

26th International Conference of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, Geneva, Switzerland, 3-7 December 1995

Resolution 5 - Strengthening national capacity to provide humanitarian and development assistance and protection to the most vulnerable

The 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent,

recalling Article 2 of the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (Movement), according to which each State shall promote the establishment on its territory of a National Red Cross or Red Crescent Society (National Society) and encourage its development, and respect adherence by all the components of the Movement to the Fundamental Principles,

recalling, furthermore, the aims and content of resolutions XXV and XXII of, respectively, the 24th and 25th International Conference of the Red Cross on, respectively, the " Development of National Societies in the context of national development plans " and " Development of National Societies as a Contribution to National Development " , and the background papers supporting these resolutions,

recognizing the major role played at the local, national and international levels by all components of the Movement in disaster preparedness and relief, as well as the range of service and development programmes carried out by National Societies, notably in the health, social welfare and blood sectors,

recognizing that the combined resources of National Societies represent a great force for promoting human betterment and the further development of civil society at a time when numerous social and economic trends are having a negative impact on the quality of life of the most vulnerable sections of the population of some countries,

acknowledging nevertheless that wide disparities exist between the relatively small number of National Societies that possess substantial capacity and financial resources and the many that do not,

taking note of the background paper and the deliberations on the subject of strengthening the Movement's capacity to assist and protect the most vulnerable people,

1. *calls upon* States

(a) *to reaffirm* the mandate of National Societies as autonomous humanitarian organizations auxiliary to their governments and as institutions that play a special role in enhancing respect for humanitarian values and human dignity,

(b) *to recognize* the need for National Societies to maintain their independence and autonomy of action in order to act in accordance with the Fundamental Principles and the values that they stand for, and *to respect* the

National Societies' right to adjust their statutes, in accordance with national legislation, whenever they deem it necessary in order to improve their functioning,

(c) *to make better use* of the potential of National Societies as cost-effective providers of health care, social services and emergency assistance for the most vulnerable, and *to recognize* that National Societies will need to develop new ways, including systems of cost recovery, to fund work carried out in cooperation with the public authorities,

(d) *to recognize* the specific role of the National Society of their country in disaster preparedness and tracing services, ensuring that it has a clearly defined role in the context of the country's overall disaster preparedness plans,

(e) *to help* create a beneficial environment for the overall development of National Societies in their own countries, by providing, for example, financial and fiscal benefits or other arrangements that recognize the not-for-profit nature of the National Societies and their role as auxiliaries to the public services,

(f) *to support* the development of the global network of National Societies by providing adequate financial resources to development cooperation programmes in order to address the needs of the growing number of the most vulnerable populations, both in normal times and in times of disaster,

(g) *to support* the efforts of all components of the Movement, according to their respective mandates, to assist in the development of National Societies;

2. *calls upon* all components of the Movement to continue their support towards the development of a network of National Societies, in accordance with their agreed coordination mechanisms, and *notes with appreciation* the efforts made in institutional, resource and programme development by National Societies and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (International Federation), and the complementary efforts of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) concerning National Societies' preparations for their role in a conflict situation;

3. *calls upon* the International Federation and the ICRC, in cooperation with National Societies, to draw up a model law of recognition of a National Society suitable for adaptation to individual national requirements, and present it to the 27th International Conference;

4. *calls upon* the States concerned and the International Federation, in cooperation with the ICRC, to promote in every country the establishment and development of an independent National Society, in order to meet the statutory conditions for recognition, and the subsequent admission to membership of the International Federation of National Societies which do not have full membership;

5. *calls upon* the International Federation, in the spirit of its Strategic Work Plan for the Nineties, to vigorously strengthen National Societies and the cooperation between them;

6. *calls upon* the National Societies to search constantly for new means to strengthen their own capacity to identify and assist the most vulnerable, and to share experience and resources with other National Societies, so as to maximize the capacity of the Movement as a whole;

7. *requests* the International Federation, in cooperation with the ICRC, to report to the 27th International Conference on the action and the principal measures taken to implement this resolution on the basis of information received from National Societies and States.