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31st International Conference of the Red Cross Red Crescent
Geneva, 28 November–1 December – For humanity



CONFERENCE GUIDE

FOR THE MEMBERS, OBSERVERS AND GUESTS OF THE 31st INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT

(28 November - 1 December 2011)

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1. Welcome and registration

Dates and venue

The **31st International Conference** will take place **28 November - 1 December 2011** in Geneva, following the General Assembly of the International Federation (23-25 November 2011), and the Council of Delegates of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (26 November 2011).

All meetings will take place at the **International Conference Centre of Geneva (CICG)**, Rue de Varembe, 15 – 1211 Geneva 20 (Switzerland).

Registration, access to the CICG and badge delivery

Participants are reminded to **register online** as soon as possible at the following address: <http://event.ifrc.org> For more details, please refer to the registration note sent with the

Convocation dated 25 May 2011 or contact Ms. Helena Pantelic at helena.pantelic@ifrc.org.

For security reasons only registered participants with badges of the 31st International Conference will be permitted to enter the Conference Centre.

To prevent delays in **receiving badges** during the opening day of the Conference, it is highly recommended to register early at the International Conference Centre (CICG) on 21 November, from 12:00 to 19:00; 22 and 23 November (07:30 to 19:00); 24 - 26 November 09:00-18:00; 28 November 07:30-19:00; 29 November - 1 December 09:00-18:00 (1 December until 12:00). **Please note that the Conference Centre will be closed on Sunday 27 November.**

You also have the opportunity to receive your badge at the IFRC Secretariat (Chemin des Crêts 17, 1209 Petit Saconnex) on 17 and 18 November 10:00 - 18:00.

As ID-pictures will be taken and badges printed on the spot at each registration desk, delegates must present themselves in person and provide identification.

For more detailed information on administrative arrangements of your participation at the Conference please refer to the document "Welcome note" available at the welcome desk at arrival area of Geneva airport or at www.rcrcconference.org/.

Opening of the Conference and Reception

The Conference opens at 09:00 on Monday 28 November 2011. The opening day ends with a reception offered by the Swiss Federal Council and the authorities of the Republic and Canton of Geneva and the City of Geneva starting at 19:00.

2. Fundamental Principles

The Fundamental Principles – Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality, Independence, Voluntary service, Unity and Universality – are defined in the **Preamble of the Statutes** of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

States shall at all times respect the adherence by all the components of the Movement to the Fundamental Principles.

All Conference participants shall respect the Fundamental Principles and all documents presented shall conform to these Principles.

3. Participants at the International Conference

Members

The members of the International Conference are the 186 recognized National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the 194 States Party to the Geneva Conventions.

A delegation shall not be represented by another delegation or by a member of another delegation.

Observers and guests

In addition to the members, observers may attend the meetings of the Conference. Observers have the right to speak only by the invitation of the Chair and to the extent that the Conference has no objections; they will have access to the documents of the Conference.

4. Provisional Agenda of the Conference

The Standing Commission has prepared the provisional agenda of the Conference. The Council of Delegates (meeting on 26 November 2011) adopts the agenda of the 31st International Conference.

5. Debates, languages and documents

Non-political nature of the Conference

In order that the debates of the Conference command the confidence of all, the Chair and any elected officer responsible for the conduct of business shall ensure that none of the speakers at any time engages in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature. The Bureau of the Conference, as defined in the Rules of Procedure, shall apply the same standard to documents before authorizing their circulation.

Languages

Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in **English, French, Spanish, Arabic and Russian** for **plenary meetings**, meetings of the **Commissions** and in the **Drafting Committee**.

Right to speak

Delegates representing **members of the Conference have the right to take part in all discussions in plenary meetings and Commissions.**

Observers have the right to speak only by the invitation of the Chair (of the Conference or of a Commission) and to the extent that the Conference has no objection.

No delegate may take the floor without permission from the Chair. Speakers shall be called upon in the order in which they have signified their desire to speak.

A speakers' list for the (IHL and disaster laws) **thematic plenary meetings** will open on the 14th November. For more information, please, contact the Office of the Commissioner of the 31st International Conference (Mr. David Wanstall at <david.wanstall@eda.admin.ch>).

There will be no speakers' list for the **Commissions**; the interest to speak is expressed by the show of hands after the Chair opens the discussion.

Delegations / delegates should refrain from making general statements, which are not related to the specific theme of the debate, should limit their comments to *three* minutes or, when speaking on behalf of a group of participants, to *five* minutes and may take the floor more than once only at the Chair's discretion and time allowing.

Working documents

The official working documents, **including draft resolutions**, were approved by the Standing Commission and dispatched by the ICRC and the IFRC to the members and observers. In addition, they are posted on the Website of the 31st International Conference www.rcrcconference.org. Participants are invited to refer to these in preparing for the Conference.

Consensus and votes

The Conference endeavours to adopt its resolutions by consensus, as provided in the Rules of Procedure. If no consensus is reached, a vote is taken in accordance with these Rules. Consensus is understood to mean the absence of any objection expressed by a delegation and submitted by it as constituting an obstacle to the adoption of the resolution in question. If no consensus is reached, resolutions are adopted by the majority of members present and voting.

As a general rule, the vote is taken by a show of hands. At the request by ten delegations, a vote is taken by roll call or by secret ballot. The vote of each delegation shall be expressed by its head or by the delegate he/she has designated to replace him/her.

6. Thematic debates

The main purpose of the thematic debates, in plenary meetings or in commissions, is to conduct in-depth discussion of the themes, to promote a common understanding thereof and to encourage cooperation with a view to achieving the overall aims and objectives of the Conference.

Procedure

The Plenary meetings and Commissions are open to all members and observers of the Conference. Observers have the right to speak by the invitation of the Chair.

The rules of the Conference apply and speakers shall not engage in controversies of political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

To encourage lively discussions experts will introduce the theme; the Chair will open the discussion with some guiding questions for debate.

Participants should refrain from making general statements, which are not related to the specific theme of the debate; they should limit their comments to *three* minutes or, when speaking on behalf of a group of participants, to *five* minutes; they may take the floor more than once only at the Chair's discretion and time allowing.

For information on order of speaking (incl. speakers' list see above under "Right to speak"). For more information on the Statutes and Rules of Procedure of the Movement that apply to the Conference, please, refer to <http://www.rcrcconference.org/en/the-rcrc-movement.html>

Schedule of thematic plenary meetings¹

The following **thematic plenary meetings** will take place at the Conference:

- **Strengthening international humanitarian law (IHL)** – Monday 28 November 13:30-18:00.
- **Follow-up issues** – Wednesday 30 November 10:00-12:30
 - Implementation of the Declaration "Together for Humanity", the resolutions and pledges of the 30th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent;
 - Implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding of 28 November 2005 between the Palestine Red Crescent Society and the Magen David Adom in Israel.
- **Strengthening disaster laws** – Wednesday 30 November 13:30-18:00.

Schedule of commissions

The Commissions will take place on Tuesday, **29 November**.

All commissions will have two sessions, each lasting 2.5 hours, providing at least once each working language. This structure allows for the widest possible attendance as also small delegations composed of e.g. 3 members can plan to attend all the plenary meetings, commissions as well as the drafting committee.

The schedule of the commissions and their language combinations are as follows (the information on the **exact venue** of the sessions will be shown on the electronic screens at the lobby of the Conference Centre):

- **Commission A:** Migration: ensuring access, dignity, respect for diversity and social inclusion
 - 9:00-11:30 – EN,FR,ES,AR,RU.
 - 13:30-16:00 – EN, FR
- **Commission B:** Furthering auxiliary role: partnership for stronger NS and volunteering development
 - 9:00-11:30 – EN, FR, RU
 - 13:30-16:00 – EN, ES, AR
- **Commission C:** Health care in danger
 - 9:00-11:30 – EN, ES, AR

¹ The timing is indicative. Possible changes will be announced.

- 13:30-16:00 – EN, FR, RU
- **Commission D:** inequitable access to health care
 - 9:00-11:30 – EN, FR
 - 16:30-19:00 – EN, FR, ES, AR, RU
- **Commission E:** IHL
 - 13:30-16:00 - EN, FR, ES, AR, RU
 - 16 :30-19 :00 – EN, FR, RU

Guiding questions for Commissions can be found on the Conference website (www.rcrcconference.org). Participants are invited to refer to these in preparing their participation.

7. Drafting Committee

The Drafting Committee is tasked to review and consolidate – in terms of substance and form - draft resolutions and documents submitted to the Conference for adoption, in the light of relevant background reports provided.

The Drafting Committee is open to all members and observers of the Conference. Only members of the Conference can participate in the discussions.

The work of the Drafting Commission is foreseen to take place daily 28 - 30 November.

The Chair of the Drafting Committee is responsible for the organisation of the work, the good conduct, the order and the efficient procedure of the debates. Delegations may take the floor more than once at the Chair's discretion and time allowing The Chair endeavours to finalise official documents for adoption by consensus. The rules of the Conference apply to the Drafting Committee. Speakers shall not engage in controversies of political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Documents finalised by the Drafting Committee will be submitted to the final plenary session on 1 December for adoption in the working languages (English, French, Spanish and Arabic) by the Chair in the report to the Conference on the work of the Drafting Committee.

8. Workshops and Side Events

The **workshops** will supplement the official proceedings of the Conference by providing informal discussions on humanitarian topics related to the Conference themes and objectives. They are an integral part of the Conference but not of its formal agenda. There is no requirement for decisions or consensus in workshops, which will take place in the late afternoon on 28 and 30 November. Please refer to the *Provisional Agenda of the Conference* and the *List of workshops* for further information.

Side events and exhibitions will highlight experiences and “best practices” relating to the objectives of the 31st Conference but are not part of its agenda.

The **programme and summary outlines of workshops and side events** are available at www.rcrcconference.org.

9. Pledges

In addition to the resolutions submitted to the 31st International Conference for adoption, the participants will be invited to undertake voluntary individual or collective/joint, humanitarian commitments for the period 2012-2014 in the form of **pledges**.

In addition to the pledges initiated by participants, a number of **open pledges** are submitted for consideration prior to and during the Conference. Open pledges are available for joining at www.rcrcconference.org.

During the Conference, a pledge stand will be open in the lobby at the Conference Centre from 09:00 on Monday 28 November to 09:30 on Thursday 1 December. For National Societies, the stand will also be open during the Council of Delegates, 26 November. All pledges received (including those sent before the Conference) may be amended and finalized by the sponsor(s) at the pledge stand until 9:30. on Thursday 1 December. Participants can join pledges after the close of the Conference by correspondence. Please, contact the organisers at <http://www.rcrcconference.org/en/contacts-and-links.html>

For further information, please refer to the *Guidelines for pledging at www.rcrcconference.org* or write a message with “pledge” at the subject line to <mailto:international.conference@ifrc.org>.

10. Election of Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

The Standing Commission (SC) is the *"trustee of the International Conference between two Conferences, carrying out the functions laid down in Article 18"* of the Statutes of the Movement.

Composition

The Standing Commission comprises nine members, namely:

- a) five representatives of different National Societies, *each elected in his or her personal capacity* by the international Conference;
- b) two representatives of the ICRC;
- c) two representatives of the International Federation.

Nomination of candidates

A profile for candidates, recommendations and guiding principles for the election of the Standing Commission are available at www.rcrcconference.org and at www.standcom.ch. Nomination forms can be requested from the Commission's Secretariat (contact@standcom.ch). All nominations submitted prior to the Conference will be published in all working languages on the Conference and the Standing Commission websites.

During the Conference, nominations for the Standing Commission have to be delivered in closed envelopes, with the curriculum vitae of each candidate, to the Chairman of the Bureau, at the latest forty-eight hours before the opening of the meeting in which the election will take place **i.e., at the latest at 09.00 on Monday 28 November**. The Bureau will circulate the curriculum vitae of each candidate twenty-four hours before the election.

On Tuesday evening 29 November, an **informal meeting** will take place at the Conference Centre with the candidates for the Standing Commission.

Election process

The International Conference shall elect in a personal capacity those members of the Standing Commission mentioned in Article 17, paragraph 1 a) of the Statutes, taking into account **personal qualities and the principle of fair geographical distribution**.

The members of the Standing Commission are elected by secret ballot by the members of the Conference. The election will start on Wednesday 30 November immediately after the roll call at 09.00 to determine the absolute majority required for election in the 1st ballot.

If five candidates obtain an absolute majority in the 1st election round, they are declared elected. If less than five candidates in the 1st round obtain an absolute majority, a second ballot will be held in which the candidate(s) obtaining the largest number of votes are elected.

11. Humanitarian Village

Delegates can learn more about Movement actors and their programmes, dialogue with each other and exchange ideas in the humanitarian village. This village will be at the Conference Centre and will include the following:

Speakers' corner

A small stage and seating area will be set up on the main entrance floor of the Conference Centre. At the Speakers' corner participants can deliver their message on a relevant topic, as well as debate and discuss the issue with other participants. Each speaker will be given a 15-minute timeslot, including Q&A. Talks will be recorded and selected footage may be used to produce a video. Any participant can register for the Speakers' corner by filling in the registration form on the Conference website. ***Exhibition stands from National Societies and other organization***

National Societies and participating organizations are invited to have an exhibition stand at the lower level of the Conference Centre. Approximately 25 exhibition stands will be available. Those interested are invited to register using the [form](http://www.rcrcconference.org/en/humanitarian-village.html) available at www.rcrcconference.org/en/humanitarian-village.html

ICRC and IFRC exhibits

ICRC has launched the Health Care in Danger global initiative to improve the safety and delivery of effective and impartial health care; the exhibit will be located on the ground floor of the CICG. The IFRC volunteering exhibit will feature personal volunteer stories and their contributions to community resilience in various contexts and will be located on the main floor of the CICG.

Development lounge

The Development lounge will enable participants to learn more about practical methods available to National Societies for their self-development. Through an interactive approach, participants will be given a tour of the interlinked methods available to them clustered around key questions that the National Society should ask itself as part of its development: “Who are we and what do we do?” The Federation-wide Databank & Reporting System “How well do we do it?”, The Organisational Capacity Assessment and Certification process “How can we do better?” and The Red Cross Red Crescent Learning Network “How can we reach further?” and “Bridging the Digital Divide”.

The layout of the Development lounge will allow individuals and small groups to view presentations on building strong National Societies through a computer terminal, and engage in conversation with on-site resource people. Throughout the meeting period, the IFRC online Learning platform will be accessible to participants to browse through courses of interest and register for a user account (if they are not already registered). Find further details and information on how to participate in the Development lounge at www.rcrcconference.org/en/humanitarian-village.html

12. Social Media

Consistent with Conference policy that limits access for media and live streaming only to the opening ceremony and specific areas during the conference, participants are requested not to “live post” to personal or institutional social media channels from within plenary sessions (other than opening ceremony), workshops, commissions and elections. Designated members of the communication team will be posting to social media channels consistent with their daily focus on specific themes.

These themes are closely tied to the official Conference agenda and will serve as the focus for social media on specific days. This strategic timing will enable participants, National Societies and their social networks to fully engage with, support and strengthen this globally coordinated approach. Conference participants who would like to use their networks to support this approach – outside of official conference sessions – are advised to contact the communication team.

Geneva, 17 November 2011