

COUNCIL OF DELEGATES MEETING

The Council of Delegates of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, which brings together the representatives of the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, met on Friday 27 November 1987, in Rio de Janeiro, following the close of the General Assembly of the League.

After the meeting had been opened by the Chairman of the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, Dr. Ahmed Abu-Goura, ICRC President Cornelio Sommaruga was elected, according to custom, as Chairman of the Council. Mrs. Mavy A. A. Harmon, President of the Brazilian Red Cross, was elected as Vice-Chairman.

In his opening speech Mr. Sommaruga, who was addressing the entire Movement for the first time, began by paying tribute to the leaders and voluntary workers who recently lost their lives in the course of their humanitarian work, including the late President of the League, Mr. Enrique de la Mata Gorostizaga, who died suddenly in Rome last September.

Mr. Sommaruga laid stress on one of the tasks that he feels is of great importance, that of preserving and reinforcing the unity of the Movement, considering that the Fundamental Principles which guide its actions constitute the principle factor of its cohesion and the guarantee of its universality. He also placed emphasis on the prevention of violations of humanitarian rules, especially through "humanitarian mobilization" and dissemination of the Geneva Conventions and the ideals of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. In addition, Mr. Sommaruga underlined the role played by the National Societies "which are the foundation of the Movement and give it its vital strength".

The delegates examined several themes of interest to the various components of the Movement, including a series of projects designed to promote public awareness of the contribution of the Red Cross and Red Crescent to peace, a draft of the Regulations on the Use of the Emblem, crucial in ensuring genuine protection for the victims of armed conflicts and those who care for them, and a draft programme for the commemoration of the 125th Anniversary of the Movement.¹

1. Contribution of the Movement to peace

The various subjects included in this theme had already been examined by the Commission on the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Peace at its 23rd session on 17 and 18 November in Rio.

A subsequent discussion during the Council of Delegates meeting led to the adoption by consensus, particularly appropriate when the Movement is considering its contribution to peace, of the following resolutions:

- *“Peace, disarmament and development”*—The Council, underscoring the shocking worldwide disproportion between arms expenditure and development aid, emphasized the willingness of the Movement to receive any resources freed by government actions in pursuit of disarmament and to assign those resources to National Society development projects.
- *“Information and dissemination of international humanitarian law as a contribution to peace”*—The Council renewed its appeal to the Movement to continue and expand its activities for the dissemination of international humanitarian law and the Fundamental Principles in various circles, including young people, nationally, regionally and internationally. It also encouraged the Commission on the Red Cross, Red Crescent and peace to take all necessary steps to improve the ways and means of making better known and understood the role of the Movement in promoting peace. This point will be examined in greater detail by the Commission at its October 1988 meeting, when it will study, together with a group of experts from various countries, the best means of promoting public awareness of the Red Cross contribution to peace. The meeting will be

¹ For the text of the Resolutions adopted by the Council of Delegates, see pages 595-606.

held in the Soviet Union at the invitation of the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR.

- “*Red Cross and Red Crescent Prize for Peace and Humanity*”—The Council decided to institute a *Red Cross and Red Crescent Prize for Peace and Humanity* to be awarded by consensus every four years by the Standing Commission, either to National Societies or to persons having actively contributed in the Movement to a more peaceful world through their humanitarian work and their dissemination of the ideals of the Movement. This prize will be awarded for the first time on the occasion of the Council of Delegates of 1989.

- “*Worldwide campaign for the protection of war victims*”—The Council enthusiastically greeted a proposal by the Swedish Red Cross to launch “a universal campaign to make known to all, not only to the armed forces, but also to civilians, the rights of the latter according to international law”. Such a campaign could begin on 8 May 1989 and culminate in 1990 with a universal two-day truce designed to draw attention to the protection of civilians in conflicts.

In the same spirit, the Council adopted a resolution inviting the ICRC *inter alia*, to “pursue and intensify its endeavours to visit regularly and without exception all combatants and non-combatants protected by the Third and Fourth Geneva Conventions” and to “take all necessary steps to enable it to protect and assist civilian victims of indiscriminate attacks and victims of the use of prohibited weapons such as chemical weapons”.

2. Regulations on the Use of the Emblem by the National Societies

The Council adopted these Regulations by consensus and decided to submit them for formal approval to the Twenty-sixth International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. The National Societies have already been invited to observe them as of now.

3. Commemoration of the 125th Anniversary of the Movement

The Council of Delegates adopted a series of proposals by the ICRC and the League Secretariat for commemoration of the 125th

Anniversary of the Movement (*see also page 653*). The commemoration period will extend from November 1987 to November 1989 and have as its main theme “**125 Years at Work**”. During the first year, emphasis will be placed, under the subsidiary slogan “... **and Still Developing**”, on the role of the Movement in the field of development; and during the second year, on respect for international humanitarian law under the subsidiary slogan “... **Protecting Human Life**”.

The main events of the commemoration programme will be the international *Information, Dissemination and Peace Seminar* (USSR, October 1988), the Movement's World Day on 8 May 1989, which will be dedicated to the *Humanitarian Gesture*, and *Supercamp 1989*, an event which the League and the ICRC, in close collaboration with the Italian Red Cross, will organize at Solferino/Castiglione in August 1989 for Red Cross and Red Crescent youth. The award in November 1989 of the “*Red Cross and Red Crescent Prize for Peace and Humanity*” will close the programme.

4. Information policy for the Movement

The Council welcomed the intention expressed by the ICRC and League representatives to explore, together with the National Societies, new ways of promoting public awareness of the Movement as a whole and to accentuate the “solidarity of image” which exists between the various components of the Movement.

The Council took note of the ICRC and League report, containing in particular the recommendations adopted by the participants in the Workshop on Information and Public Relations (Varna, June 1987), and approved the new orientation it proposed in order to establish a real information policy for the Movement. With this in mind, the Council invited the ICRC and the League to constitute a joint working group, with which public relations experts from the National Societies will be associated, to prepare for the next Council of Delegates a series of guidelines for this information policy.

It also congratulated the ICRC and the League on their intention of making the “Red Cross, Red Crescent” magazine a publication for the whole Movement.

5. Development of the Henry Dunant Institute

The Council encouraged the Henry Dunant Institute to continue its activities on behalf of the Movement in research, training and publications and invited the ICRC, the League and the National Societies to provide it with the necessary resources to carry out its programmes.

6. Participation in the 1992 Seville Universal Exposition

The Council proposed that the ICRC, the League and the National Societies participate in this important universal exhibition which has the potential of giving the Movement, its Principles and activities a broad international impact.

7. Award of the Henry Dunant Medal

During a solemn and moving ceremony, the Henry Dunant Medal was awarded in the name of the Standing Commission by its Chairman to the following people:

- Justice J. A. Adefarasin (Nigeria), former League President;
 - Juan José Vega Aguiar (Cuba), former head of the Cuban Red Cross Tracing Services;
 - Marie Josée Burnier, ICRC nurse, formerly posted in Angola and Mozambique;
 - Princess Gina of Liechtenstein, former President of the Liechtenstein Red Cross;
 - Enrique de la Mata Gorostizaga, late President of the League (the medal, awarded posthumously, was accepted by his wife, Doña María de la Mata);
 - Onni Niskanen, former Secretary General of the Ethiopian Red Cross Society (posthumously);
 - Dr. Anton Schlögel, former Secretary General of the German Red Cross in the Federal Republic of Germany;
 - Kai Warras, former Secretary General of the Finnish Red Cross.
-