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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

responsibilities in the event of armed conflict and National Society staff about to go on mission for the ICRC.

Many missions were carried out from Geneva and ICRC regional delegations to meet National Society leaders, ascertain their activities and needs, and take part in national or regional meetings and seminars.

In order to help National Societies in regions exposed to armed conflict and other disturbances to strengthen their operational capacity, the ICRC circulated among them a study entitled "ICRC contribution to the development of National Societies" (adopted on 5 July 1990).

Empress Shôken Fund

This Fund was created in 1912 by a gift from the Empress Shôken of Japan to promote the development of National Society activities in peacetime. Since then the Fund has received several gifts from the Japanese Imperial family, the government and public of Japan, and the Japanese Red Cross.

The Joint League/ICRC Commission for the distribution of income from the Empress Shôken Fund met in Geneva on 28 March 1990 under the chairmanship of Mr. Maurice Aubert, ICRC Vice-President, and in the presence of Japan's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva.

In accordance with the criteria it has set itself, the Commission decided to carry out the 69th distribution of income among the National Societies of the following countries; Antigua and Barbuda, Benin, Chile, Fiji, Ghana, Indonesia, Lesotho, Mongolia, Peru, Somalia and Western Samoa. The money will be used to purchase ambulances and other vehicles, training material and rehabilitation and first-aid equipment.³

LEAGUE OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES

In order to maintain and promote unity and solidarity within the Movement, the ICRC and the League consult each other in detail on a regular basis about operational matters and any questions relating to the work of the Movement's statutory bodies.

The ICRC was accordingly invited to attend as an observer the XXVth and XXVIth sessions of the League Executive Council, which were held in Geneva on 3-4 May and 23-24 October respectively.

In addition, the League President and Secretary General attended the ICRC Assembly of 31 January and the League Secretary General also attended the ICRC Executive Board meeting of 13 September.

Joint League/ICRC meetings

In addition to the above-mentioned regular contacts, formal joint meetings of ICRC and League representatives were held to discuss matters of mutual interest. These meetings took place on 26 March, 28 June, 3 October and 29 November 1990. They dealt in particular with questions relating to the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, preparations for the other statutory meetings of the Movement and the progress of various joint studies, publications and other projects; information was also exchanged about other current activities and missions of joint interest were discussed.

³ Details of the 69th distribution may be found in the *International Review of the Red Cross*, No. 277, July-August 1990.

Joint ICRC/League Commission on National Society Statutes

The Joint ICRC/League Commission on National Society Statutes met six times in 1990, on 13 February, 23 April, 5 July, 12 September, 31 October and 11 December.

In accordance with Resolutions VI of the 22nd International Conference and XX of the 24th International Conference, the Commission examined draft amendments to their statutes submitted by 10 National Societies. It also followed the development of nine emergent National Societies or Societies that had applied for recognition. In addition the Commission stood by to help several National Societies facing internal problems or seeking support from the two international institutions.

Henry Dunant Institute

The ICRC, the League and the Swiss Red Cross are members of the Henry Dunant Institute and take it in turns to supply a Chairman for the Institute for a two-year term of office. Since October 1989, the Chairman has been Mr. Hubert Bucher, Secretary General of the Swiss Red Cross.

The ICRC joins in certain studies undertaken by the Institute, for example on international humanitarian law. As in the

past, the ICRC provided instructors for a number of seminars, in particular:

- the fifteenth introductory course on the international activities of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, for National Society leaders and volunteers (Geneva, 4-13 June), held in Spanish and attended by 24 representatives of 20 National Societies;
- the Latin American seminar for heads of penitentiary administrations (San José, Costa Rica, 14-18 May), attended by 22 officials from 18 Latin American countries to discuss common difficulties and practical ways of improving the treatment of detainees and the administration of justice in general;
- the seminar for the heads of penitentiary administrations in French-speaking Africa (Bujumbura, Burundi, 24-28 September), at which 40 officials from 16 countries discussed their experiences and concerns in order to improve not only the conditions of detention but also dialogue and cooperation between different prison systems.

Together with the League and the Swiss Red Cross, the ICRC also followed the preparation and progress of studies on the Movement's development and the latter's role in general in this respect.