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POLICY & COOPERATION WITHIN THE MOVEMENT

COOPERATION WITHIN
THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS
AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

- Statutory bodies

WORKING TOGETHER
IN THE FIELD

ICRC POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

In November 2001 the ICRC, together with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, convened the Council of Delegates, which brings together representatives of each component of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and is its supreme deliberative body for internal matters. The primary achievement of the 2001 meeting was the adoption of an overall Strategy for the Movement, which fixed strategic objectives aimed at strengthening the Movement's components, enhancing cooperation and coordination among them, and harmonizing their relations with external partners.

In October the ICRC published *Women Facing War*, its study on the impact of armed conflict on women. This was the outcome of a three-year review of the specific needs of women in situations of armed conflict, of the protection provided by international law and of ICRC activities on their behalf. A plan of action for implementation of the findings of *Women Facing War* was drawn up in order to strengthen ICRC activities carried out for, and with, women affected by armed conflict.

As part of the ongoing process of reviewing its policies in the light of the situations it encounters, the ICRC updated its policy with regard to hostage situations and planned to issue it in June 2002.

The Cooperation Unit focused on providing delegations with support and training in matters relating to cooperation with National Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies. Useful tools for capacity assessment and procedures for budgeting activities carried out with National Societies were developed for application in the field. In particular, substantial progress was made with the cooperation database in which all existing policies, procedures, tools and guidelines pertaining to work with National Societies were compiled. All ICRC delegations should be able to access this database by mid-2002.

The Joint International Federation and ICRC Working Group on Development Cooperation drew up guidelines which clarified the two organizations' respective roles and responsibilities in providing development support for National Societies, and provided a framework for management to improve coordination in the areas of planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and review.

Building upon lessons learned from operational activities in the field involving various components of the Movement, the Cooperation Unit also worked to improve coordination. A model *Memorandum of Understanding* detailing roles and responsibilities was drafted, and specific procedures were set out for working with National Societies on the coordination of communication and information management, security matters and the involvement of National Society personnel.

COOPERATION WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

Statutory bodies

The Council of Delegates and the Strategy for the Movement

The Council of Delegates, meeting in Geneva from 11 to 14 November 2001, adopted an overall Strategy for the Movement aimed at achieving the goals specified in the Preamble to the 1997 Seville Agreement. This Strategy focuses on three objectives for the Movement: strengthening its components; enhancing cooperation among them; and improving relations with governments and other key players.

To pursue these strategic objectives, 17 actions were identified and explained. These included building the capacity of National Societies, the systematic training of Red Cross and Red Crescent leaders and upgrading of their knowledge, and the establishment and maintenance of mechanisms for consultation and coordination with key players in the political, military and humanitarian spheres. Implementation of these actions were to be monitored and evaluated and the results presented at each subsequent meeting of the Council of Delegates. The ICRC is fully committed to this process.

The Council welcomed another strategic document entitled *Movement action in favour of refugees and internally displaced persons*, drawn up jointly by the ICRC and the International Federation. On the basis of this review the Council requested the ICRC and the Federation, with the support of the National Societies, to develop further means of enhancing protection and assistance for these populations through better coordination and cooperation within the Movement and with other humanitarian agencies such as UNHCR.

Other key topics discussed by the Council included the Movement's strategy with respect to anti-personnel landmines and other explosive remnants of war, and the International Criminal Court. The Council also endorsed ongoing efforts by the International Federation to consolidate international disaster-response law with a view to improving access to victims of natural or technological disasters. Lastly, the Council confirmed the Movement's objective of finding, as rapidly as possible, a comprehensive solution to the emblem issue which would be acceptable to all parties in terms of both substance and procedure.

Towards a comprehensive solution to the question of the emblem

Since the 1999 International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, the ICRC, together with the Standing Commission and the International Federation, has been very actively involved in the process of seeking a comprehensive solution to the emblem issue. In 2000 a third protocol to the Geneva Conventions was drafted, introducing an additional emblem free from any political, religious or national connotations, to be put at the disposal of States and National Societies having difficulty in using the existing emblems. A Diplomatic Conference was planned to consider adoption of the protocol, but had to be postponed because of the deterioration of the situation in the Middle East. Both the International Federation and the ICRC took every possible opportunity to pursue cooperation – in particular in the operational field – with the National Societies which were not yet formally recognized. Moreover, the Standing Commission will continue consultations with a view to finding a comprehensive solution to the question of the emblem on the basis of the work already carried out and will report on its progress at the Council of Delegates and the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent due to be held in 2003.

Follow-up to the 27th International Conference (1999)

With regard to the Plan of Action for 2000-2003 that was adopted by the 1999 International Conference and the many pledges made by participants, the ICRC and the International Federation were requested to present a report to the 2003 International Conference on their implementation. To this end, in 2001 the ICRC and the International Federation jointly developed a computer database to facilitate monitoring and reporting on action taken to meet the commitments made. This database was presented at the 2001 Council of Delegates and was made accessible to the public on the ICRC Website. As the 1999 Plan of Action and the 387 pledges are stored in the database, Conference participants will be regularly reminded to provide information as to progress on implementation. For its part, the ICRC made every endeavour to fulfil its own pledge relating to the situation of women in armed conflict.

Review of National Society statutes and recognition of two new National Societies

The Joint ICRC-International Federation Commission on National Society Statutes (Joint Commission) met six times in 2001 to support about 35 National Societies actively engaged in reviewing and updating their statutes. As a direct result, the National Societies of Gabon, Latvia and Sri Lanka successfully completed this process in 2001. The statutes of five non-recognized Societies applying to join the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement were also reviewed. In accordance with the recommendations of the Joint Commission, the ICRC Assembly recognized the new National Societies of Bosnia-Herzegovina (8 May) and Moldova (24 October).

WORKING TOGETHER IN THE FIELD

In 2001 the ICRC and National Societies continued to work as active partners in pursuing their shared objective of preventing and alleviating human suffering in armed conflict by providing protection and assistance. The purpose of ICRC cooperation activities is to enhance and build upon the existing capacities of National Societies so that they can fulfil their responsibilities as members of the Movement in providing humanitarian services in their respective countries. These cooperation programmes focus on three areas of activity: preparing to bring assistance to those affected by conflict and internal strife (preparedness and response); promoting international humanitarian law (IHL) and spreading knowledge of the principles, ideals and activities of the Movement; and restoring family links as part of the worldwide Red Cross and Red Crescent tracing network.

The ICRC and the National Societies derive many advantages from their mutually supportive relationship. Victims of conflict receive wider and more efficient services through the coordinated capacities of the various components of the Movement. The ICRC's accumulated knowledge and expertise gained over years of operational experience form a solid basis on which National Societies can build their capacity in the three programme areas mentioned. In return, the ICRC benefits from the National Society's knowledge of the local context, conditions, people and culture as well as from its infrastructure throughout the country. Cooperation activities are carried out in close consultation and coordination with the International Federation to ensure that they are consistent with the long-term organizational development plan and contribute to the development process of the National Society concerned.

During the year under review, the ICRC allocated 60 million Swiss francs to capacity-building programmes for National Societies. In the areas of promotion and dissemination of IHL and the Fundamental Principles, 113 National Societies received capacity-building support from the ICRC, while 79 received support for the restoration of family links. Seventy-three National Societies were given assistance in preparing to respond to armed conflict.

Support for cooperation activities in delegations

To ensure that capacity-building and operational cooperation initiatives were carried out in accordance with the ICRC's policy of cooperation with National Societies, further tools and procedures were developed in 2001 and specific briefings and training were provided for field staff.

Examples of such tools were model performance frameworks for the three main programme areas and a model concept and methodology for capacity-building. These tools were made available in a database which was designed and partially written in 2001 and will be accessible to delegations by mid-2002.

Two training seminars were held for 49 delegates directly involved in implementing cooperation plans in delegations. The focus of the seminars was on practical implementation of the cooperation policy. Additional support in the form of specific briefings was given to 13 cooperation delegates. Six new cooperation positions were created in 2001, bringing the number of delegations with specialized cooperation delegates to 33.

The ICRC training course for new delegates was modified to include more Movement issues and cooperation strategies. Training on coordination within the Movement (Seville Agreement) and the ICRC's cooperation policy was also provided for 75 Federation personnel on their first assignment.

Integrating ICRC and International Federation cooperation policy

Practical steps were taken towards further harmonizing the approaches of the ICRC and the International Federation in terms of capacity-building for National Societies. The Joint Working Group on Development Cooperation issued directives on development support for National Societies. First, these clarified the two organizations' respective roles and responsibilities for development support in the four main areas of Strategy 2010, namely disaster preparedness, disaster response, health and care in the community, and promotion of the Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values. Secondly, all ICRC and Federation delegations were instructed to plan their development support for National Societies in close consultation with one another. To support these initiatives, coordinated measures were taken to harmonize planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and review.

These directives had a significant impact. In Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, for instance, ICRC development support in the fields of IHL and the Fundamental Principles, conflict-preparedness and -response, and tracing became part of the strategic development plans of the National Societies concerned, with the full support of the International Federation. Similar improvements in the coordination of development support between the Federation and the ICRC were seen in the Balkans, Central Europe and the Maghreb.



Implementation of the Seville Agreement

The ICRC's cooperation activities also have the broader purpose of strengthening the work of the Movement as a whole and achieving greater consistency in operations involving more than one component of the Movement.

In 2001 the ICRC assumed the role of lead agency for the Movement's operational activities on several occasions and improved its cooperation strategies, building upon lessons learned from past and present operations such as those in Afghanistan, in Macedonia and in Israel and the occupied and autonomous territories. A model headquarters memorandum of understanding detailing roles and responsibilities was drafted for such situations, and specific procedures were laid down for working with National Societies with regard to the coordination of communication and information management, security matters and the involvement of National Society personnel.

An overview of the activities of the components of the Movement to implement the Seville Agreement was compiled, highlighting the difficulties encountered and the progress achieved by each country. This report was distributed widely at headquarters and to all delegations and will serve as a guide for further initiatives to improve Movement relations and coordination.

National Society representatives received at headquarters

The ICRC organized 44 visits to its headquarters for 184 National Society leaders, managers, senior officials and staff, either at the request of National Societies themselves or upon invitation. The visits, whose purpose was to enhance knowledge of the ICRC, its functions and its activities around the world, also offered an opportunity for discussions on matters of common interest, promoted mutual understanding and strengthened the Movement's unity.

ICRC POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

Policy review

Apart from the completion and publication of its *Women Facing War* study, the ICRC paid particular attention to establishing, consolidating or reviewing its policies on issues such as conflict prevention, involvement in resolving hostage situations, rejection of the principle of armed protection for ICRC operations, and the protection of children in armed conflict.

On the basis of the general debate on the prevention of armed conflict and other forms of violence jeopardizing peace, and of its own long experience of the humanitarian management of such situations, the ICRC updated its position on conflict prevention. A general concept was drafted and adopted by the ICRC Assembly. The related review of ICRC policy in regard to good offices and mediation made progress and was due to be finalized in 2002.

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The ICRC also updated its policy on hostage-taking, focusing on defining the type of situation in which it could offer humanitarian assistance and possibly its good offices to facilitate the resolution of such a crisis. This policy was adopted by the ICRC Assembly in September 2001 and was to be published by mid-2002. Recent experience of being confronted with extremely volatile security conditions in the field prompted the ICRC to define its position on recourse to armed protection. The principle of non-recourse to such protection, which was particularly emphasized at the 1995 Council of Delegates, was reaffirmed and ultimately approved by the ICRC Assembly in early 2002.

Protection of children

All components of the Movement strove to implement the commitments they had made in the 1995 Plan of Action concerning children in armed conflict. These included aiming to raise the minimum age for recruitment into the armed forces to 18 and developing rehabilitation programmes for demobilized child soldiers. An intermediary report on the status of implementation was presented to the Council of Delegates in November 2001.

In all situations of armed conflict, the fact is that the protection of children, notably in terms of their safety and their physical and mental health, is better guaranteed when the civilian population as a whole, and in particular families, are afforded protection.

The ICRC took an active part in the development of specific humanitarian instruments designed to protect children in armed conflict, such as the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, which in fact entered into force on 12 February 2002. Knowledge of these rules was promoted among armed forces, police forces and other bearers of weapons, at universities and in schools. The ICRC remained committed to preventing the recruitment of child soldiers, and was successful in certain cases, in Colombia and Sri Lanka for example, in obtaining the withdrawal of children from military groups and returning them to their families. The "Child advocacy and rehabilitation" project in Sierra Leone, instigated by the National Society and supported by the ICRC, achieved similar results.

On the operational level, in 2001 the ICRC registered some 2,700 children separated from their families, 1,200 of whom were subsequently reunited with their relatives. Over 2,500 minors were visited in detention, and their living conditions in terms of food and hygiene were closely monitored. The ICRC also engaged in medical activities specifically aimed at children, such as nutrition programmes in Rwanda.

Women and war

When the ICRC published its *Women Facing War* study in October 2001, activities marking the launch of the English version took place in several countries including Australia, South Africa, Switzerland, the United States and the United Kingdom. Further events are planned for 2002 to mark the publication of the Arabic, French, Russian and Spanish versions.

The ICRC is particularly concerned about the protection of women against the effects of armed conflict and is determined to try to alleviate their plight. The plan of action drawn up for implementation of the study's findings also focuses on conveying the key messages of the study to as wide an audience as possible – from arms bearers to women's associations – so that everyone is made responsible for improving the situation of women caught up in war.

To supplement the study and to facilitate the dissemination of IHL, a series of eleven short films were produced. Also entitled *Women Facing War*, these films feature eleven different women describing in their own words how war affected their lives. The films, shot in seven different regions or countries, cover a variety of subjects including sexual violence, access to health care, the search for missing relatives and displacement. Another film, *Working with Women in War*, further highlights the ICRC's work in this area. All the films are used for training and awareness-raising throughout the world. A number of television stations plan to broadcast them in 2002. "Women and War" fact sheets and posters were also produced in 2001 and were widely distributed as an additional means of drawing attention to the different ways in which women are affected by armed conflict and to the protection that is afforded them under the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols.

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The study, films, posters and fact sheets all serve as a reminder that the protection of women in situations of armed conflict can be achieved through better implementation of and respect for the existing rules of IHL and other international instruments. Pointing this out was one part of the pledge made by the ICRC at the 27th International Red Cross and Red Crescent Conference in 1999. In 2001 the ICRC took steps to spread knowledge of the provisions of IHL that protect women and girls and to ensure that this concern is fully addressed in all ICRC activities. Meetings were held with dissemination delegates to discuss means of promoting the protection of women and of prohibiting sexual violence committed by people bearing weapons. Ways of introducing the study's findings into training courses for all ICRC staff were also examined.

Furthermore, briefings were held with more than 350 ICRC delegates to explain the study's findings and its application in operational activities, and to learn more about country-specific programmes. Visits were also made to several ICRC field operations, such as those in Eritrea, Ethiopia, Liberia and Sierra Leone, to see how special activities for women were being carried out and what lessons could be learned from these programmes. More such visits are planned for 2002. In addition, documents were given to all delegates going to the field on the situation of women in detention, on assistance and health activities for such women and on gender in communication. The ICRC takes its pledge seriously and is fully committed to ensuring its implementation and improving the situation of women suffering the effects of war.