approaches:

- the need to utilize the local expertise of National Societies during disaster response;
- the importance of community-based disaster-preparedness programmes, which are seen by National Societies as a good supplement to, not a substitute for, disaster-management programmes;
- the importance of collective action involving all key players at the local, national, regional and international levels.

The following points emerged from the discussion on the need for a holistic approach to disaster management:

- investing in risk reduction means investing in development;

- effective tools already exist and are being utilized (for example, the International Federation's Vulnerability and Capability Assessment is being used by many National Societies with good results);
- National Societies can act as catalysts for the development of national disaster response plans;
- National Societies, governments and other organizations must work together in areas such as planning, training, education and legislative approaches to enhance disaster management efforts;
- unfortunately, not many organizations approach their planning in a holistic manner or involve communities in dialogue to enhance their level of readiness.

On the topic of international disaster response law, the following points were noteworthy:

- the International Federation's international disaster response law project was strongly endorsed in the session, with speakers urging the Federation to continue its work in this field;
- the participants felt that a greater level of understanding and implementation of existing international disaster response law was more important than the development of a new body of law on the subject.

Commission B3

Commission B3 was entitled “Reducing the risk and impact of disaster and disease: Reducing the risk and impact of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases on vulnerable people”.

The participants had an extensive exchange of views on the alarming and growing magnitude of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, on the disastrous situation that many countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, face and on the extreme difficulties to which vulnerable groups in the population are exposed.

The participants raised a number of issues and made a number of recommendations.

- At present, 70 per cent of the global HIV/AIDS burden lies in sub-Saharan Africa, but the virus is also spreading at an alarming rate in Eastern Europe, Asia and the Caribbean. Efforts must be focused on these regions, too.
- The response is not commensurate with the rate at which the pandemic is spreading. The global community must therefore renew its commitment for an expanded response and consider access to treatment as an urgent humanitarian imperative.
- Of the four million people living with HIV/AIDS in Africa, only 2 per cent have access to antiretroviral treatment. The Conference Declaration must emphasize the need for accelerated access to antiretroviral treatment and call on developed countries to redouble their support and efforts.
- The Declaration has to discuss the HIV/AIDS situation in terms of prevention and promote a holistic

approach, i.e. prevention, fighting stigma and discrimination, providing treatment and support. It was recommended that the Declaration include more detail on specific prevention strategies.

- Sensitive issues such as sex, injecting drug use, men having sex with men, etc. must be addressed with sensitivity and openness. To achieve real results, practical activities must be designed accordingly.
- Stigma and discrimination were underscored as factors in the spread of the epidemic.
- An effective mechanism was needed to mobilize the resources required to implement programmes at community level.
- Risk reduction, in particular harm reduction related to injecting drug use, was considered an important means of minimizing the spread of HIV and other blood-borne infections among injection drug users.
- Equity must be maintained in providing access to care and treatment, especially for marginalized segments of the population.
- Child trafficking was another factor in the spread of HIV, and the International Federation and the ICRC are encouraged to address this issue.
- HIV/AIDS affects family breadwinners and results in food shortages for many of the people living with HIV/AIDS and their families. Food security was an important consideration that should be addressed in the Declaration.
- Because women shoulder the burden of infection and other HIV associated problems, the Declaration should include measures to empower women and alleviate their suffering.
- The participants acknowledged and commended the International Federation's efforts to address the HIV/AIDS challenges, including fighting stigma and discrimination, prevention, care, treatment and support.
- The participants recognized that the Massambo Fund, established by the International Federation to make antiretroviral drugs available for the staff and volunteers of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, is a step in the right direction. However, concern was expressed that such a move might be seen to compromise the principle of impartiality.
- The participants consider that the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is a respected voice and has access to governments to advocate for:
 1. access to antiretroviral therapy for all who need it;
 2. the reform of discriminatory legislation and policies, which deny many vulnerable people access to adequate measures of prevention, treatment and care;
 3. the involvement of people living with HIV/AIDS and other vulnerable populations in decision-making;
 4. the advancement and empowerment of women and their protection from violence;

5. the introduction of harm reduction strategies for injection drug users.

Given the extensive experience that the Movement has acquired in areas of disaster response, work in coordination with the community at grassroots level, the management of its vast volunteer base at global level and the promotion of the Fundamental Principles that favour rights-based action, the participants strongly encouraged the National Societies to:

- provide a "humanitarian space" for negotiating policies and legal issues;
- provide basic health care on the basis of vulnerability and need without discrimination;
- adopt operational measures for comprehensive prevention and care, including harm reduction strategies for injection drug users;
- support AIDS education, voluntary and confidential testing, and adequate pre- and post-test counselling and awareness programmes, particularly for women and girls;
- integrate HIV/AIDS into emergency operations;
- continue to implement the global campaign against AIDS-related stigma and discrimination.

It was noted that the collective global response was too limited in scope and had therefore done very little to curb the pandemic, which was killing not just people but also nations.

(Applause)

**Mr Jaime Ricardo Fernández Urriola,
Chairman of the Conference**

(Original Spanish)

Thank you, Ms Gervais-Vidricaire. We shall now continue with item 4, the report from the Drafting Committee. I turn to the Chairman of the Drafting Committee, Ambassador Johan Molander, under whose skilful leadership the Committee reached a consensus on several matters considered during the Conference and prepared the draft resolutions distributed this morning. Ambassador Molander, you have the floor.

4. Report of the Drafting Committee

**H.E. Ambassador Johan Molander, Chairman
of the Drafting Committee**

(Original English)

Mr Chairman,

The Drafting Committee had before it a number of documents and was given the task of negotiating them and reaching a consensus with a view to their adoption by the plenary.

The documents were: the draft Declaration, the draft Agenda for Humanitarian Action, and draft Resolution 1 by which those two substantive texts would be adopted. The Committee also dealt with three technical resolutions: draft Resolution 2 amend-

ing the Regulations of the Empress Shōken Fund, draft Resolution 3 on the emblem, and draft Resolution 4 on the date and place of the next International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

Early yesterday evening, the Committee was able to adopt all the documents submitted to it by consensus. In connection with the adoption of Resolution 3 on the Emblem, two delegations expressed their national positions.

I now have the honour of submitting these documents to the Conference for approval.

The Drafting Committee engaged in an in-depth discussion on several parts of the substantive documents. It worked each day until late at night. Several revised drafts were produced of the Declaration and of the different parts of the Agenda for Humanitarian Action, in order finally to arrive at a consensus text.

An open-ended working group, chaired by the Vice-Chair, Ms Norma Nascimbene de Dumont of Argentina, was set up in order to deal with General Objective 4 of the Agenda, relating to "Reducing the risk and impact of diseases". The other texts were dealt with by the Drafting Committee itself in plenary, while a number of issues were of course subject to consultations in informal groups of interested delegations.

Although the negotiations were often difficult and sometimes brought to light diverging views, the atmosphere in the Drafting Committee and other groups was excellent. I was impressed by the spirit of cooperation and accommodation and the constructive approach that was taken by all.

The documents now before the plenary are thus the result of extensive negotiations, in which many delegations have had to make often painful concessions. They reflect a delicate balance which we are sure will meet with the approval of all members of the Conference.

It is my view that delegations to the Conference will be able to appreciate that the essence of the Declaration and of all the objectives has been maintained and sometimes even strengthened.

Finally, I would like to express my warmest thanks to Ms Norma Nascimbene de Dumont for the extraordinary way she handled the difficult negotiations on the text relating to HIV/AIDS. Without her the Drafting Committee would not have been able to finish its work on time. I also extend my thanks to the members of my Secretariat, seconded to me from the ICRC and the International Federation, for their sterling contributions throughout the Conference. I cannot mention them all by name, but as regards assistance and drafting, I wish particularly to highlight the outstanding work of Charlotte Lindsey and Victoria Bannon and their colleagues Christiane Johannot-Gradis, Peter Herby, Gabor Rona, Michelle Mack and Inigio Barena. They are the ones who did the real work.

I would also like to thank the other two Vice-Chairs, Ambassador Valentine Rugwabiza of Rwanda and

Dr Heike Spieker from the German Red Cross, for their support.

Finally, Mr Chairman, I thank you and your colleagues in the Bureau for the excellent cooperation. Last but not least I express my gratitude and appreciation for the constructive and cordial spirit in which the delegations – National Societies and governments – participated in the Drafting Committee.

I have, however, one more comment to make. We have produced quite a few documents and translated them very quickly, and there are a few small errors in the text which I would like to highlight. My declaration will be included in the minutes. The texts we adopted are thus technically amended by me to reflect in one case the agreement we made and in another case the translations in French and Spanish.

In paragraph 8, line 7 of the Declaration, the text beginning on line 6 should read: "Furthermore, humanitarian workers should be allowed free and unimpeded access in accordance with the rules provided for in relevant international law to populations affected by armed conflicts, disasters and diseases, or under foreign occupation". In the reproduction of this document, the words "the rules provided for in relevant international law" had by error been omitted.

Furthermore, a correction should be made in the French and Spanish versions of Objective 3.2. I understand that international disaster response should be translated in French as "les actions internationales en cas de catastrophes" and in Spanish as "las acciones internacionales en casos de desastre". Secondly, the laws, rules and principles applicable to international disaster response should be translated in the inverse order, with the word "rules" first, so that in French it should read "les règles, lois et principes applicables aux actions internationales en cas de catastrophes" and in Spanish, "las normas, leyes, y principios aplicables en las acciones internacionales en casos de desastre".

(Applause)

5. Adoption of the resolutions of the Conference and comments of participants

**Mr Jaime Ricardo Fernández Urriola,
Chairman of the Conference**

(Original Spanish)

Thank you, Ambassador Molander. We know how hard you and your team have worked in the past few days to put these texts before the Conference today. I now suggest that the Conference adopt the Declaration and the Agenda for Humanitarian Action by approving Resolution 1 in the version formulated by the Drafting Committee. Can we consider that we have adopted Resolution 1? Thank you, Resolution 1 has been adopted.

I now suggest that we proceed to the adoption of the remaining resolutions of the Conference, which were

also adopted by the Drafting Committee. You have received a copy of each of the following documents: draft resolution 2 on the Empress Shôken Fund, draft resolution 3 on the emblem, and draft resolution 4 on the date and place of the International Conference to be held in 2007. Can we consider that these resolutions have been adopted? Thank you, I declare the above-mentioned resolutions approved.

The delegations of Japan and Algeria have asked for the floor. I will start by giving the floor to the representative of Japan.

Statement of the Delegation of Japan

H.E. Mr. Minoru Endo, Ambassador, Special Assistant to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Japan

(Original English)

Following the adoption of the Declaration and Agenda for Humanitarian Action, the Japanese delegation wishes to make the following short statement.

We regret that the reference to human security included in the draft text has been deleted and that our proposal to refer to the promotion of human security is not reflected in the text.

We conducted consultations on this issue with interested delegations, and progress was made. Unfortunately we were unable to find a formulation acceptable to all interested delegations in time.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to those delegations that considered our proposals seriously.

Japan attaches importance to the concept of human security, and the promotion and realization of human security is an important pillar of Japan's foreign policy objectives. We will therefore continue to endeavour to obtain deeper and wider understanding of the matter.

Mr Jaime Ricardo Fernández Urriola, Chairman of the Conference

(Original Spanish)

Thank you. The representative of Algeria has the floor.

Declaration on behalf of the Arab Group and of the African Group

H.E. Mr Mohamed-Saleh Dembri, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Algeria, Geneva, speaking on behalf of the Arab Group and of the African Group

(Original French)

Mr Chairman,

I have two statements to make, one on behalf of the Arab Group, which I chair, and one on behalf of the African Group, which I coordinate.

Generally speaking, both groups applaud the cordial, consensual and sincere atmosphere in which the Conference deliberations were held. They express their gratitude and appreciation to the Swedish Ambassador, Johan Molander, who is a personal friend, for the work he did, to you, of course, Mr Chairman, for the way you handled the Conference, and to all those who helped you in that endeavour, including the staff of the ICRC.

I will start with the statement of the Arab Group.

(Original Arabic)

The Arab Group,

Having noted Council of Delegates Resolution 5 of 1 December 2003, wishes to make the following comments in relation thereto:

1. Regarding operational paragraph 3, the Arab Group confirms that it understands the meaning of the phrase "developments which have made it impossible to bring the process to its expected outcome". The main reason the diplomatic conference did not take place was the serious deterioration in the situation in the occupied Arab and Palestinian territories and the escalation in serious Israeli violations of the rights of the Palestinian people and the rules of international humanitarian law, in particular the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their two Additional Protocols. Consequently, the apparent confusion in the wording of operational paragraph 3 does not clearly reflect that reality.
2. As concerns operational paragraph 6, the Arab Group emphasizes its attachment to the consensus on the principle of protocol 3, on condition that the emblem have no political, religious, ethnic, racial or regional connotations. In that framework, the Arab Group considers that the draft protocol in its present state remains open for discussion and may be modified. In that respect, the Arab Group affirms that it suggested that the text be modified just before the negotiating process stopped.
3. The Arab Group requests that this statement be incorporated into the proceedings of the Conference.

(Original French)

Mr Chairman, I have a second statement on behalf of the African Group.

The African Group has analysed the results of the elections to the Standing Commission. It congratulates the five new members elected and hopes that the Standing Commission will, as it always has, carry out its duties for the sole benefit of humanitarian action throughout the world.

The African Group nevertheless regrets, although it does not claim that it is entitled to a quota, that Africa, a continent undergoing many trials, has no representative on

the Standing Commission. It hopes that the next time elections are held, a position of solidarity among all delegates towards Africa will provide the Standing Commission with the possibility of benefiting from the broadest representativity, in accordance with the principles of universality of the international humanitarian movement.

**Mr Jaime Ricardo Fernández Urriola,
Chairman of the Conference**

(Original Spanish)

I now give the floor to the representative of the Holy See.

Statement of the Holy See

**Archbishop Silvano Tomasi, Apostolic Nuncio,
Permanent Observer of the Holy See**

(Original English)

Mr Chairman,

The Holy See welcomes the adoption of the Declaration and Agenda for Humanitarian Action by the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

Although the delegation of the Holy See participated actively in the drafting work, it expresses a reservation about paragraphs 4.1.3 and 4.1.4 of the Agenda for Humanitarian Action, under General Objective 4 regarding certain actions to reduce the risk and impact of diseases.

The Holy See, in conformity with its nature and particular mission, reaffirms all the reservations that it has previously expressed at the conclusions of various United Nations conferences and summits and the Special Sessions of the General Assembly for the review of those meetings. Nothing that the Holy See has done during the discussions leading up to the adoption of the Agenda for Humanitarian Action should be understood or interpreted as an endorsement of concepts it cannot support for moral reasons.

The Holy See considers that the expression “sexual and reproductive health care” applies to our holistic concept of health, which embraces the person in the entirety of his/her personality, mind and body, and which fosters the achievement of personal maturity in sexuality and in the mutual love and decision-making that characterizes the conjugal relationship in accordance with moral norms.

The Holy See wishes to emphasize that it has in no way changed its well-known moral position regarding the use of condoms as a means of preventing HIV infection.

The Holy See asks that this reservation be recorded in the proceedings of the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

**Mr Jaime Ricardo Fernández Urriola,
Chairman of the Conference**

(Original Spanish)

Thank you, Father. I now give the floor to the representative of Iran.

Statement of the Islamic Republic of Iran

**Mr. Hamid Eslamizad, First Counsellor,
Deputy Permanent Representative of the
Islamic Republic of Iran, Geneva**

(Original English)

I requested the floor to express the position of my government concerning Resolution 3, which the Conference has just adopted.

My delegation was dismayed to see draft Resolution 3 brought to our attention at such a late stage last night, and believes that the work of the Conference requires more transparency, at least for the future.

Without wishing to go into details and recalling what was stated by Ambassador Dembri of Algeria on behalf of the Arab Group, my delegation would like to make a reservation as concerns Resolution 3, which is not acceptable to my delegation and to many other countries that are members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

I would like to further clarify that the content of Protocol III is of the utmost importance to Iran, and the way this resolution was handled at this Conference makes us and many other members of the OIC even more vigilant about the efforts which may be being made and which may be prejudicial to the content of the Protocol.

I request that this reservation be recorded in the proceedings of the Conference.

**Mr Jaime Ricardo Fernández Urriola,
Chairman of the Conference**

(Original Spanish)

Thank you. I can inform all the delegates who have spoken that their remarks will be incorporated into the Conference proceedings. We will now continue with item 6, namely the closing ceremony of the Conference. I give the floor to the President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Mr Juan Manuel Suárez del Toro Rivero.

4.10 CLOSING CEREMONY

6 December 2003
11.00 a.m.

**Address by Mr Juan Manuel Suárez del Toro
Rivero, President of the International
Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent
Societies**

(Original Spanish)

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, Friends from
the Red Cross and Red Crescent,

At this final meeting of the 28th International
Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent,
I should first like to thank all the delegations present
for their statements in support of the work of the
International Federation and the National Red Cross
and Red Crescent Societies. It is truly encouraging to
note that you appreciate our efforts to reduce vulner-
ability and improve the lives of persons affected by
disaster, sickness and conflict.

I am particularly grateful to all those governments that
have helped the National Societies to build their
capacities. This is crucial if the National Societies are to
respond effectively to the needs confronting us.

This Conference has tried to obtain a better under-
standing of the main challenges in the humanitarian
world, to reaffirm our collective commitment to
respond to them and to reach a consensus on specific
action we can take to protect human dignity.

Many challenges face us: reducing the impact of disas-
ter and diseases such as the HIV/AIDS pandemic,
fighting stigma and discrimination, and promoting
respect for everyone's rights and for international
humanitarian law. An enormous job lies ahead if we are
to meet these challenges.

As I told you yesterday, each person can help advance
issues, but by channelling the efforts and commitment
of others and by working together, we can achieve
far more.

We have demonstrated this here in the past few days.
We have noted a high level of commitment by the
components of the International Red Cross and Red
Crescent Movement and State representatives to a
common goal – protecting human dignity.

I am very pleased that we were able to set aside our dif-
ferences and appreciate the diversity of opinions
expressed here in our discussions. We have worked out a
Declaration and an Agenda for Humanitarian Action that
set us a number of priorities for the coming four years.

However, we cannot and should not stop with what
the Conference has produced. Starting today, we must
all begin to put into practice what we have agreed. We
must act now, for the lives and dignity of millions of
people are at stake.

We must also try to evolve and not confine ourselves
just to protecting but also to promoting human dignity.

This means working regularly and in the long term to
eliminate threats to human dignity without infringing
on anyone's rights and dignity. Everyone should have
the same possibility to live a full life, with security,
good health and dignity.

The International Federation is committed to this
task. Our National Societies and our network of vol-
unteers will continue to respond to the consequences
of conflict, disaster and disease. More than that, they
will also pursue their efforts to reduce risks and vul-
nerability to disaster, disease, violence and conflict.

We will work with and in vulnerable communities to
strengthen their capacity and to enable them to
respond better to situations that threaten their lives,
their means of survival and their dignity, and help them
find the long-term solutions that are best adapted to
their culture, hopes and aspirations.

We will work to reduce the risk of disaster and disease,
to improve our disaster response, to fight the stigma
and discrimination associated with HIV/AIDS, to pro-
mote respect for diversity and to defend the dignity of
each and every person.

This is our commitment to this International
Conference.

And, in order to fulfil our objectives effectively, we
must continue to develop effective partnerships with
the Movement's other components, with other stake-
holders and, in particular, with governments. We have
learnt a great deal from such partnerships.

In this regard, I should like to highlight the recom-
mendations made in the report on "National Societies
as Auxiliaries to the Public Authorities in the
Humanitarian Field", that we should ensure a balanced
relationship between States and National Societies.
These recommendations, in my opinion, serve as a
model and tool to develop stronger, more positive
partnerships.

I would also like to urge governments, as I said yester-
day on the occasion of International Volunteer Day, to
work out laws and policies promoting volunteerism
and to take steps to protect volunteers involved in
humanitarian work.

To conclude, I wish to highlight the importance of
partnerships, especially with vulnerable communities
– as well as the importance of our work to combat
HIV/AIDS – and to repeat something that Julian
Hows, from the Global Network of People living with
HIV/AIDS (GNP+), said in his address at the opening
ceremony.

Julian said: "Partnership with us, people living with the
virus – empowered through really being accorded

dignity and respect – offers the best strategy to reach out to those groups. I believe these approaches express the Fundamental Principles in a way that is fitting for the 21st century”.

Mr Chairman, let us all work in partnership, inspired by the Fundamental Principles, mutual respect, the commitments set down in the Declaration and the Agenda for Humanitarian Action of this 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

Human dignity depends on us all. We must accept this challenge and make it our commitment.

(Applause)

**Mr Jaime Ricardo Fernández Urriola,
Chairman of the Conference**

(Original Spanish)

Thank you, Mr President of the International Federation, for that statement.

I now give the floor to Mr Jakob Kellenberger, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

**Address by Mr Jakob Kellenberger, President of
the International Committee of the Red Cross**

(Original English)

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, I thank all of those of you who have contributed to the accomplishment of this Conference. The ICRC is grateful for all the messages of support it has received both with regard to its work in international humanitarian law and its humanitarian activities.

We are pleased that the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent has so clearly reaffirmed the relevance of humanitarian law in contemporary armed conflicts. In this troubled times, it is important that the standards that represent a minimum degree of humanity as agreed by the States party to the Geneva Conventions serve as reference points.

We have heard the great concerns of the States party to the Geneva Conventions and also National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies about violations of humanitarian law, which cause so many victims, most of whom are civilians.

The firm resolve expressed so often these past few days by the community of States and by civil society to prevent and to put an end to such violations is extremely encouraging. All of us must now see to it that our indignation over the suffering we have witnessed leads to a marked improvement in the field in the conditions of those who fall victim to the violence of armed conflicts. Let us all join forces to ensure that the methods and means of combat do not exceed the limits set by humanitarian law and that persons protected by humanitarian law do indeed benefit from such protection.

This Conference has also provided us with an opportunity to discuss the normative challenges facing humanitarian action. One of the ICRC's main responsibilities is to clarify, interpret and even, where necessary, contribute to the development of humanitarian law. We shall continue to assume this responsibility by pursuing the consultation process we have launched in various parts of the world in a bid to strengthen and enhance the protection afforded by humanitarian law.

This law provides the basis for humanitarian action. Our intention is to honour the trust that you have placed in us by intensifying our efforts to gain access to victims, to make authorities aware of their responsibilities so that the dignity of persons affected by armed conflicts is respected and those who suffer receive assistance.

We must, however, recognize that the threats to the humanitarian mission about which many of you have expressed concern represent a major challenge to the fulfilment of the mandate you have conferred upon us.

Such threats strike a blow at the very heart of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, at the immunity of impartial, independent and neutral humanitarian action and the right of the victims to protection. Let us see to it that our work does not also fall victim to the various forms of total warfare that we have observed or to confusion over humanitarian action.

We extend thanks to the members of the Movement for their support. In today's world, we must work in close collaboration. In so doing, we must take into account the respective competencies of our partners, but above all we must work in a spirit of solidarity and mutual respect and strive for effectiveness together. While the fractures that currently divide mankind may not disappear in the immediate future, these past few weeks the Movement has shown that it is united in its respect for diversity and its struggle against intolerance and discrimination.

Lastly, it is our duty to ensure that the resolutions, decisions, and pledges we have drafted in such a way that they reflect our common hopes are put into concrete effect. For its part, the ICRC shall assume its duty, particularly the implementation of its commitment to the tragic plight of missing persons. By the same token, it shall pursue its efforts on behalf of women who fall victim to armed conflict, particularly the mothers, sisters and wives of persons whose fate has never been determined, women whose uncertainty has plunged them into timeless anguish.

Human beings in the four corners of the world are dying as a result of armed conflict, infectious diseases, lack of disaster preparedness and malnutrition. The stakes are global. Our response shall be united. We have seen what needs to be done in several sectors. Now let our vision brings results and hope!

(Applause)

**Mr Jaime Ricardo Fernández Urriola,
Chairman of the Conference**

(Original Spanish)

Thank you, Mr Kellenberger, for those words.

We now have the honour to listen to Her Royal Highness Princess Margriet of the Netherlands.

**Address by H.R.H. Princess Margriet of the
Netherlands, Chairman of the Standing
Commission**

(Original English)

Your Excellencies, Dear Colleagues and Friends,

We have nearly come to the end of the 28th International Conference. I should like to make three remarks and I will need less than three minutes to do so.

First and foremost, on behalf of the outgoing Standing Commission, I should like to extend a very warm thank you to each and every one of you who has contributed to making this Conference a success. I believe this Conference has uplifted us all and empowered us in our humanitarian work.

We are greatly indebted to the Swiss government for its most generous support.

We owe a special word of gratitude to the co-hosts – the leadership and the staff of the ICRC and of the Federation. You have worked tirelessly and diligently on substance and on organization. We are deeply grateful to the Chairman and the Vice-Chairs, the Secretary General and all the other Chairs and Officers for their most efficient work and for leading us to a successful outcome.

The dedicated volunteers of the Red Cross of Geneva deserve a distinct mention for their hard work and ready assistance.

I should also like to offer heartfelt thanks to all Standing Commission members with whom I have had the great privilege of serving in the past eight years. I treasure your friendship and am most grateful for the enriching experience and teamwork.

With great joy I congratulate the new members on their election. The Movement's expectations of you are high and I wish you all the very best.

It is very rewarding for me to have been part of this successful and harmonious gathering. I am confident that you will build on the knowledge and experience within the Movement at large. The staff and volunteers are the backbone of the Movement.

Secondly, there can be no doubt that the right to human dignity is universal and non-negotiable. This conviction, for me, is the most important outcome of this Conference.

And finally, my hope is that our words of humanitarian commitment – contained in the Declaration, the Agenda and your pledges – will be transformed into concrete action. The Movement and governments must begin work for its implementation now. Together we can make a difference to humanity.

(Applause)

**Mr Jaime Ricardo Fernández Urriola,
Chairman of the Conference**

(Original Spanish)

Thank you, Princess Margriet. Before giving the floor to the new Chairman of the Standing Commission, we wish to express our most sincere thanks to Princess Margriet and congratulate her one more time on the extraordinary work the Standing Commission did under her leadership. I suggest a fresh round of applause in tribute to the Princess.

(Applause)

I now give the floor to the new Chairman of the Standing Commission.

**Address by Dr Mohammed Al-Hadid, newly-
elected Chairman of the Standing Commission**

Peace on You *As salam Alaykoun*, Mr Chairman, Your Royal Highness, Your Excellencies, Dear Friends,

I am deeply touched and greatly honoured by the confidence showed in me. I am committed to the humanitarian values of our great Movement and will serve in its interest, with the Fundamental Principles guiding my way.

I thank all members of the outgoing Standing Commission, especially its Chairman, Her Royal Highness Princess Margriet, for her commitment and her loyalty to the Movement, and for her contribution in transforming the Standing Commission under her great leadership in the last eight years into an active and strong Movement body. I shall endeavour to step into her shoes as the trustee of the International Conference.

I want to thank and congratulate all members of this Conference for the successful conclusion and adoption of the Declaration and the Agenda for Humanitarian Action, and to extend my sincere thanks to all those who have worked hard on the podiums and the unknown soldiers working behind the scenes to achieve these results.

One of the tasks entrusted to the Standing Commission is to further and to encourage the implementation of the resolutions of the International Conference and the Council of Delegates. The agenda will guide our work for the next International Conference, to take place in 2007. You have my commitment to do that.

You have elected the Standing Commission, you gave it your vote and now we need you to give it your support.

I wish you all a safe journey back to your home countries and I look forward to keeping in touch with you for the benefit of this great Movement.

As for the absence of an African member among the Standing Commission elected members, I would like to assure you that we will all take the voice of Africa into account. You can rely on us, we are committed to serving you and to serving this great Movement.

(Applause)

Address by Mr Jaime Ricardo Fernández Urriola, Chairman of the Conference

(Original Spanish)

Thank you, Mr Al-Hadid.

Dear Friends,

We have now reached the end of the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, which has focused on humanitarian concerns and on work in favour of the most vulnerable. This Conference took place at a time when the world is facing major problems relating to security, peace, relations between nations and communities, the threats to people's health in different parts of the world and pressure on the environment. Humanitarian work faces many challenges; one of the most crucial is to preserve the security of humanitarian workers, which grows more precarious with each passing day.

Never, however, has mankind mobilized to such an extent in the face of adversity. For us, this is a message of hope reflected in the fact that these conferences bring together governments, humanitarian agencies and the National Societies. The willingness of the parties to reach agreements has enabled the entire world, which has thus turned its attention to the situations that arise and threaten man's subsistence, to produce instruments and create organizations that have become

guarantors of the protection of human rights, one of which is access to a life of dignity.

I would like to thank all the Conference participants for their outstanding cooperation. Your statements in both the plenary meetings and in the commissions have been heard and their significance comprehended. The feeling that unites us enables us to continue our work. The agreements we have reached during these arduous days are tangible proof that man's interest in his fellow men is a manifest reality. In this respect, this year's Conference has shown an oft forgotten aspect of humanitarian action, emphasizing the protection of the victims' human dignity. It is from this point of view that the Conference deliberated the issue of missing persons, how to cope with disease and disaster, the use of certain arms and the stigmatization of those living with HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases. It is up to us, as representatives of our countries and of our National Societies, to implement the pledges we have agreed on. As a result, it only remains for me to urge you not to weaken in the daily struggle to protect human dignity.

I would like to thank all of you for your participation and your hard work. I express my gratitude to those people behind the scenes who have worked hard for the success of the Conference, such as the interpreters and the photographers. I ask you to give them a warm round of applause.

(Applause)

The time has come for us to take leave of each other, to return to our countries in order to make the agreements reached here a reality. I wish all the delegates, who come from almost every country in the world in evidence of the scope and universality of our Conference, a pleasant and happy trip back to their homes.

I hereby close the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

4.11 LIST OF DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED TO THE CONFERENCE

Provisional Agenda and Programme of the 28th International Conference (03/IC/00)

Information Note for the members, observers and guests

Summary Information – Rules of Procedures of the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

Compilation of documents, including:

- Draft Declaration (03/IC/01 – *for decision at the Conference*)
- Draft Agenda for Humanitarian Action (03/IC/02 – *for decision at the Conference*)
- Draft Resolution 1 (03/IC/03 – *for decision at the Conference*)

Background information on drafts of the Declaration, Agenda for Humanitarian Action and Resolution 1 (03/IC/04)

Activity Report 2000–2003 of the Empress Shōken Fund & Revision of the Regulations for the Empress Shōken Fund (03/IC/05 – *for decision at the Conference*)

Report prepared by the Joint Commission of the Empress Shōken Fund

Follow-up Report on the Implementation of the Plan of Action for the years 2000–2003 adopted by the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

Report prepared jointly by the ICRC and the International Federation (03/IC/06)

Women and War – Implementation of the ICRC pledge to the 27th International Conference

Report prepared by the ICRC (03/IC/07)

Women affected by armed conflict: Protection and Assistance – Outline of the Guidance Document (Women and War)

Report prepared by the ICRC (03/IC/08)

International Humanitarian Law and the Challenges of Contemporary Armed Conflicts

Report prepared by the ICRC (03/IC/09)

The Missing and their Families: Action to resolve the problem of people unaccounted for as a result of armed conflict or internal violence and to assist their families

Report prepared by the ICRC (03/IC/10)

International Disaster Response Laws Project Report 2002–2003

Report prepared by the International Federation (03/IC/11)

National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies as Auxiliaries to the Public Authorities in the Humanitarian Field: Conclusions from the study undertaken by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Report prepared by the International Federation (03/IC/12)

Report on the follow-up to Resolution 3 of the 27th International Conference on the Emblem (03/IC/13 – *for possible decision at the Conference*)

Report prepared by the Standing Commission

Customary International Humanitarian Law

Report prepared by the ICRC (03/IC/14)

Report on the Implementation of the International Federation Pledge to the 27th International Conference on Volunteers

Report prepared by the International Federation (03/IC/15)

Preparedness for climate change – 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

Report prepared by the International Federation in cooperation with the Netherlands Red Cross (03/IC/16)

Summary Presentation of the Workshops to be held during the 28th International Conference

Outlines prepared by the organizers of the workshops

List of Pledges Registered as of 1 October 2003

4.12 LIST OF PLEDGES

The pledges can be consulted on the ICRC and International Federation websites (www.icrc.org and www.ifrc.org). For further information, please refer to the overview of the pledges presented by Mr Hisham Harun Hashim, Vice-Chairman of the Conference (section 4.9).

Governments that made pledges at the 28th International Conference

Argentina	Estonia	Namibia	Sweden
Australia	Ethiopia	Netherlands (the)	Switzerland
Austria	Finland	New Zealand	Thailand
Belarus	France	Nigeria	Former Yugoslav
Belgium	Germany	Norway	Republic
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Greece	Panama	of Macedonia (the)
Bulgaria	Hungary	Peru	Turkey
Burkina Faso	Iceland	Poland	Uganda
Canada	Ireland	Portugal	Ukraine
China	Israel	Republic of Korea (the)	United Kingdom of
Colombia	Italy	Romania	Great Britain and
Croatia	Japan	Rwanda	Northern Ireland (the)
Cuba	Latvia	Serbia and Montenegro	United States
Cyprus	Lesotho	Sierra Leone	of America (the)
Czech Republic (the)	Lithuania	Singapore	Zambia
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Luxembourg	Slovakia	Zimbabwe
Denmark	Malta	Slovenia	
Eritrea	Mauritius	South Africa	
	Mexico	Spain	

National Societies that made pledges at the 28th International Conference

Afghanistan – Red Crescent	Dominican Republic (the) – Red Cross
Albania – Red Cross	Ecuador – Red Cross
Algeria – Red Crescent	El Salvador – Red Cross
Angola – Red Cross	Estonia – Red Cross
Antigua and Barbuda – Red Cross	Ethiopia – Red Cross
Argentina – Red Cross	Fiji – Red Cross
Armenia – Red Cross	Finland – Red Cross
Australia – Red Cross	France – Red Cross
Austria – Red Cross	Gambia (the) – Red Cross
Bahamas (the) – Red Cross	Georgia – Red Cross
Bahrain – Red Crescent	Germany – Red Cross
Barbados – Red Cross	Greece – Red Cross
Belarus – Red Cross	Grenada – Red Cross
Belgium – Red Cross	Guatemala – Red Cross
Belize – Red Cross	Guinea – Red Cross
Bosnia and Herzegovina – Red Cross	Guinea-Bissau – Red Cross
Botswana – Red Cross	Guyana – Red Cross
Bulgaria – Red Cross	Haiti – Red Cross
Burkina Faso – Red Cross	Honduras – Red Cross
Burundi – Red Cross	Hungary – Red Cross
Cambodia – Red Cross	Iceland – Red Cross
Cameroon – Red Cross	Indonesia – Red Cross
Canada – Red Cross	Ireland – Red Cross
Chile – Red Cross	Italy – Red Cross
Cook Islands – Red Cross	Jamaica – Red Cross
Costa Rica – Red Cross	Japan – Red Cross
Cuba – Red Cross	Kenya – Red Cross
Czech Republic (the) – Red Cross	Lao People's Democratic Republic (the) – Red Cross
Democratic People's Republic of Korea (the) – Red Cross	Latvia – Red Cross
Democratic Republic of the Congo – Red Cross	Lebanon – Red Cross
Denmark – Red Cross	Lesotho – Red Cross
Djibouti – Red Cross	Liberia – Red Cross
Dominica – Red Cross	Lithuania – Red Cross
	Luxembourg – Red Cross

Madagascar – Red Cross	Sierra Leone – Red Cross
Malawi – Red Cross	Singapore – Red Cross
Malta – Red Cross	Slovakia – Red Cross
Mauritius – Red Cross	Slovenia – Red Cross
Mexico – Red Cross	Somalia – Red Crescent
Morocco – Red Crescent	South Africa – Red Cross
Mozambique – Red Cross	Spain – Red Cross
Myanmar – Red Cross	Sri Lanka – Red Cross
Namibia – Red Cross	Sudan (the) – Red Crescent
Netherlands (the) – Red Cross	Swaziland – Red Cross
New Zealand – Red Cross	Sweden – Red Cross
Nicaragua – Red Cross	Switzerland – Red Cross
Niger (the) – Red Cross	Syrian Arab Republic (the) – Red Crescent
Nigeria – Red Cross	Thailand – Red Cross
Norway – Red Cross	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (the)
Pakistan – Red Crescent	– Red Cross
Panama – Red Cross	Tonga – Red Cross
Peru – Red Cross	Trinidad and Tobago – Red Cross
Philippines (the) – Red Cross	Turkey – Red Crescent
Poland – Red Cross	Uganda – Red Cross
Portugal – Red Cross	Ukraine – Red Cross
Republic of Korea (the) – Red Cross	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern
Republic of Moldova (the) – Red Cross	Ireland (the) – Red Cross
Romania – Red Cross	United Republic of Tanzania (the) – Red Cross
Rwanda – Red Cross	United States of America (the) – Red Cross
Saint Kitts and Nevis – Red Cross	Uruguay – Red Cross
Saint Lucia – Red Cross	Uzbekistan – Red Crescent
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines – Red Cross	Viet Nam – Red Cross
Serbia and Montenegro – Red Cross	Zambia – Red Cross
Seychelles – Red Cross	Zimbabwe – Red Cross

International Components that made pledges at the 28th International Conference

International Committee of the Red Cross

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Observers that made pledges at the 28th International Conference

Cruz Vermelha Timor-Leste – Red Cross

European Union

International Committee of the Blue Shield

Magen David Adom

Pan-Pacific and South-East Asian Women's
Association International

Eritrea – Red Cross

Comoros (the) – Red Crescent

FOURTEENTH SESSION OF THE STANDING COMMISSION OF THE RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT (Constitutive meeting) Geneva, 5 December 2003

Present

Chairman of the 28th International Conference

Mr Jaime Ricardo Fernández Urriola

Elected members

Mr Mohammed Al-Hadid

Mr Philippe Cuvillier

Ms Janet Davidson

Mrs Zoy Katevas de Sclabos

Dr Freddy Pedersen

ICRC

Mr Jakob Kellenberger

Mr François Bugnion

International Federation

Mr Juan Manuel Suárez del Toro Rivero

Mr Abbas Gullet (representing Mr Markku Niskala)

Secretary

Ms Helena Korhonen

Ms Erica Tong Junod, Assistant

Other participants

Mr Jean-Luc Blondel, Adviser to Mr Jakob Kellenberger

Mr Manuel Fiol, Adviser to Mr Juan Manuel Suárez del Toro

In accordance with Rule 3 of the Rules of Procedure for the Standing Commission, Mr Jaime Ricardo Fernández Urriola, Chairman of the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, convened and chaired the first meeting of the newly elected Commission.

1. ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE STANDING COMMISSION

The main purpose of the meeting was to elect the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Standing Commission, who are traditionally chosen from among the Commission's elected members.

On the basis of that tradition, Mr Fernández nominated Dr Al-Hadid, Vice-Chairman of the outgoing

Commission and the member elected with the highest number of votes (222), for the position of Chairman.

Decision: Dr Mohammed Al-Hadid of the Jordan National Red Crescent Society was unanimously elected Chairman of the 14th Session of the Standing Commission.

2. ELECTION OF THE VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE STANDING COMMISSION

In keeping with the same tradition, Mr Fernández nominated Ms Janet Davidson, who had received the second highest number of votes (209), for the position of Vice-Chairman. Her nomination was further motivated by criteria such as gender and geographical balance.

Decision: Ms Janet Davidson of the Canadian Red Cross Society was unanimously elected Vice-Chairman of the 14th Session of the Standing Commission.

3. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled to take place on 28-29 January 2004. It would last for one-and-a-half days and would be held at a venue to be confirmed outside Geneva. The Secretariat would communicate with all members in planning the programme and the agenda.

Dr Al-Hadid said that he would aim to plan future meetings in conjunction with meetings of the Federation's Governing Board, in order to reduce the number of journeys to Geneva for some members.

Decision: The Commission's next meeting would take place on 28-29 January 2004. The meeting venue, programme and agenda would be confirmed later. The Commission's meetings would be conducted in English with interpretation into Spanish.

In closing, Dr Al-Hadid thanked the Commission's members for their confidence and the ICRC and the International Federation for their continued support. It was his wish that the new Commission work as a team, in close cooperation and constant communication.



19-12-2005

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