

ICRC and OAU sign cooperation agreement

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) signed a cooperation agreement at ICRC headquarters in Geneva on 4 May 1992.

The agreement authorizes the ICRC to participate in OAU meetings as an observer and formalizes the long-standing cooperation between the two bodies. The official document was signed by ICRC President Cornelio Sommaruga and OAU Secretary General Salim Ahmed Salim in the presence of top officials from both organizations.

In his welcoming address, Mr Sommaruga said the agreement confirmed and would enhance cooperation between the ICRC and the OAU, particularly at a time when the OAU was increasingly involved in peace efforts in Africa. He said it should also enable the ICRC to step up efforts to ensure Africans are treated with dignity even in conflict situations. "The OAU is working for peace and the ICRC is convinced that its humanitarian action is also a contribution to peace", he stated.

Mr Salim said he appreciated and admired the ICRC's work not only in Africa but all over the world. He underlined that the agreement testified to the recognition by all African countries of the important role played by the ICRC.

The signing of the agreement was followed by a meeting between ICRC and OAU delegations led respectively by the ICRC President and the OAU Secretary General. An overview of ICRC operations on the African continent was given, with discussions focusing on the situations in Liberia, Mozambique, South Africa, Sudan and Western Sahara.

Both delegations were particularly concerned about the tragic situation in Somalia. While expressing his appreciation for the ICRC's aid efforts in the country, Mr Salim agreed that they were not sufficient to avoid a catastrophe and that a major involvement of the international community was essential. The two organizations will continue to use all possible means to achieve this goal.