

Action before, during and after the crisis

The experience of the ICRC in retrospect*

by **François Grunewald**

The past of the present time is our memory
The present of today lies with action
The future of the present time is imagination

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The time and the action

The international community recently realized that certain types of emergency assistance could have negative effects on the still to come development phases. In that context, a theme has been brought under the limelight: the “emergency-development continuum”, underlying the need to design the activities in time of crisis taking into account the following stages.

The hypothesis presented here tries to go a few steps further: **the relationship between an emergency and development starts long before the crisis erupts and lasts long after it has ended.**

* Article based on a study presented to the Colloquium: “Emergency — Rehabilitation — Development”. Arche de la Fraternité, Paris, 17 November 1994.

The analysis must therefore focus on four main points:

- What preventive and/or preparatory measures should be taken in times of peace?
- Emergency action: when, why and how should it be started and how should it be phased out?
- The various aspects of rehabilitation during and after the conflict.
- What should be done when peace has finally been restored and the guns fall silent (the final phase in the progression from emergency to development)?

2. A unique organization: the ICRC

It is doubtless useful to recall briefly the **unique** and often little known nature of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Although it is a non-governmental organization, the ICRC has been entrusted with its mandates by the explicit authority of the 185 States party to the Geneva Conventions and of those States which have signed the Additional Protocols of 1977. Furthermore, the ICRC is part of a much broader “family”, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, which is composed of the ICRC, the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and their Federation. Of the members of this family, the ICRC plays a special role in the event of conflict. This international Movement is governed by a clear and specific ethical code based on the set of **Fundamental Principles** it has adopted, the most important of which are humanity, neutrality, impartiality, independence and universality. For 150 years, the ICRC’s *raison d’être* has been the protection of war victims, and relief work is one facet of this task.

3. Societies disrupted by conflict

The wars waged in today’s world seek to undermine established structures and values, often attained through arduous endeavour. A few air raids or artillery attacks, a rumble of tanks, an exchange of gunfire or knifings, and nothing is left but rack and ruin. Until the mid-1980s, things were fairly simple: there were the soldiers, and there were civilians. Since then the rules seem to have disappeared. All kill and are killed without distinction. We seem to have reverted to the old style of warfare that prevailed before the coming of the nation state: one human being kills another simply because he is different; and the goal is destruction not

victory. Conflicts arising from political and ethnic differences, with clanish and mafia-like overtones, are starting to outnumber those waged on ideological and geopolitical grounds. Societies have become “war prone”. What action can be taken in the light of these new circumstances?

II. PREVENTIVE AND PREPARATORY ACTION BEFORE DISASTERS ARISE

1. Preventing the crisis: The risks of ill-conceived development

Both in the North and in the South and in the East, ailing economies are one of the main factors heightening the risk of confrontation, for they undermine the respective country’s capacity for disaster prevention and disaster response. With very few exceptions, the situation has worsened nearly everywhere: the standard of living has declined, plunging ever larger segments of the population below the poverty line; demographic growth, which increases the pressure on the environment, causes conditions of production in rural areas to deteriorate still further and speeds up (often uncontrolled or virtually uncontrolled) urbanization, heightens pressure on increasingly fragile ecosystems, aggravates friction between farmers and nomads and exacerbates the risk of ethnic and political strife.

Under the influence of the World Bank, structural adjustment programmes are streamlining administrative systems. Though necessary, this process unfortunately does not go hand in hand with improved public services, on the contrary. The first cutbacks are made in social welfare, health and educational facilities ... and also disaster prevention and preparedness! What comes next? Growing poverty is conducive to crime and breeds insecurity, violence and all forms of hatred. This hatred is then channelled into ultra-nationalistic, fanatical, tribal and fundamentalist movements, triggering a vicious circle of revolt and repression. The small-scale geostrategic clashes that accompanied the Cold War have been succeeded by a multiplicity of conflicts resulting from ill-conceived development. All too often, the only response to this worldwide crisis is to provide “emergency ward” treatment in the form of maize as food aid and increasingly explosive combinations of “military-political-humanitarian” diplomacy.

Under these circumstances, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in many countries are trying to support certain vital services by engaging in development activities, organizing community help for the disadvantaged, setting up blood banks, AIDS prevention campaigns, youth group activities, etc., and thereby helping to promote positive socio-economic development.

2. Certain development strategies increase vulnerability

Certain factors inevitably reduce the available per capita resources (whether they are renewable or not). One such factor is demographic growth, which creates disparities and heightens the risk of conflict. Some development policies unfortunately have similar results and, moreover, weaken the whole system, leaving it unable to cope with crises. The ICRC has observed the often disastrous effects of such policies in the course of many conflicts and crises, as illustrated by the following examples.

- ***Development strategies which increase farmers' vulnerability in terms of food***

1980, Upper Casamance (Senegal): Drought had struck again. The Mandingo farmers had hardly any food stocks left. They had adopted the "all cotton extension programme" advocated by the cotton company on over 70% of their land. In the same region the Toucouleur minority, who had become settled only a short time before, had been far less receptive to the enticements of the "grow cotton" campaign. They had agreed to plant a small amount of cotton, but their staple crops came first. As a result, their stores were still half full! If the current crisis in Lower Casamance were to spread to Tambacounda, the majority groups would find themselves short of food, while the ethnic minority would experience no immediate need. What consequences could such an imbalance have?

- ***Forced development campaigns with catastrophic results***

Nampula (Mozambique), early 1992/1993: The economic reforms which followed the signing of the peace accord opened the way for ever greater liberalism. Powerful trading companies reverted to methods used during colonial times: forcible planting of large areas with cash crops (more cotton), bans on felling cashew trees (cashew nuts), virtually compulsory limits on the cultivation of staple crops (cereals or legumes). The only feasible crop left was cassava with its long productive cycle

(8-12 months), its ability to grow in the shade of fruit trees and its low nutritional value. In such conditions, this policy led to malnutrition, kwashiorkor and disinvestment in a rural economy already reeling from a decade of civil war, and continues to do so. How will this situation affect the stability of a country just emerging from civil war.

- *Ecologically disastrous development policies*

The case of the trans-Amazonian highways and the agricultural concessions bordering them are well known. One of the earth's "green lungs" has been consigned to the huge land owners' bulldozers and cattle herds while the indigenous peoples, the Indians, are being mown down by private militias. One day, these Indians or their offspring, if any of them survive, may themselves take up machetes or kalashnikovs, the modern equivalent of the traditional blowpipes and poison arrows.

- *Development options resulting in extreme economic dependence*

The vast cotton fields in certain countries of the former Soviet Union give rise to several questions. The first relates to the environmental cost of such production units (the drying up of the Aral Sea, the spraying of often very toxic products from the air, etc.). The second challenges the viability of such set-ups once the centralized, planned economy which typified the Soviet Union has disappeared. Production takes place in one area, processing in a second, food supplies come from a third. What happens when a political rift or, worse yet, a front line cuts the cotton-producing region off from its markets and its sources of food?

3. Action during peacetime to change behaviour

In these high-risk situations, humanitarian reflexes must be created which will come into play whenever a crisis breaks out. The ICRC, in conjunction with the other components of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, strives to remind the various groups involved (be they regular armed forces or guerrilla groups) of their duties and responsibilities as codified in international humanitarian law (Geneva Conventions of 1949, Additional Protocols of 1977). A host of experts, equipped with an entire range of texts and instructional materials, have been deployed on the four continents currently affected by crises and hold courses for thousands of men-at-arms every year. This activity, known as "**Dissemination**", is essential, for it is our only means of trying to prevent the irreparable from

occurring. Indeed, every possible step must be taken to prevent those acts and atrocities from being committed in times of war that would ruin any attempt at reconciliation and sabotage any effort to negotiate. The memories lingering from the hours of war may sometimes determine whether or not peace can be successfully restored.

To what avail is such work? After seeing what took place in Rwanda, Liberia or the former Yugoslavia, that is a valid question. Yet on each occasion, in the midst of horror, a few small glimmers of humanity have shown us that our efforts were not all in vain. Delegates and ambulances were able to cross front lines, the wounded were no longer summarily executed, prisoners received visits and had their names recorded, ill-treatment ceased in prisons, food was delivered in the middle of a combat zone — small gestures brought **light into the darkness**.

4. Providing training to cope with crises

One of the liveliest debates today in the development forum is focused on grassroots participation at every stage of the development process, from identification to evaluation and naturally implementation. In terms of emergency action, this same approach has been much slower. How often have teams with their white uniforms and stethoscopes descended upon astonished villages and attempted to go about their work while ignoring the human and social resources already on hand? To reverse this trend, we must first decide to train men and women among the civilian population to cope with disasters. In cooperation with a number of National Societies and their Federation, the ICRC has developed a comprehensive strategy to train aid workers and emergency personnel. But much still remains to be done.

Other leading organizations are also working in the field of disaster prevention and forecasting. The activities of international institutions such as the Asian Centre for Disaster Preparedness, UNDR0 and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) working in connection with the United Nations Decade for the Prevention of Natural Disasters should be stepped up. NGOs, both in the North and in the South, have a crucial role to play in this race against the clock to stop the deadly spread of crises.

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement must in any case continue to concentrate on damage control by training men and women in disaster prevention and management, whether natural disasters

(which are the Federation's domain) or conflict-related (the ICRC's sphere of action).

5. For an operational information policy on potential crises

One of the key elements in disaster prevention and efficient intervention (preparation of the necessary means and staff) is the information available about "high-risk" situations. **How many mistakes have been made for the simple reason that the people concerned "did not know".**

General and specialized maps, reports, lists of stocks and ethno-sociological data should be readily available for the emergency teams. By setting up these data banks during development programmes, any necessary emergency action (which must be linked to subsequent rehabilitation) would be considerably improved. There are virtually no situations in the world today about which nothing has been written. The problem is finding this information when one has to leave in haste for an unfamiliar country with a different culture and climate. Much preparation has yet to be done to give easy access to this information, a task which fortunately is facilitated by the progress in communications and information technology (INTERNET system, etc.).

6. Prompt detection of crises: Early Warning Systems (EWS)

Those who have been fortunate enough to be involved in setting up and monitoring early warning systems are aware of their obvious benefits, but they also know their limitations. There are at present several systems operating at different levels. The global system adopted by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) covers the entire world. The Famine Early Warning System (FEWS) of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) operates on a regional scale. Others have a country-wide or sometimes only a local range. Some of these systems use data mainly provided by satellites, while others take in only climatological and agronomical data. The most effective ones are probably those based on a combination of specialized fields including the social sciences, in particular price curve analysis and economic phenomena such as abnormal sales of livestock or other exceptional activities. Some focus

on one subject, especially those designed for the anti-locust (acridian) campaign. If properly operated, the large-scale FEWS or FAO system or the anti-locust networks are extremely useful in charting overall trends and signalling a shift to orange and/or red alert.

These systems, however, are rarely operational at the very local level and are often hindered by a lack of local parameters. Only specifically-designed studies can produce the database indispensable for the setting up of effective early warning systems. Furthermore, there must be adequate means available to launch such studies, the appropriate methods to put them into effect and the capacity to make use of them. A few NGOs have attempted to do so, but their efforts have yet to be evaluated.

It is relatively costly to set up and operate these national or local early warning systems, and they do not “pay off” immediately. Only a disaster can show whether the EWS has worked well by providing a timely warning which enabled effective action to be taken so that worse consequences were avoided. Such smaller-scale early warning systems are truly a field to which development planners and donors should devote greater attention.

Besides having regular access to the above-mentioned major early warning systems, the ICRC has its own EWS. It consists of a network of regional delegations, one of whose tasks is to keep up a constant watch for incipient crises throughout the world, and is based on constantly checking which vulnerable areas (fragile economies and precarious food supplies) coincide with high-risk areas (geopolitical factors, internecine friction).

7. Rapid response: strategies to build up emergency reserves

Early warning systems are worthwhile only if the “**early warning**” actually gives rise to a “**rapid response**”.

Food aid can be provided in several ways, ranging from imports in the course of major relief operations launched by the World Food Programme, the European Union or USAID to the transfer of buffer stocks set up by regional bodies (Club of the Sahel, Southern African Development Coordination Conference, etc.) in combination with/or by means of counterpart funding. For the time being, the establishment of regional buffer stocks is hindered by both technical (perishable foodstuffs, inad-

equate storage conditions) and economic problems. Storage costs are indeed high, as illustrated by the European Community's difficulties with its own surpluses.

The availability of food aid is unfortunately still largely determined by political contingencies. Timely warnings have been given of countless incipient disasters, yet a tardy response came only when public opinion was stirred to action by the appalling scenes shown on television: Ethiopia in 1983-1984; Somalia in 1992, etc. In some forgotten conflicts, when political considerations or lack of interest outweighed the right to emergency food aid, there was simply no response at all.

III. WHAT ACTION IS MOST NEEDED IN THE MIDST OF HORROR?

1. The spectre of famine

In ever larger areas, economic progress is being reversed by tensions and conflict. War destroys the infrastructure, disrupts services, cuts off markets from their suppliers. Worse yet, crops are sometimes burnt or looted by men-at-arms or great numbers of people displaced by conflicts. The fields may not even have been tilled or sown if the area was too unsafe or military action resumed in the area during the usual farming season. Seed reserves have been destroyed or used as food in a last effort to ward off starvation. Herds have been slaughtered, die in epidemics or are cut off from their traditional grazing lands. Food from traditional alternative sources is no longer available. The slightest climatic setback then signals the end. In extreme cases, it results in famine and long columns of rural inhabitants trudging towards towns, refugee camps or food distribution sites.

The conventional, and often indispensable, response to nutritional problems is food aid paired with medical assistance. In the last 15 years, the ICRC has assembled millions of tonnes of foodstuffs and distributed them to millions of war victims: such were the large-scale operations on the Khmer-Thai border from 1979/1981; those in Ethiopia in 1985/1986; in Angola and the Sudan in 1986/1991 and again in 1993/1994; in Somalia in 1991/1993; in Mozambique in 1992/1993, in Rwanda from 1992 to 1994; not forgetting the former Yugoslavia, Liberia, the Caucasus, etc.

Food aid, however, has its limits and itself carries certain dangers also often observed by the ICRC in the field. Among the detrimental effects of food aid the following should be noted:

- the emergence of a chronic dependence on aid whenever there are large-scale and long-lasting food distributions;
- the tendency of the population to incorporate food aid, and free assistance in general, in their strategies for survival. This often leads to a drain on emergency food reserves. The farmers become used to receiving aid to offset the vagaries of climate and other crisis factors;
- the lowering of incentives to resume agricultural production owing to the fall in commodity prices induced by the massive arrival of free foodstuffs.

Programmes must be set up which enable victims to stay alive today and to survive tomorrow. The ICRC has developed a special tool to assess the needs and most suitable means of achieving this: **pluridisciplinary teams composed of nurses, nutritionists, agronomists, sanitary engineers, logistics experts and delegates specialized in several fields**. The specific role of the latter is to analyse the problems involved in the protection of certain categories of victims who are of particular concern to the ICRC: prisoners of war, security detainees, etc.

The approach adopted by ICRC nutritionists and agronomists is based on a simple premise: malnutrition results from lack of access to food. To wait until malnutrition can be detected by the classic anthropometric indicators (weight/height, weight/age, etc.) generally means arriving too late. At one point, and particularly when help is slow in coming, the only option left is to set up a large-scale operation entailing generalized distributions and special centres for supplementary and therapeutic feeding. Food programmes, though useful and necessary, provide only unsatisfactory solutions to food crises.

2. Emergency rehabilitation in times of war: A glimmer of hope

Action plans resulting from surveys by multidisciplinary teams of agronomists and nutritionists and put into effect at the height of the emergency, alongside the provision of food aid, will lay the foundations for rehabilitation. In some programmes, by enabling farmers to stay on their land, food aid becomes an integral part of the rehabilitation policy.

The ICRC will try to detect as early as possible the potential food supply problems even in the midst of battle. It must then attempt to tackle the causes of a foreseeable famine and help people start up production again despite security constraints. Relief strategy is often based on the provision of coordinated food aid (“stay alive today”) combined with support in resuming production (“survive tomorrow”). Experience in Somalia, the Sudan, Mozambique, Angola, Rwanda, Liberia and Yugoslavia has shown us just how effective this approach is.

The same reasoning also applies in other areas. By repairing the water conduits of encircled towns, sinking wells in areas where water sources have been destroyed by passing tanks and sending medicines to public health facilities cut off by battle lines, some hope can be restored even before the gunfire has ceased. Without this aid, the population would have no alternative but to flee or die.

IV. MAKING THE WASTELANDS OF WAR GROW GREEN AGAIN: AIMS AND METHODS OF REHABILITATION

1. Philosophy of emergency rehabilitation

The twofold approach of “food aid/emergency agricultural rehabilitation” can have a preventive effect or at least limit the damage. The aims of emergency agricultural rehabilitation are:

- **to prevent or limit damage** (this is the “care and maintenance” principle, applied not to individuals but to the productive capacity of rural societies);
- **to hasten the return to productive capacity** after a period of rapid disinvestment in rural economies hard hit by war;
- **to help restore reliable food supply networks**, particularly by facilitating the renewal of food reserves and of emergency seed banks;
- **to restore producers’ dignity**, which may have suffered during the often long and humiliating wait at food distribution sites.

Since conflicts are tending to drag on more and more, the concept of “conflict-related emergency” is being or should be replaced by a different notion: support for the survival strategies of people enduring prolonged wars. The decades of clashes in Angola and the Sudan and the years of destruction and economic paralysis in the former Yugoslavia demand more than food aid or even mere seed distribution. How, for example, can the food derived from animal husbandry be replaced in an agro-pastoral society that has lost all its livestock? There is still much to be thought up, experimented with or tested in actual conditions.

2. A key concept: support for survival strategies

Most societies have developed in conditions that were precarious in every respect. Unfavourable weather conditions, haphazard food supplies, unstable relationships with other communities, etc. Ingenious mechanisms have had to be devised to reduce risks and manage crises. Societies and groups which failed to do so have perished. The ICRC’s task is to bolster such mechanisms either during or at the end of the crisis. The few examples given below will illustrate this point.

The Sudan

In the rigorous conditions of the White Nile basin, the survival strategies of the Dinka and Nuer peoples are based on five traditional activities: animal husbandry, agriculture, gathering, fishing, and trading; food aid must now be added to this list. These coping mechanisms in an inhospitable environment require comprehensive management of vast sparsely inhabited areas. The large concentrations of people at the food distribution points mean that people are sometimes cut off for long periods of time from their own lands and sources of food and their vulnerability is increased. As early as 1988, the ICRC decided to reinforce the productive capacities of the southern Sudanese people by launching a large-scale veterinary programme. This strategy, renewed in 1993, has proved very worthwhile.

Somalia

The war has had a particular effect on the food supply of this country, with its very diversified agro-ecological systems ranging from purely nomadic herding to essentially agrarian systems and including multiple

combinations of agriculture, animal husbandry and fishing. From the outset of the conflict, the ICRC has approached the problem by recognizing this diversity. In grazing areas, it has taken measures to protect surviving herds from the major endemic diseases and boost their productivity; in the less arid south, it has distributed seed and farming implements. Finally, along the coast and rivers, the ICRC has supplied fishing villages with hooks and lines.

Mozambique

In Mozambique, we discovered the local people's lore of edible wild plants. These plants are the key to their survival in hard times but they are not inexhaustible. They too must have the chance to grow again. Food and agricultural assistance save these forest products from depletion by over-use. They are thus conserved during the season when the areas concerned are easily accessible and remain available for use during the rainy season or if the conflict flares up anew, making aid deliveries problematic again.

Eastern Europe

While the ICRC now has considerable experience in supporting survival strategies in tropical areas, there is still much to be learnt about conflict situations in "developed" countries. Nevertheless, over the past two years, the ICRC has gained a certain expertise in the former Yugoslavia and in the countries of the former Soviet Union where lifestyles and production methods often closely resemble our own. Programmes have been set up to assist agriculture but also to stimulate production units. In this specific instance, experience has shown that it is essential for the ICRC to continue to be perceived as neutral by all the parties concerned.

Conclusion

The key to the success of emergency agricultural rehabilitation programmes is dictated by their specific nature. Since they are set up under crisis conditions, they can seldom benefit by the classic support systems for agricultural extension campaigns that give ongoing advice on their implementation and familiarize the population with the methods used. From the very beginning, these programmes must therefore make use of

local know-how and traditional practices, adopting varied strategies to take local diversity into adequate account. In order to follow closely these peasant farmers' traditional strategies, with their geographical differences and adaptability to the unpredictable, a soundly based analysis of them is needed. Emergency workers and development experts should meet and share views on the appropriate methods for such an analysis.

V. RISING FROM THE ASHES: POST-DISASTER DEVELOPMENT

1. Past crises and future weaknesses

The link that exists between poverty, war and vulnerability is already well known. Everyone is not equal in the face of adversity, and crises further accentuate the disparities. It is very likely that we will again see the ravages of growing inequality, of rampant poverty and the unchecked extraction of mineral resources, further devastating a natural environment already deeply scarred by conflict and its consequences (for instance, huge numbers of displaced people have totally deforested south-west Rwanda and the Goma region in Zaire).

The aftermath of crises is a time of incredible social creativity, redistributing the cards in ways that would previously have been unthinkable. However, these exceptionally promising moments may also simply result in chaos, crime, waste and the perpetration of gross injustice — all conditions conducive to a renewed crisis. Those who wish to help these devastated areas and their traumatized peoples to get back on their feet must demonstrate unwavering vigilance and generosity.

That same period is also a crucial one for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement: it is a time to forge a spirit of and capacity for humanitarian action within a community whose wounds are still open; a time to forget hate while remembering the beneficial work of Red Cross volunteers during the conflict; to rebuild a world in which the phrase "mutual aid" has a meaning, bringing to mind those who hastened beneath heavy fire to rescue the wounded from either side; a time to restore village communities and instil a spirit of solidarity by participation in projects such as those undertaken by the ICRC in the darkest hours.

2. For “emergency” personnel, planning the withdrawal and training others to take over

A number of leading organizations, like OXFAM, have both specialized emergency departments and other departments engaged in long-term action. If funds do not dry up when the crisis ends and media attention shifts elsewhere, these institutions can make a smooth transition from the “emergency” phase to rehabilitation and development activities.

The ICRC’s mandate is restrictive since it applies essentially to the period of conflict. Fortunately, many conflicts have a “happy” ending, namely peace, which usually leads to a withdrawal of the “emergency” personnel. Partners must then be found to take over the emergency rehabilitation activities and transform them into development projects with their specific methods and objectives.

There are several possible scenarios:

- *The situation favoured by the ICRC:* the country’s own National Society decides to take over these activities (either alone or with the help of the Federation). In this way it has been possible to adapt programmes started during the war — medical and social work, dissemination of international humanitarian law, tracing of families separated by the conflict, etc. — to development needs and ensure that they were continued.
- *A rare situation:* the national ministries decide to take over and run the programmes themselves. Since peace has returned, the ministries and their provincial representatives theoretically can travel throughout the country (which was not always possible during the conflict and had led the ICRC to assume the role of a neutral and independent intermediary).
- *The most common situation:* an NGO or occasionally a United Nations agency is interested in taking over a programme or a specific region.

Replacing the ICRC by another organization often proves difficult, for mutual trust must be established between that organization and the people before it can step in. And things do not necessarily go smoothly simply because the ICRC has been able to donate equipment for the initial months of the NGO’s operation. Experience has therefore led us to adopt the idea of a transitional “**induction**” period during which the National Society or NGO concerned works for a time under the guidance of the ICRC in order to get to know the situation and meet its partners. This approach

has been successfully tried out in Somalia and Mozambique and the ICRC intends to continue it.

The National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are often the only quasi non-governmental bodies in civil society, in the absence of a true network of non governmental organizations, which is usually non-existent or in its infancy. Their role is all the more essential in the post-conflict period. In view of the challenges, but also of the limited absorption capacity of most of the National Societies, one could see the importance of a dynamic policy to develop these other components of the Movement. This should take place during peace time, and it is there that the role of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies has a crucial role. Strategies to develop National Societies in the middle of the conflicts have still to be further elaborated. The ICRC, alongside with the other components of the Movement, should pursue its efforts in that direction.

VI. LOOKING AHEAD: A WORLD AT RISK

1. A comprehensive strategic approach must be found

It is often depressing to glance at the newspaper or watch the TV news every day. It is becoming more and more evident on this crisis-stricken planet of ours that there is a space-time continuum, starting well before the crisis breaks and lasting long after it is over. We are beginning to recognize clearly the determining factors that make it better or worse. We also have become very familiar with the catalysts of peace and the sources of conflict and know how hard it is to build peace on the ruins and hatred left by war.

The diagnostic means devised by development specialists, the insight gained into the varying forms and degrees of vulnerability resulting from emergency operations, and the peaceful tool of international humanitarian law can and must be used.

To sum up, the “emergency-development” continuum can be represented as follows, juxtaposing the working methods of institutions such as the United Nations Organization or NGOs and those of the ICRC.

THE “EMERGENCY-DEVELOPMENT” CONTINUUM

	Phase	Activities within a more general framework (UN, NGOs)	Activities of the components of the Movement
1	Development	Programmes for socio-economic development Disaster prevention — Disaster preparedness (analysis of factors rendering systems vulnerable, preparation of databases, creation of buffer stocks) Installation of early warning systems	Disseminate knowledge of IHL (in advance, in times of peace) Identify databases and prepare data summaries Develop the capacity of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to conduct these activities Prepare for emergencies (training, set up logistic infrastructures, etc.) Analyse risk factors, monitor situations via the network of regional delegations.
2	Early warning	Certain indicators show red alert	Sound the warning: send an evaluation team
3	Emergency	Assess the situation Prepare UN Consolidated Appeals Mobilize resources Start emergency operations	Start preventive action, emergency programmes and emergency rehabilitation Disseminate knowledge of IHL (with greater immediacy, in the heat of battle) Mobilize resources
4	Rehabilitation	Mobilize resources Set up rehabilitation activities	Start rehabilitation Seek partners to take over programmes and transform them into “development activities”.
5	Development	Resume development and reconstruction projects	Programmes taken over either by a National Society with help from the Federation or by an NGO and attention gradually transferred to development problems.

2. The big challenges

The ICRC has at its disposal an entire range of skills, information and impressive relay systems whose potential is doubtless not yet fully utilized. Many of the subjects raised above should be developed in greater detail, from both the theoretical and the operational points of view. There are several areas that merit joint reflection and action.

(a) The time factor

Farmers in France often say: *“il faut se faire un allié du temps”* (you must make an ally of time/weather). The dual meaning of the word *“temps”* is used to say that the weather determines the time when they can or must do their work, and that both weather and time must be put to the best possible use. A large part of the “emergency and development” issue is linked to the question of time. The contrast between “doing things fast and well” or “doing things fast OR doing them well” is one such question. “Doing things in time”, and therefore “being forewarned and forearmed/prepared” is another. Lastly, there is the question of the “durability” once the emergency is over, or what is termed in English the “sustainability”, of activities begun during the emergency period.

(b) Use of local human resources

There is now a growing realization of the fact that, even in emergencies, nothing can really be achieved without the consent or participation of the population concerned. To send in emergency teams without relying on the local people and their skills often results, at best, in rather a mess and at worst in disastrous mistakes. It is often on this point that the “emergency” approach diverges most widely from the “development” approach. Yet a crucial link between emergencies and subsequent development can be found in improved human resource management and recourse to traditional knowledge and local skills. The strength of the ICRC in conflict situations lies in its clear-cut mandate and the network of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies upon which it can call.

(c) Investing in the collection of information

Improved knowledge means superior planning, earlier warning and more effective action. Much work remains to be done in the collection, processing, and summarizing of the necessary information on the hot spots (past, present and future) around the globe. For example, all the urban

problems with humanitarian implications in the mammoth cities in the South are uncharted territory to us.

(d) A four-fold approach: presence/dissemination/protection/assistance

While the link between assistance and protection is now fully recognized, the complete formula for the aforesaid possible approach — both as a whole and its application over time, i.e. before, during and after the crises — is less clearly understood.

That is perhaps one of the challenges for the years to come, for the ICRC in particular, and for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in general.

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