

Resolutions of the Council of Delegates

*(adopted at its session of 28-30 November 1991,
in Budapest)*

1

Study Group on the future of the Movement

The Council of Delegates,
taking into account dramatic changes which have created a new world environment,

aware of the problems relating to the application of humanitarian law as encountered in recent armed conflicts,

realizing the increasing pressures on the respective components of the Movement to provide protection and assistance to victims of armed conflicts, strife and disasters,

noting the growing number of participants in the field of international humanitarian assistance and the problems associated with the coordination of disaster relief operations,

recognizing that the Movement must adapt itself to these changing world realities while maintaining and operating in accordance with the Fundamental Principles,

1. *decides* in accordance with Article 14, paragraph 7, of the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to establish a Study Group on the future of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement;
2. *defines* the terms of reference of such a Study Group as follows:

I. Role

The Study Group's role is to advise on and recommend to the Council of Delegates a strategy for the Movement in response to emerging trends and evolving humanitarian issues.

II. Duties and responsibilities

The responsibilities of the Study Group shall be:

1. To review, study, research and discuss current and future trends and issues in the humanitarian field with a view to achieving common positions on matters of concern to all components of the Movement.
2. To study governing and operating structures of the Movement and to suggest appropriate courses of action which will enable the Movement to carry out its humanitarian mandate with the utmost effectiveness and cohesion.

III. Composition

The Study Group shall be composed of five members from National Societies appointed in their personal capacity by the President of the Federation, two members from the Federation and two members from the ICRC.

IV. Working methods

The work of the Study Group shall be supported by a Secretariat. The Study Group shall submit for approval by the Federation and the ICRC the type of Secretariat and the budget it will require for its activities.

The Study Group shall meet at least twice a year, or as required. Its decisions shall be taken by consensus.

The Study Group may seek advice and expertise within and outside the Movement in formulating its recommendations.

The Study Group shall produce a report to the next Council of Delegates.

Furthermore, the Study Group shall report to the Federation's Executive Council and the Assembly of the ICRC every six months in order for these two bodies to take appropriate action within the process of Yverdon (Switzerland).

2

Appeal to the governments

The Council of Delegates,

expressing the views of the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement meeting in Budapest,

concerned by the Movement's inability to hold the 26th International Conference, which was to have brought together the Movement's various components and the governments of States party to the Geneva Conventions,

considering that, as a result, the development of international humanitarian law, to which the Movement makes an essential contribution, has been set back,

aware that this state of affairs was brought about by the introduction of political issues and concerns that do not come within its purview and which are foreign to the ideals, principles and activities of the Movement,

anxious to maintain the independence of National Societies and other components of the Movement by not involving them in issues which are not within their competence,

pointing out that whereas neutrality enables States to abstain, it allows the Red Cross and Red Crescent to act,

requests governments and other political entities to make sure that their future relations with Red Cross and Red Crescent bodies do not jeopardize the latter's compliance with the principles of impartiality and neutrality, with a view to enabling the 26th International Conference to meet as soon as possible in order to advance and develop international humanitarian law.

3

Commission on the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Peace

Role, tasks, working methods, composition

The Council of Delegates,

having taken note of the report of the Commission on the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Peace and its annexes, which describe the Commission's activities since the 1989 meeting of the Council of Delegates in Geneva,

wishing to discharge its mandate under the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to give an opinion or, where necessary, take decisions on all matters concerning the Movement which may be referred to it by the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, the National Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross or the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies,

1. *decides* to maintain the Commission on the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Peace as a subsidiary body within the meaning of Article 14, paragraph 7, of the Movement's Statutes;
2. *defines* its terms of reference as follows:

I. Role

The Commission's role is to promote the implementation, by all the components of the Movement, of the Programme of Action of the Red Cross and Red Crescent as a factor of peace and the Fundamental Guidelines for the contribution of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to true peace in

the world. According to this mandate, the Commission contributes to the Movement's efforts to achieve lasting peace, which the latter understands as a dynamic process of cooperation among all States and peoples, founded on respect for freedom, independence, national sovereignty, equality and human rights, and on a fair and equitable distribution of resources to meet the needs of peoples. The Movement contributes to this process by its humanitarian work and the dissemination of its ideals.

II. Tasks

The tasks of the Commission shall be the following:

- a) to follow up on the recommendations of the Council of Delegates and carry out preparatory work for the Council in the following specific areas:
 - dissemination and promotion of respect for international humanitarian law and the principles and ideals of the Movement;
 - the Movement's role in promoting respect for human rights and the rights of refugees and minorities, and in situations not covered by international humanitarian law;
 - humanitarian mobilization for the respect of the fundamental rights of the individual, particularly as regards the prohibition of torture, discrimination, summary executions and hostage-taking, and for the respect of the specific rights of women and children;
 - specific Red Cross and Red Crescent action to foster greater understanding between different cultures, ethnic, social and cultural groups;
- b) to fulfil any other task assigned to it by the Council of Delegates which falls within the Commission's mandate. The Commission may submit proposals to the Council of Delegates on studies to be undertaken.

III. Working methods

The Commission may ask one or more of its members to conduct special studies on its behalf. Likewise National Societies which are not members of the Commission may be invited to contribute to such studies. The Commission may also ask for contributions from experts outside the Movement and may hear them during its meetings.

As a rule, the Commission shall meet twice a year, normally on the occasion of statutory meetings. Its decisions shall be taken by consensus.

The Commission shall report to the Council of Delegates.

IV. Composition

The Commission shall be composed of sixteen National Societies and, as permanent members, the Federation, the ICRC and the Henry Dunant Institute.

The National Societies shall be elected for four-year terms in accordance with Article 14, paragraph 7, of the Movement's Statutes.

National Societies shall be selected with due regard to fair geographical distribution.

The Council of Delegates elects the Commission's Chairman.

The Commission shall appoint a Vice-Chairman.

4

Commission on the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Peace

Membership and Chairman

I. Membership

In addition to the permanent members, that is, the Federation, the ICRC and the Henry Dunant Institute,

the Council of Delegates,

having regard to the interest expressed by individual National Societies and to the principle of fair geographical representation and the need for a mixture of experienced and new members of the Commission,

elects the following 16 National Societies as members:

Australian Red Cross

Brazilian Red Cross

Colombian Red Cross

Egyptian Red Crescent

Ethiopian Red Cross

French Red Cross

Hellenic Red Cross

Hungarian Red Cross

The Republic of Korea Red Cross

Red Cross of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Malaysian Red Crescent

Nigerian Red Cross

Paraguayan Red Cross

Sudanese Red Crescent

Swedish Red Cross

Tunisian Red Crescent

In order to ensure the continued injection of new contributions, the Council of Delegates *approves* a rotational system whereby every two years four long-standing members would be replaced by four new National Societies (at least one from each region).

II. Chairman

The Council of Delegates *elects*

Mr. Maurice Aubert as the Chairman of the Commission on the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Peace.

5

Use of the emblem by National Societies

The Council of Delegates,

aware that respect for the emblem of the red cross or the red crescent is of vital importance for the protection of the victims of armed conflict and those who care for them,

convinced that clear and widespread knowledge of the uses authorized under the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 is a prerequisite for respect for the emblem,

recalling that the First Geneva Convention places an obligation on States to take the necessary measures to prevent and suppress misuse of the emblem at all times,

recalling that the 24th International Conference of the Red Cross (Manila, 1981) requested the ICRC to prepare a draft revision of the *Regulations on the use of the emblem of the red cross, red crescent and red lion and sun by National Societies* (Resolution XII),

recalling Resolution 6 of the 1987 Council of Delegates and Resolution 6 of the 1989 Council of Delegates,

noting that the drafts prepared by the ICRC in consultation with the National Societies and the Federation Secretariat have been examined in detail within the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement,

aware of the need to have, as soon as possible, Regulations replacing the 1965 Regulations,

1. *adopts the Regulations on the use of the emblem of the red cross or the red crescent by the National Societies*, contained in the report on the subject submitted by the International Committee of the Red Cross;

2. *invites* the ICRC to submit these Regulations and this Resolution to the States party to the Geneva Conventions, encouraging them to endorse the Regulations and, where necessary, to authorize their National Societies to observe them;
3. *recommends* that National Societies, in the light of the deferment of the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, comply with the new Regulations, in accordance with national legislation, at the earliest possible date;
4. *invites* National Societies to assist their governments in meeting their obligations under the Geneva Conventions with regard to the emblem, in particular to prevent its misuse, and to support the activities of the ICRC in that respect;
5. *invites* the ICRC, in cooperation with the Federation, to examine any questions submitted to it with regard to compliance with and interpretation of the Regulations on the use of the emblem and to report to the next Council of Delegates.

6

Information policy of the Movement

The Council of Delegates,

having taken note of the ICRC/Federation report on implementation of the Information Policy of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, submitted to it pursuant to the request by the 1989 Council of Delegates (Resolution 4),

1. *notes* with satisfaction that the main objectives set for the ICRC, the Federation and the National Societies as regards global communication have been achieved:
 - the *Communicator's Guide*, intended to assist implementation of the Movement's Identity Programme,
 - the regional training seminar for information officers of English-speaking National Societies in East Africa, held in Kenya, to introduce the Communicator's Guide as a permanent working tool,
 - development of *Red Cross/Red Crescent* as the Movement's magazine;
2. *decides*, with regard to World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day:
 - to choose, for the three-year period from 1993 to 1995, the overall theme of "dignity for all",
 - under this overall theme, to focus on three annual sub-themes to be adapted as appropriate by National Societies:
 - 1993: "the vulnerable"
 - 1994: "our children's future"
 - 1995: "respect for women"

3. *supports* the ICRC and the Federation in their intention to find the resources necessary to continue publishing *Red Cross/Red Crescent*, and *invites* National Societies to demonstrate their interest in the Movement's magazine in a more tangible way, especially as regards its financing and distribution;
4. *encourages* the Movement's communication experts to strengthen existing professional links in order to improve the Movement's performance in terms of public information;
5. *takes note* of the continuation of a professional group of communication experts from the ICRC, the Federation and the National Societies, such as the Public Support Group, sufficiently flexible in composition to handle the various information programmes regularly carried out within the Movement;
6. *invites* the ICRC and the Federation to continue harmonizing their efforts in everything relating to the conduct of information programmes of interest to the Movement, both regionally and internationally, so as to highlight more effectively the humanitarian work being carried out throughout the world.

7

Respect for and dissemination of the Fundamental Principles

The Council of Delegates,

convinced that respect for the Fundamental Principles by all the components of the Movement and dissemination of knowledge of those Principles among the National Societies and the general public are of vital importance,

concerned by violations of the Principles, resulting either from lack of understanding of their purpose and meaning, or from outside pressure on National Societies,

noting that National Societies often find themselves unable to cope with such situations,

noting with satisfaction the activities undertaken by the ICRC and the Federation to make the Principles more widely known, and in particular the adoption of their dissemination policy,

1. *takes note* of the ICRC's second interim report relative to the study on respect for and dissemination of the Fundamental Principles, drawn up in cooperation with the Federation;

2. *expresses* its appreciation of the contribution by National Societies which took part in the consultation arranged by the ICRC;
3. *encourages* the ICRC, in cooperation with the Federation, to continue the consultation by holding extensive talks with National Society officials, organizing regional or international seminars on the subject, or by any other means it deems appropriate;
4. *asks* the ICRC, in cooperation with the Federation, to support the National Societies' efforts in implementing the Principles and to help them in particular to counter any pressure to which they may be subjected;
5. *requests* the ICRC, in cooperation with the Federation, to continue the ongoing study with a view to setting out, in an updated commentary, the Movement's common interpretation of the Principles;
6. *invites* the ICRC, in cooperation with the Federation, to report to the next Council of Delegates.

8

Dissemination of international humanitarian law and of the principles and ideals of the Movement

The Council of Delegates,

having taken note of the joint ICRC/Federation report on the many dissemination activities carried out since 1977 by the National Societies, the ICRC, the Federation and the Henry Dunant Institute, and on the implementation of the recommendations contained in Resolution IV of the 25th Conference,

stressing once again that responsibility for the dissemination and teaching of international humanitarian law lies mainly with the States, by virtue of the obligations set out in the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their two Additional Protocols of 1977,

deploring the fact that there are still too many violations of international humanitarian law,

recalling that the dissemination of international humanitarian law and of the principles and ideals of the Red Cross and Red Crescent is one of the Movement's permanent activities and aims to:

- limit the suffering caused by armed conflicts and other situations of violence,
- make certain that humanitarian work may proceed safely, by ensuring that the emblems of the red cross and red crescent are respected,
- strengthen the image of the Movement, and
- contribute to promoting a spirit of peace,

1. *adopts* the *Guidelines for the '90s* and *recommends* that they be circulated as widely as possible;
2. *urges* the States fully to discharge their treaty obligations so that international humanitarian law may be known, understood and respected at all times;
3. *reiterates* the recommendation that National Societies appoint and train dissemination experts, and cooperate with their countries's authorities, particularly within the framework of joint dissemination committees;
4. *invites* the ICRC, in cooperation with the Federation, to maintain and if possible increase its support for dissemination activities and national and regional dissemination programmes.

9

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and refugees

The Council of Delegates,

recalling Resolution XXI of the 24th International Conference of the Red Cross, the accompanying statement of policy on Red Cross aid to refugees and Resolution XVII of the 25th International Conference on the Movement and refugees,

concerned that the number of refugees, asylum-seekers and persons displaced within their own countries has continued to grow steadily,

aware that many long-standing refugee situations are still awaiting solutions, and that continued dependence by large numbers of refugees on the support and protection of host countries may progressively increase their vulnerability,

recognizing that a large number of these persons suffer from psychological problems and that the most vulnerable, in particular refugee children, may be exposed to high risks and severe deprivation having a lasting effect on their lives,

taking note that violations of human rights, armed conflict and violations of international humanitarian law are amongst the main causes of population movements,

noting with concern that the majority of refugees find asylum in low-income countries in which they share scarce resources with the local population, thereby aggravating conditions of poverty and instability,

recalling the primary function of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to ensure international protection and material assistance to refugees, persons displaced outside their countries of origin and returnees, and to seek durable solutions,

recognizing that new forms of movements of persons, due principally to economic and social hardship, frequently leading to severe malnutrition and famine conditions, and often associated with political instability, have emerged, and that these persons, while not fulfilling the international criteria for refugee status, are in need of humanitarian support,

noting the tasks carried out by the various components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement on behalf of refugees, asylum-seekers, displaced persons and returnees, and the efforts made to provide information and training within the Movement in order to keep pace with these growing tasks,

requests the various components of the Movement, in accordance with their respective mandates:

- a) to act vigorously in favour of refugees, asylum-seekers, displaced persons and returnees,
- b) to pursue their efforts in disseminating international humanitarian law, human rights law, of which refugee law is part, and the Fundamental Principles of the Movement in order to enhance protection and humane treatment of refugees, asylum-seekers, displaced persons and returnees,
- c) to cooperate actively in supporting activities designed to enhance refugees' self-reliance in camps and on their safe return to their home countries,
- d) to focus attention on the psychological problems encountered by most refugees, asylum-seekers, displaced persons and returnees and on the care needed for the most vulnerable among them, giving due support to children through activities such as community-based health services and assistance in psychological and social readjustment,
- e) to enhance training and information, including exchanges of experiences, of its members and representatives in this field,
- f) to draw the attention of host communities to the problems of humanitarian concern encountered by refugees, asylum-seekers and displaced persons, and to fight xenophobia and racial discrimination,
- g) to continue and further strengthen cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other international organizations acting in favour of refugees, asylum-seekers, displaced persons and returnees,
- h) to actively seek the support of governments with a view:
 - i) to permit the Movement to assist those who are deprived of any suitable protection or assistance,
 - ii) to address first and foremost the causes of people fleeing their homes, and to promote peace and respect for human rights and to intensify cooperation in socio-economic development, particularly among low-income countries,

- iii) to ensure that, in all circumstances, refugees, asylum-seekers and displaced persons receive humane treatment and decent material conditions,
- iv) in the search for durable solutions, to see that the voluntary character of repatriation and the safety of returning refugees in their countries of origin are fully ensured,
- v) to support the development of refugee hosting areas in the event of mass influxes of refugees, so as to avert any deterioration in living conditions and ensure the security of the refugee and local population,
- vi) to ensure that a decision to deny asylum is taken only within the framework of fair and proper procedures and that the principle of return in safety and dignity of rejected asylum-seekers is reaffirmed and, if assistance is given by National Societies, to respect their adherence to the Fundamental Principles of the Movement.

10

Women in Red Cross/Red Crescent development

The Council of Delegates,

recalling Decision 33 of the VIIth Session of the League General Assembly in 1989, and the endorsement of the Plan of Action on Women in Red Cross/Red Crescent Development,

increasingly concerned about the vulnerability of women and children in situations of deprivation, including disasters,

aware of the often weak economic, social and legal position of women, aggravated by the current adverse socio-economic conditions,

concerned about the continued use of harmful traditional practices threatening the lives of women,

recognizing that the hard life endured by women in the countryside and urban slums is not only a question of basic injustice, but also an impediment to economic and social development,

urges all National Society and Federation representatives responsible for the implementation of development programmes to:

- recognize women as a major beneficiary group for Red Cross/Red Crescent development programmes,
- ensure that the role of women in situations of disaster is being taken into account adequately,
- ensure that literacy and other training schemes for women are linked to their daily concerns and aimed at improving their lives,

- put emphasis on community-based primary health care, including child spacing, family planning and clean water supply, in order to meet some of the most urgent needs of women and children,
- review the ongoing health activities, particularly first-aid training, to ensure that they cater to the needs of the most vulnerable,
- promote income-generating activities for women, and ensure that such projects are economically viable and become independent of subsidies from the National Societies,
- embark upon labour-saving development projects for women, giving high priority to water and fuel supply, child care, agriculture and food processing.

11

Protection of victims of war

The Council of Delegates,

having taken note of the report on the World Campaign for the Protection of Victims of War,

realizing the importance of making the general public and governments aware of the tragic plight of war victims, in particular the ever-increasing number of civilian victims, and of reminding the parties to armed conflicts of their obligation to respect international humanitarian law,

1. *appreciates* the worldwide effort made in carrying out the World Campaign for the Protection of Victims of War;
2. *expresses* the wish that the components of the Movement continue their efforts in behalf of war victims at the national and regional levels;
3. *encourages* governments and the ICRC, in cooperation with the Federation and the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, to take advantage of the impetus given by this campaign to intensify efforts to promote better understanding and knowledge of the situation of war victims and of international humanitarian law;
4. *appeals* to the States and all belligerents to respect international humanitarian law;
5. *calls on* all the parties involved in armed conflicts to establish without delay conditions conducive to dialogue in order to put an end to violence and ongoing hostilities.

Humanitarian assistance in situations of armed conflict

The Council of Delegates,

deeply concerned by the suffering of civilian victims of international and non-international armed conflicts and by the scale of ensuing needs,

recalling that the principle of humanity and the rules of international humanitarian law recognize the victims' right to receive protection and assistance in all circumstances,

recalling also that States affected by an armed conflict have the primary responsibility for assisting victims,

stressing that a relief action which is neutral, humanitarian and impartial in character does not constitute interference in the internal affairs of States,

pointing out that respect for the rules of international humanitarian law, in particular those protecting the civilian population against the effects of hostilities, contributes to alleviate the need for food and medical relief,

noting that the destruction of existing infrastructures and the existence of zones of military operations put specific constraints on the transport and distribution of humanitarian aid during armed conflict,

stressing the urgency of the needs and the necessity of gaining access rapidly to the victims in the areas affected by armed conflict,

urges therefore all the parties to an armed conflict and, where applicable, any High Contracting Party:

- a) to respect and ensure respect for the rules of international humanitarian law protecting the civilian population against the effects of hostilities and, in particular, those that prohibit the use of starvation of civilians as a method of combat;
- b) to allow free passage of medicines and medical equipment, foodstuffs, clothing and other supplies essential to the survival of the civilian population of another Contracting Party, even if the latter is its adversary, it being understood that they are entitled to ensure that the consignments are not diverted from their destination;
- c) to agree to and cooperate in relief actions which are exclusively humanitarian, impartial and non-discriminatory in character, within the meaning of the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement;

urges the States to support the work of the ICRC and other humanitarian organizations that are in a position to conduct humanitarian assistance operations for victims of armed conflict in a neutral and impartial manner;

invites the ICRC to pursue its efforts to ensure that the rules of international humanitarian law protecting civilians are implemented, in particular the latter's right to receive supplies essential to their survival, in cooperation with

National Societies and in conjunction with all intergovernmental agencies and non-governmental organizations concerned.

13

Protection of the civilian population against famine in situations of armed conflict

The Council of Delegates,

having taken note with interest of the report submitted by the ICRC on aid to famine victims during armed conflicts,

deeply concerned by the frequency, extent and duration of famines that have occurred in such situations in recent years,

noting that, in general, the most severe outbreaks of famine are not due to a lack of local natural resources, but to the disruption or deliberate destruction of normal means of production, acquisition and distribution of basic food-stuffs,

noting further that famine tends to become endemic when population movements and the destruction of vital resources are associated with military operations,

stressing that respect for the rules of international humanitarian law, as codified or expanded in Articles 23 and 59 to 61 of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, and Articles 54 and 70 of Additional Protocol I, and Articles 14, 17 and 18 of Additional Protocol II, would in many cases suffice to prevent or reduce the risk of famine as a result of an armed conflict,

1. *reminds* the authorities concerned and the armed forces under their command of their obligation to apply international humanitarian law, in particular the following humanitarian principles:

- the prohibition on starvation of civilians as a method of combat,
- the prohibition on attacking, destroying, removing or rendering useless objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population,
- the prohibition on displacing civilians unless their security or imperative military reasons so demand and, should such displacements have to be carried out, the stipulation that all possible measures be taken to ensure that the civilians are received under satisfactory conditions of shelter, hygiene, health, safety and nutrition,
- the obligation to allow humanitarian and impartial relief operations for the civilian population when supplies essential for its survival are lacking;

2. *urges* the Parties to armed conflicts to maintain conditions enabling civilians to provide for their needs, in particular by refraining from taking

any measures destined to deprive them of their sources of food or of access to their crops;

3. *invites* governments, with the support of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, to spread knowledge of and ensure respect for the principles and rules of international humanitarian law which, if applied in situations of armed conflict, suffice to avert or limit famine.

14

Child soldiers

The Council of Delegates,

recalling that children suffer particular hardship during armed conflicts and that international humanitarian law in general, and the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols in particular, afford them special attention and protection,

recalling that international humanitarian law, as expressed in Protocol I, Article 77, and Protocol II, Article 4, sets at fifteen the minimum age for the participation of children in hostilities, and stipulates that in recruiting persons between the ages of fifteen and eighteen priority is to be given to those who are oldest,

recalling Resolution IX entitled "Protection of children in armed conflicts" and Resolution XX entitled "Assistance to children in emergency situations" of the 25th International Conference of the Red Cross,

mindful of Article 38 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child concerning children in situations of armed conflict,

welcoming the provision of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, which requires respect for the rules of international humanitarian law specially protecting children,

having taken note of the report of the Conference on Children of War held in Stockholm from 31 May to 2 June 1991,

deeply concerned that in many areas of the world children continue to take part in hostilities and are recruited into armed forces, and that some governments and armed non-governmental entities encourage and sometimes compel children to take part in hostilities,

deploring the fact that many child soldiers have been killed or seriously injured and that others languish as prisoners of war,

concerned that children in areas affected by armed conflict may be induced to participate in hostilities for lack of alternative means of satisfying their basic needs of food, clothing and shelter,

also concerned that persons under the age of eighteen years may not be sufficiently mature to understand the consequences of their actions, and to comply with international humanitarian law,

recognizing that children who have been caught up in armed conflicts, and particularly those who have participated in hostilities, are often mentally, morally and physically marked for life,

deeming it necessary to take steps to afford children better protection during armed conflicts and to put an end to their participation in hostilities,

1. *appeals* to all Parties to armed conflicts strictly to observe the rules of international humanitarian law affording special protection to children;
2. *invites* States and other parties to armed conflicts to strengthen the protection of children in armed conflicts through unilateral declarations or bilateral or regional instruments setting at eighteen the minimum age for participation in hostilities;
3. *invites* National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to do everything possible to protect children during armed conflicts, particularly by ensuring that their basic needs are met and by organizing peaceable and educational activities for them;
4. *requests* the Henry Dunant Institute to undertake a study, subject to financing, on the recruitment and participation of children as soldiers in armed conflicts, and on measures to reduce and eventually eliminate such recruitment and participation;
5. *decides* to re-examine, at the Council of Delegates in 1993, on the basis of the aforementioned study, the situation of children in armed conflicts.

15

Coordination of non-governmental disaster relief in time of peace

The Council of Delegates,

noting with satisfaction the growing governmental and non-governmental humanitarian response to international disaster relief operations,

aware of the responsibility of the recognized relief agencies to promote information, cooperation and coordination in case of international disaster relief operations,

referring to the *Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Disaster Relief* adopted by the 21st International Conference of the Red Cross in Istanbul (1969), amended by the 22nd International Conference in Teheran (1973), by the 23rd International Conference Bucharest (1977), by the 24th International Conference in Manila (1981), and by the 25th International Conference in Geneva (1986),

stressing the function of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to act as the permanent body of liaison, coordination and information exchange between the National Societies, in accordance with the *Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Disaster Relief*,

recalling Resolution No. VII adopted at the 22nd International Conference in Teheran (1973) requesting the Federation, the ICRC and National Societies to maintain and further strengthen their association with UNDRO with a view to effecting closer cooperation and coordination in the field of relief assistance in cases of disaster, including also other specialized UN agencies,

recognizing the commitment of the Federation to supporting the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (1990-1999),

recognizing that governments of countries prone to natural disasters are increasingly acknowledging the important roles played by national and international voluntary relief agencies in times of disaster and are further strengthening their mechanisms for effectively utilizing international NGO relief,

recognizing the need for disaster-prone countries to have in place a disaster preparedness plan which includes a policy on the role of international NGOs offering assistance in times of disaster, in order to avoid confusion, duplication and waste of effort which would reduce the effectiveness of assistance to disaster victims,

recognizing that disaster preparedness covers both natural and man-made disasters, including movements of refugees and displaced persons,

taking note of the growing number of NGOs involved in disaster relief and the variety of skills they bring to the disaster area, which can be of importance in increasing the benefits accruing to disaster victims, if well coordinated with national relief efforts,

recognizing the well-founded and increasing demands of donor governments and other donor institutions for improved effectiveness in disaster relief through better coordination, and the need to present a coherent picture of international humanitarian action to world public opinion,

1. *appeals* to all governments of disaster-prone countries to take steps, as a disaster preparedness measure, to ensure the establishment of National Disaster Relief Committees to provide overall coordination in times of disaster;
2. *urges* that National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies should be represented on such committees along with other relevant national NGOs;
3. *recommends* that National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, in cooperation with the Federation and abiding by the *Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Disaster Relief*, take steps to facilitate the coordination of NGO efforts in disaster relief or to assist other appropriate national NGOs in so doing;

4. *urges* the Federation to take steps to assist National Societies in fulfilling this role. These should include, *inter alia*:
- pre-disaster preparedness assistance to National Societies to aid them in preparing for a possible coordination role, including the provision of training and communications equipment where appropriate,
 - assistance to National Societies in times of disaster to carry out timely needs assessments and formulate effective relief action plans,
 - the provision of specifically allocated and suitably equipped international personnel, in times of disaster, to assist National Societies in the critical work of gathering, analyzing and sharing information pertinent to the disaster, within the responding NGO community, with a view to providing a common basis of understanding from which cooperation and coordination can grow,
 - assistance to National Societies, in times of disaster, to develop the potential to act as a facilitator between the NGO community and the host government, if so requested.

16

Harnessing international humanitarian assistance for disaster reduction

The Council of Delegates,

notes the growing international awareness of the increasing scale of disasters and the detrimental effect they have on attaining sustainable development targets of disaster-prone countries and communities;

notes the increasing willingness of multinational and national bodies to take action in support of foreign disaster relief;

notes the growing phenomenon of short-lived NGOs created in response to particular disaster events, which on occasion act as channels for donor government funding;

notes in particular the present discussions in, *inter alia*, the UN, EC and the Council of Europe on strengthening their respective disaster relief responses;

notes with regret that in the above discussions the emphasis is placed upon high-profile short-term relief measures with consequential reduction in the resources available for the vital work of disaster preparedness and prevention;

appeals to governments and multilateral bodies to re-examine the existing arrangements for delivering relief with a view to making these structures function effectively rather than creating new, possibly short-lived, fractionated arrangements;

appeals to governments to demonstrate a clear commitment to funding and carrying out disaster preparedness programmes aimed at reducing people's vulnerability to disasters and increasing agencies' ability to respond to disasters;

affirms the willingness and capacity of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to act in disaster preparedness, relief and rehabilitation across all major disaster-prone countries;

calls upon the Federation to continue to increase its competence in disaster response, thus increasing its viability as an operational partner for major government and multilateral donor institutions while keeping its independence.

17

Humanitarian assistance in situations of natural and technological disasters

The need for a code of conduct

The Council of Delegates,

concerned for the respect for the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, proclaimed by the 20th Conference and revised by the 25th Conference,

aware of the essential role of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in international humanitarian activities and related codification,

1. *asks* the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, in consultation with the main relief organizations, to set up a group of experts to study the possibility of elaborating a Code of Conduct relative to humanitarian aid in situations of natural and technological disasters;
2. *requests* the Federation, after consultation with the main relief organizations, to report on the outcome of that study to the next Council of Delegates.

18

Financing of the ICRC

The Council of Delegates,

having taken note of the report submitted by the Commission for the Financing of the International Committee of the Red Cross,

having noted that a stable number of National Societies make regular contributions to the ICRC's headquarters budget,

having noted with satisfaction the increase in the number of staff seconded by National Societies to take part in the ICRC's field operations, and the increase in the overall amount of contributions made by National Societies and governments to the ICRC's field budgets,

1. *thanks* National Societies and governments which, by making contributions in cash, kind or services, provide essential support to the ICRC;
2. *thanks* the Commission for the Financing of the ICRC for its work;
3. *decides* to renew the mandate of the Commission for the Financing of the ICRC for four years;
4. *appoints* the National Societies of the following countries to be members of the Commission:
Australia, Costa Rica, Finland, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Sierra Leone,
and renews the mandate of National Societies of the following countries:
Algeria, China, Colombia, France, Germany, Japan and Mauritania;
5. *sets* as the objective for the Commission to increase by 10 per cent at least the number of National Societies that contribute to the budgets of the ICRC;
6. *urges* all National Societies to contribute to the activities of the ICRC and to support the ICRC's appeals to their respective governments.

19

Report of the Joint ICRC/Federation Commission on National Society Statutes

The Council of Delegates,

recalling Resolution VI of the 22nd International Conference and Resolution XX of the 24th International Conference,

stressing the importance of the mandate conferred on the Joint ICRC/Federation Commission on National Society Statutes to ensure respect for the Fundamental Principles within the Movement,

approves the report submitted by the Joint ICRC/Federation Commission on National Society Statutes and *invites* the ICRC and the Federation to continue their work in this respect;

requests National Societies to submit the draft texts of their new or amended statutes to the ICRC and the Federation before their final adoption, and to follow up the recommendations made by the Joint Commission;

stresses the need for the Federation and the ICRC to have on file the current statutes of all National Societies which are members of the Movement;

calls on governments to respect at all times the commitment of all the Movement's components to observe the Fundamental Principles.

20

Empress Shôken Fund

The Council of Delegates,

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 the 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 proposed amendment of Article 9 of the Regulations, which now reads as follows:
"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 realization of their projects";
4. *invites* the ICRC and the Federation to submit this amendment to the States Party to the Geneva Conventions;
5. *decides* that, if within six months of the text being submitted to them, the States raise no objection, the amended Regulations will be deemed to have been definitively adopted.

21

Revision of the Regulations for the Florence Nightingale Medal

The Council of Delegates,

having taken cognizance of the report of the International Committee of the Red Cross,

wishing to preserve the exceptional nature of the award of the Florence Nightingale Medal,

1. *approves* the revised text of Article 2 of the Regulations;
2. *invites* the ICRC to submit this amendment to the States Party to the Geneva Conventions;

3. *decides* that, if within six months of the text being submitted to them, the States raise no objection, the amended Regulations will be deemed to have been definitively adopted.

22

Budapest Appeal: peace in people's hearts

The Council of Delegates,

profoundly concerned by the fratricidal battles a few hundred kilometres south of Budapest,

aware of its responsibility, as the supreme body of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, in fostering harmony and understanding among peoples and fellow men,

having taken note of and deeply moved by the important declaration made by the Red Cross of Yugoslavia, the Red Cross of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Red Cross of Croatia, the Red Cross of Macedonia, the Red Cross of Montenegro, the Red Cross of Serbia and the Red Cross of Slovenia, and the agreement reached under ICRC auspices in Geneva on 27 November 1991 by the representatives of the various parties on matters of humanitarian concern arising from the conflict,

decides to give its full support to the activities of the Societies having endorsed that declaration;

expresses its determination to pursue the humanitarian work currently being carried out by the Movement;

considers that, once the fighting is over, there must be peace in people's hearts before lasting solidarity and peaceful coexistence can be achieved;

consequently *calls on* all the Authorities and Organizations concerned to act without delay so as to create the conditions for dialogue at all levels of public opinion as the prerequisite for mutual understanding.

23

Place and date of the next Council of Delegates

The Council of Delegates,

decides that its next meeting will be held in 1993 at the same place and on the same date as the General Assembly of the Federation.