

**Council of Delegates 2017**  
**Chairman's Closing Message, Saturday 11 November 2017**

Dear colleagues,

The Council of Delegates is where the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement develops strategy, decides policy, learns from practice, and prepares for the future.

While our colleagues and volunteers carry out their vital work in this region and throughout the world, we are here to do all we can to support them so that their work is more effective and impactful.

Our identity is strong: for those living through armed conflict, humanitarian crises or natural disasters, the Red Cross and Red Crescent emblems signify hope. They communicate our promise to help without taking sides, anywhere in the world. And with almost 200 components operating independently but toward the same ends, carefully considered policy and coordinated action are vital to ensuring that the power of the Movement is harnessed and people receive the help they need.

We do not need to look far to understand the urgency and importance of our task. Here in Turkey today, we are encircled by some of the world's most urgent humanitarian emergencies. We are only a short distance from the crises in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Ukraine, Afghanistan, and the shores of Mediterranean Europe. Further afield, there are many more.

These crises and others are a constant test not only of the courage of our volunteers, but also of our institutions: we are challenged to cooperate efficiently in complex scenarios, to adapt to changing actors and political dynamics, and to adhere to our fundamental principles in the face of increasing State involvement in humanitarian activities.

Through our official Resolutions on Strengthening Movement Cooperation and Coordination, and on collective resource mobilization, we have taken major steps toward working in a more complementary, accountable and cost-effective manner.

Through our in-depth workshop discussions on upholding independence, impartiality and neutrality, we have confronted and explored some of the most sensitive challenges we face in our relationship with States. And by looking for ways to awaken our immense, but still not fully tapped power to communicate, we have begun to use our global voice more strategically in a changing media landscape.

We have planned to take action over the next two years to confront increasing risks from disasters, fueled by climate change. The impact of these disasters is exacerbated

by rising vulnerabilities associated with urbanization and the persistent problem of sexual and gender-based violence.

This meeting has not only been about coordination. We have also worked to enhance our ability to meet very specific and complex humanitarian needs arising from a fragmented and unstable world.

Cities under siege, people on the move, super-storms and rising sea levels, rapidly spreading disease, children without education, families torn apart, the devastating effect of nuclear weapons ... this Council of Delegates has taken us a step forward in our work on all of these issues.

We have adopted a number of Resolutions:

- In response to unprecedented levels of migration - and the suffering of vulnerable migrants all over the world - the Movement has determined to take a strong position for the sake of humanity and for the preservation of the dignity of migrants at every stage of their journey. We have called on States to better protect and assist vulnerable migrants, and we have committed to strengthening cooperation between components of the Movement to support States in these areas;
- We have strongly expressed our unwillingness to allow humanity to live under the threat of nuclear attack, and we have committed to telling States that it is time to sign onto the Treaty Prohibiting the use of Nuclear Weapons;
- We have declared education as paramount in providing the knowledge, values and skills necessary to develop resilient individuals, families and communities, and we have committed to developing a framework for our activities in this area;
- Acknowledging the profound emotional and psychological traumas caused by conflict and disaster, we have decided to enhance our policies and action on mental health and psychosocial needs;
- Acknowledging the increasing prevalence and possibility of disease outbreaks, we have decided to work more closely with communities and governments to better prepare and respond to pandemics and epidemics at the national level;
- We have determined to continue to help separated families to find one another in a world of mass migration and rapidly transforming communications;
- And finally, we have deepened our efforts to protect health care and the sick and wounded; to ensure safe access to people in need; to make our emblems understood

and respected around the world as symbols of hope, protection, and neutrality, and to promote respect for international humanitarian law.

Our next milestone will be the 33rd International Conference in 2019. We have laid the foundation here, not only through our discussions and resolutions, but through the RC<sup>2</sup> Forum and our exchange of ideas on the future of humanitarian action. Taken together, I am confident that in two years' time, with States sitting alongside us, we will build on what we have accomplished, and become even better at fulfilling our unique role.

Thank you for your hard work over the last two days. There is much we can be proud of and much more than we can still achieve. Moving forward, let's work to be a more trusted, coordinated, and stronger Movement.