

WORLD RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT DAY 1992

JOINT MESSAGE OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION
OF THE RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES
AND OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

Today, 8 May 1992, is World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day.

On this day, the anniversary of the birthday of its founder, Henry Dunant, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement makes a solemn appeal:

“In the name of Humanity, let us unite against disasters!”

The lives of millions of people are disrupted and ruined by calamities and disasters. Famines, floods, droughts, hurricanes and all kinds of scourges cause unimaginable suffering throughout the world. Wars force entire populations into exile and bring about destitution, sickness and death.

Every day, in 150 countries, millions of Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers, delegates and staff are striving impartially to assist and protect the victims of disasters. They help provide a roof over their heads, food, water and medical care. And when the media spotlight has moved on, the Movement is still there, trying to build a better future with them.

The task of the Red Cross and Red Crescent is not only to alleviate suffering but also to prevent it.

To assist local communities and families in preparing and equipping themselves to deal with disasters. To train volunteer workers in first-aid. To install early warning systems and build shelters. To promote the adoption of national emergency plans. To co-ordinate international aid more effectively. To call for international humanitarian law to be respected — since violations of this law cause so many disasters, particularly for the civilian casualties of war.

United against disasters, we can and we must do more — and better. But we must also tackle the causes of so much misery and suffering.

As always, the more vulnerable — the poorest: women, children, the elderly and the handicapped — are among the first to be most seriously affected.

The fight against disasters is therefore inseparable from the fight against the forgotten calamities, the “silent wars”, such as poverty, the forced exodus of entire populations, the deterioration of the environment. These cause death and render the poor even poorer and more vulnerable.

Present throughout the world in the midst of such tragedies, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is duty bound to sound the alarm and call for action in the name of Humanity.

Millions of human lives can be saved, and suffering avoided, if appropriate measures are taken in time and adequate means committed — and if there is respect for humanitarian principles and rules.

In the name of Humanity, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement calls upon the citizens of all countries and their governments:

To respect, and ensure respect for, human life and dignity everywhere in the world, and to act accordingly.

“Let us all unite against disasters!”

Note: This message has been recorded by:

Mr. Cornelio Sommaruga, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (speaking in *French, German and Italian*);

Dr. Mario Villarroel Lander, President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (speaking in *Spanish*);

Mr. Pär Stenbäck, Secretary General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (speaking in *English*);

Dr. Ahmad Abu-Goura, Chairman of the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (speaking in *Arabic*).

The recording (on 7 1/2 reel tape or cassette) can be obtained from the Press Division of the International Committee of the Red Cross.