

COOPERATION WITHIN THE MOVEMENT

The work of the statutory bodies

STANDING COMMISSION

In 1990 the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, composed of two representatives from the ICRC, two from the League and five from the National Societies, the latter elected by the International Conference, met on 1 May, 30 July and 22 October. It was chaired by Dr. Ahmad Abu-Goura, President of the Jordan National Red Crescent Society.

The Standing Commission devoted most of its time to preparations for the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

At its first meeting of the year, the Commission took note of the decision by the Colombian Red Cross not to organize the next International Conference. The Commission decided to send a circular to the National Societies informing them of the Colombian Society's withdrawal and asking whether they wished to host the 1991 Conference.

After considering the offers received, the Commission decided at its July meeting to accept that of the Hungarian Red Cross to host the Conference in Budapest in November-December 1991. The Commission also began drawing up the Conference's agenda and reviewing general preparations.

Commission on the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Peace

The Commission on the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Peace, set up by the Council of Delegates in 1977, met twice in 1990 (30 April and 16 October) in Geneva

under the chairmanship of Mr. Alexandre Hay.

It is composed of representatives of the League, the ICRC, the Henry Dunant Institute and 14 National Societies.¹ During its meetings the Commission was informed of the initial work carried out by the Ad hoc Group which it had set up to reactivate the Plan of Action against Racism and Racial Discrimination (*see below*).

It also took note of the progress made in preparations for the World Campaign for the Protection of Victims of War and the interim report of the International Promotion Bureau² in charge of the Campaign. The Commission reviewed the Campaign's goals, the various programmes involved and the means of carrying them out.

The Commission also discussed its future activities. Noting that major changes on the international scene had given rise to new humanitarian needs, it felt duty-bound to reassess some of its priorities and widen the future scope of its concerns.

Ad hoc Group against Racism and Racial Discrimination

The Ad hoc Group on the Reactivation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Plan of Action against Racism and Racial Discrimination was set up by the Commission on the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Peace in October 1989 in accordance with Decision 3 of the 1985 Council of

¹ The Red Cross Societies of Australia, Benin, Brazil, Colombia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany, Indonesia and Sweden, and the Red Crescent Societies of Egypt, Jordan, Mauritania and Yemen.

² A joint ICRC/League body.

Delegates. It met on 30 April and 15 October 1990 in Geneva under the chairmanship of Dr. Dawit Zawde (Ethiopian Red Cross Society).

The Group, composed of representatives from the ICRC, the League and three National Societies (Ethiopia, Sweden and Yugoslavia), worked to define its mandate and determine what action it could invite the National Societies, the League and the ICRC to take in order to encourage the struggle against racism and racial discrimination. It concluded that it should confine its investigations and proposals to situations involving the work of the Movement's components.

The Group sent a circular letter to the National Societies asking them to identify racist practices or behaviour based on racial discrimination and state what they were doing to counter them. On the basis of the replies, the Group was able to provide the Commission on the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Peace with a detailed report. The Commission stressed the magnitude of racism and discrimination and the need for National Societies to intensify their work against such practices.

Relations with the components of the Movement

NATIONAL SOCIETIES

Dialogue and contacts

Convinced of the need to strengthen its relations with the National Societies and increase its own particular contribution to their development, the ICRC continued to establish and maintain direct contact with many National Society leaders to promote mutual understanding and cooperation.

To this end, the ICRC President and members of the Committee regularly visit

the National Societies, in particular to mark anniversaries and commemorations. In 1990, such missions were carried out by several members of the Committee: Mr. Claudio Caratsch, ICRC Vice-President, went to Norway; Mr. Max Daetwyler and Mr. André Ghelfi attended two Swiss Red Cross commemoration ceremonies; Mr. Marco Mumenthaler went to the Republic of Korea; and Mrs. Anne Petitpierre went to Poland.

President Cornelio Sommaruga himself went to Austria in January, the Netherlands in February, Belgium in February and June, Mexico in February, Liechtenstein in May, Czechoslovakia in June, Iceland in July, Iraq, Iran and Jordan in September in connection with the Gulf crisis, Viet Nam, Cambodia and Thailand in September and October, and Italy and Denmark in October. On each of his visits, President Sommaruga made a point of meeting many National Society and government leaders.

Development of National Societies

In the year under review, the ICRC continued its efforts to strengthen the Movement as a whole by increasing cooperation in its own specific areas with a number of National Societies. The ICRC's programme included strengthening the National Societies' operational capacity in, and preparedness for, emergency situations (armed conflict); providing technical and legal assistance in founding or reorganizing National Societies; promoting and supporting National Society information services and projects to spread knowledge of international humanitarian law and the Fundamental Principles; giving assistance in implementing the Geneva Conventions and especially the regulations on the use of the red cross and red crescent emblem; and training National Society officials for their