

SIXTH REGIONAL MEETING OF ARAB RED CRESCENT AND RED CROSS SOCIETIES

The Sixth Regional Meeting of Arab Red Crescent and Red Cross Societies was held at Amman from 31 March to 6 April 1973. It was organized by the Jordan National Red Crescent, and half a dozen Societies took part in it. The League of Red Cross Societies and the ICRC delegated several representatives to attend the meeting.

The meeting was opened by Dr. Ahmed Abu-Goura, President of the Jordan Red Crescent, who was unanimously elected Chairman. Dr. Abdel-Aziz Modaress, President of the Saudi Arabian Red Crescent, and Mr. Mohamed Safwat, Director of the Egyptian Red Crescent, were elected Vice-Chairmen.

The agenda included a number of items which had already been dealt with at previous meetings, including the co-operation and co-ordination of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the League and the ICRC; efforts to promote the creation of new Red Crescent Societies; preparing National Societies for the XXIInd International Conference of the Red Cross scheduled to be held in Teheran next autumn, and their role in the development of international humanitarian law. The participants also considered various questions relating to organization or work such as the League's training institutes for Red Cross executives (the next is to be held in Amman in July 1973), matters relating to the Red Cross and environment, the duties of Societies in supplying relief, and the ICRC's activities in regard to the Israelo-Arab conflict. The representatives of the League and the ICRC submitted various statements. At the close of the discussions, a number of recommendations on agenda items were adopted, such as those concerning the founding of new Red Crescent Societies, in which it is the duty of the ICRC and the League to co-operate; the dissemination of the Geneva Conventions in the Arab countries; the setting up of a public relations service in each National Society which does not

yet have such a service, and the means of making the role of the Red Crescent and Red Cross and the underlying principles of the Geneva Conventions widely known; respect of the red crescent emblem; and the translation of ICRC publications into Arabic.

REASSESSMENT OF THE ROLE OF THE RED CROSS

In an article published in the review La Croix-Rouge Suisse (Berne, 1973, No. 1), Professor Hans Haug, President of the Swiss Red Cross and Vice-President of the League, deals with fresh problems that are now confronting the Red Cross movement. After mentioning that the attempts to reassess Red Cross duties, structures and methods and instruments of work have multiplied in the national and international fields, and that in a number of countries cultural and other foundations serving the public interest have provided funds to allow of a careful study being made, he goes on to say:

The world Red Cross movement, which was launched in 1863, is obviously facing a great many problems which from year to year are looming ever larger and more acute. In the developed countries, National Red Cross Societies are wondering whether they can go on playing the traditional role of "auxiliaries to the public authorities" in States where social welfare is very advanced or in the context of total defence, and whether any gaps remain to be filled in the performance of their humanitarian duties. The traditional role of Red Cross Societies in providing relief for the victims of disasters and conflicts has also been shaken, either because the State itself and its powerful organizations (the army, civil defence, disaster relief bodies) render that aid, or because other private aid bodies, denominational bodies for instance, are increasingly active in that field. In developing countries, the reverse is usually the case: for want of financial resources and