

20th Session of the General Assembly
First Plenary
Friday, 4 December 2015
15:35

Opening ceremony

Mr Tickner, speaking in his capacity as Master of Ceremonies, welcomed participants to the 20th General Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland. He highlighted the rich heritage of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, which had been established in Geneva by Henry Dunant in 1863. Dunant and his colleagues had changed the course of history with two visionary concepts: the recognition that there should be limits to human conduct during war time, which had led to the establishment of the First Geneva Convention in 1864; and the idea of setting up voluntary humanitarian relief societies in every country, which would later become National Societies. Recalling that the IFRC centenary was only four years away, he encouraged all National Societies to use that anniversary as an opportunity to transform the Organization. The Secretary General had made a commitment to increase the standing and effectiveness of the IFRC in the years ahead and ensure that it had a truly global reach. He noted that National Societies, including their 17 million volunteers, had a historic role to play in the transformation process. The General Assembly was a wonderful opportunity to forge and renew friendships, share ideas, be inspirational and innovative and strengthen National Societies in order to make a true difference.

A cultural performance was given by a diverse group of Syrian refugees, volunteers and professional musicians, introduced by German opera singer, Cornelia Vance.

Opening of the session

The President of the International Federation declared open the 20th session of the General Assembly and welcomed participants. The current session was an opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences, strengthen the Federation and its work to do more and better, and reach further in support of vulnerable people. He was confident that, by uniting the power of humanity, the participants would find a common humanitarian language, despite their diverse experiences and backgrounds. Thanks to the dedication of their volunteers, National Societies were at the forefront of humanitarian relief work, saving lives, protecting human dignity and restoring hope to the most marginalized. The IFRC had achieved a lot in the previous two years, sometimes at a very high cost. He called for a minute's silence to mark the deaths of those volunteers who had lost their lives while carrying out their humanitarian mission.

A video presentation illustrating the work of National Societies, the *power of humanity*, was shown

Item 1 of the agenda: **PROCEDURAL MATTERS**

1.1 Roll call

The roll call was taken in the French alphabetical order. 166 National Society delegations were present and therefore a quorum had been reached.

1.2 Adoption of Agenda (AG/1.2/1)

The President outlined the revised draft agenda, which captured the comments and suggestions put forward by National Societies and retained *Strategy 2020* as its focal point, in particular the outcomes of the mid-term review.

Decision (GA/15/01)

Adoption of the agenda:

The General Assembly,

adopts the draft agenda AG/1.2/1;

1.3 Admission of newly recognized National Societies as members of the International Federation
(AG/1.3/1)

Mr Mohrhauer, speaking in his capacity as Secretary of the 20th General Assembly, said that the Tuvalu Red Cross had applied for ICRC recognition and admission to the IFRC in July 2015. The Joint Statutes Commission had undertaken an assessment mission to Tuvalu in September 2015 and recommended its recognition and admission in October 2015. The ICRC had recognized the Tuvalu Red Cross as the 190th member of the Movement in November 2015 and the Board had provisionally admitted it to the Federation at its extraordinary session on 4 December 2015. The Society had submitted all documentation required under the Constitution for admission.

The Secretary General said that the Tuvalu Red Cross had been founded in 1965 as a branch of the British Red Cross. Following the country's independence, it had adopted a new constitution in 1981. It was very active throughout Tuvalu and was linked to the community through its network of 600 volunteers, 70 per cent of whom were young people. The National Society carried out a range of activities, delivering first-aid and blood services, raising awareness of noncommunicable diseases and providing social care and support to elderly people and people with disabilities. It also helped communities to prepare for and recover from the impact of climate change, notably in the wake of the recent Cyclone Pam. He congratulated the Tuvalu Red Cross and looked forward to working in partnership with it.

Decision (GA/15/02)

Admission of newly recognized National Societies as members of the International Federation:

The General Assembly,

admits the Tuvalu Red Cross Society as a member of the IFRC.

The President presented a certificate of admission to Mr Isala Valpuna Taape, executive board member of the Tuvalu Red Cross.

Mr Taape (Tuvalu Red Cross) said that the recognition and admission of the Tuvalu Red Cross was an important milestone for the people of Tuvalu. The National Society would ensure that it met its commitments throughout the country and he looked forward to working closely with the Red Cross and Red Crescent family.

The President, recalling that one of the IFRC's objectives was to establish a National Society in every country, said that the admission of the Tuvalu Red Cross would bring new energy to the IFRC global network and was an invitation to the whole Movement to establish good relationships and help each other. He conveyed the Federation's wholehearted support to the National Society in the achievement of its objectives and urged other members to support it in assuming its new responsibilities, including compliance with the IFRC Constitution and policies. The Tuvalu Red Cross would be able to participate fully in the work of the General Assembly with immediate effect and would have voting rights.

Certification of the Georgia Red Cross and the Red Cross of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

The President noted that the Georgia Red Cross and the Red Cross of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia had just been certified under the Organizational Capacity Assessment and Certification (OCAC) process. He congratulated both organizations and encouraged other National Societies to initiate the certification process.

1.4 Approval of the records of the 2013 General Assembly

Mr Mohrhauer said that the draft records of the 2013 General Assembly had been sent to the National Societies in July 2014 and all comments received had been included in the final draft.

Decision (GA/15/03)

Approval of the records of the 2013 General Assembly:

The General Assembly,

adopts the record of the 19th Session of the General Assembly held in Sydney, Australia on 12-15 November 2013.

1.5 Appointment of the Drafting Committee and approval of the terms of reference (AG/1.5/1)

The President, illustrating his remarks with slides, invited members to appoint the Chair and nine members of the Drafting Committee and approve their terms of reference for the duration of the General Assembly. The Governing Board had approved the nominations and recommended the adoption of their terms of reference. It had also approved the draft decision sheet for the General Assembly. If changes in the wording or editing of these draft decisions would be required subject to outcomes of the discussions at the General Assembly, the Drafting Committee would have responsibility for amending them, and for drafting any additional decisions, if required. It would ensure that all language versions of Assembly decisions were consistent.

Decision (GA/15/04)

Appointment of the Drafting Committee and approval of the terms of reference

The General Assembly,

establishes a drafting committee for the duration of the Assembly,

approves the terms of reference of the drafting committee, and

appoints the following members:

Ms Natia Loladze (Chair)

Mr Gameli Gavlo

Mrs Neima Candy

Mr Gustavo Lara

Ms Delia Margaret Chatoor

Ms Cathy Wong

Dr Fawzi Amine

Ms Maria Alcazar

Ms Emilie Goller

Mr Mohammad Zaidi Bin Ariffin

Ms Orla Murphy

Item 2 of the agenda: ACCOUNTABILITY AND FOLLOW-UP REPORTS

2.1 The President's statement on the state of the Federation (AG/2.1/1)

The President said that the IFRC's greatest strength came from its shared identity, which was rooted in its Fundamental Principles and the belief that National Societies were stronger when they worked together and

overcame their differences. The humanitarian environment had changed dramatically in recent years. Climate change had triggered natural disasters and created new unpredictable and severe weather patterns, threatening communities in every region of the world. Conflicts, political instability, economic crises and widening inequalities had exposed millions to intolerable risks, forcing more people to flee their homes than at any point since the end of the Second World War. The causes and consequences of humanitarian crises were interlinked and, in the absence of meaningful political solutions or a unified response from the international community, many of those crises would only worsen. However, such changes also presented opportunities and the IFRC was uniquely placed to respond to the challenges faced; no other actor had the same reach or community-level capacity, backed by international resources and solidarity. Change was not new; what was new was the pace at which things were changing. If the IFRC was to maintain its position as the world's most recognized and trusted humanitarian actor, it must ensure that it could adapt to the new environment.

In September 2015, a new development agenda based on 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) had been adopted, which better reflected the complex challenges faced by vulnerable communities and captured the Federation's priorities, including the critical role of national actors, the link between humanitarian crises and development and the need to invest in resilience building. The emphasis on resilience also built on the outcome of the 2015 United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, at which the IFRC had called for a *One Billion Coalition for Resilience*. The fact that the Federation's priorities were so faithfully captured in both the SDGs and the outcome of the Sendai conference attested to its influence and the leadership role it could and was expected to play. In Sendai, he had discussed the role of the Movement with the United Nations Secretary-General, who had highlighted the continued importance of the Movement's Fundamental Principles and urged the IFRC to defend those principles and demonstrate their continued relevance, at a time when some were questioning their role in a modern and asymmetrical world. He had praised the work of all National Societies, especially those from the Middle East and North Africa, which were on the frontline of some of the world's defining humanitarian crises, and emphasized the importance of supporting local humanitarian actors. National Society strengthening not only increased the capacity of the Movement as a whole, but also allowed the IFRC to meet the expectations of the international community and the people it served.

Since National Societies were usually limited in their capacity to respond singlehandedly to major disasters, other members of the Federation had to mobilize around them. Often, governments and the Federation's partners only recognized the strength of that network upon witnessing the speed, scale and the quality of its coordinated responses in support of the affected country. It was crucial to engage in humanitarian diplomacy and dialogue with governments about the importance of the National Society's auxiliary role. For example, the Nepal Red Cross had played a major role in the humanitarian response thanks to its nationwide network of trained volunteers and the credibility that came with that capacity. The then Nepalese Prime Minister had personally thanked the Movement at the International Conference on Nepal's Reconstruction. The power of shared humanity had also been evident during the Ebola epidemic in West Africa. Thirteen African Societies had leapt into action and, in the three countries with the largest number of cases, approximately 4,000 trained volunteers had been joined by personnel sent by sister Societies. Only local volunteers who were familiar with local traditions and trusted by the community had been able to engage with people on the risks associated with traditional burial customs and mitigate those risks while safeguarding the dignity of the dead. Such community-level interventions had been enhanced by the generosity and camaraderie of other African National Societies, who had shared their experiences in relation to similar outbreaks.

The Movement was stronger when it worked together. During the Council of Delegates, the IFRC would vote on processes to improve its collaboration with the ICRC, including the initiatives to strengthen Movement coordination and cooperation and adopt a Movement logo. However, that interconnectedness and shared identity also meant that mis-steps could affect the entire Movement. While each National Society was responsible for solving its own problems, the impact of individual issues on the wider membership should incite other Societies to offer support and share their expertise. The Federation also had a specific role to play. Working in tandem with the ICRC, the IFRC Secretariat periodically investigated whether each National Society's statutes were in line with the Fundamental Principles and adapted to current needs. In 2014, the Governing Board had adopted important guidelines for increasing accountability to every stakeholder in National Societies and the IFRC itself. However, much work remained to be done.

National Society integrity was linked to its capacity to deliver services and support to vulnerable communities. Only a strong Society with a robust volunteer network, a culture of youth engagement, a strong funding base and high-quality leadership could deliver on its mandate. Each Society was responsible for its own development and should ensure self-sufficiency by mobilizing resources locally on a sustainable basis. Seventy-two National Societies had completed the self-assessment phase of the OCAC process, which had confirmed that some were struggling to meet basic operational requirements owing to fragile funding bases and a tendency to accede authority to their donors. The IFRC must aim to ensure the autonomy and sustainability of National Societies, which might require a critical review of the way in which international programmes were developed and whether work was being conducted in true partnership.

It was 50 years since the adoption of the Fundamental Principles, and the IFRC must renew its commitment to those principles and put them into practice. The principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence were shared with United Nations humanitarian agencies and the wider humanitarian community, but IFRC principles went further. A requirement for all National Societies must be to prove their efficacy to both governments and populations. They should therefore recall the principle of unity and strive harder to conduct humanitarian work throughout their territories. The Federation also ascribed to the principle of voluntary service. A motivated, dedicated and well-qualified volunteer force was every National Society's greatest asset. However, a recent global review on volunteer action had revealed a number of challenges, including a 10 per cent decline in the number of volunteers in 43 countries between 2009 and 2013. If that trend held true on a larger scale, the number of volunteers worldwide would decrease by 50 per cent in 20 years, having a negative impact on the Federation's position as a humanitarian organization and an even greater impact on the communities that relied on its support. It should therefore invest in their personal and professional development and recognize that their interests and motivations for volunteering were changing. In order to remain relevant, it should offer a range of opportunities, depending on individual interests and competencies. Volunteers no longer signed up for life, but were cause-driven and wanted to see the impact of their investment. Volunteer management systems needed to be faster, more responsive and more effective and the IFRC should nurture the commitment of its volunteers by establishing a Movement-wide volunteer charter that clarified their responsibilities and rights, including the rights to a safe working environment, protection, risk information and insurance.

The bitter lessons learned from the Rwandan genocide had led to the creation of the Code of Conduct, which stated that aid organizations were accountable to those they sought to assist. Volunteers bridged the gap between humanitarian actors and their beneficiaries and, by articulating its accountability to its beneficiaries, the Movement could significantly boost volunteerism. Over 150 years previously, Henri Dunant had been inspired to humanitarian action by the horrors he had witnessed in Solferino. His passion had attracted volunteers, influenced leaders and led eventually to the creation of the Movement, the continued credibility of which relied on its ability to respond to the needs of vulnerable communities. Jean Pictet had said, "If the Red Cross were to lose the human touch, its direct contact with suffering, if it were to lose its voluntary character and become tied up with red tape, it would be like a flower which has been plucked and soon withers and dies". When the power of humanity was united, it could begin to light the way.

Decision (GA/15/05)

The President's statement on the state of the Federation:

The General Assembly,

notes the statement of the President on the state of the IFRC (annex 1).

2.2 Report of the Governing Board (AG/2.2/1 and AG/6.4/1)

The President drew attention to document AG/2.2/1, which reported on the Board's performance and progress made towards achieving its 2014-2015 priorities. The Board had continued to strive for excellence based on the findings of the governance review approved by the General Assembly in 2013, by adopting and implementing a work plan that included best practices and measures to improve governance processes and evaluate Board performance and accountability. The Board had started focusing more on strategic issues and

new technology had been developed to support its work. An online course entitled “Introduction to Governance for Red Cross and Red Crescent Leadership” had been developed and was available in English and Spanish on the IFRC Learning Platform. The next step in the implementation of the work plan would be to develop indicators to measure the impact of Board decisions.

He drew attention to document AG/6.4/1, which discussed the outcomes of the 9th European Regional Conference in June 2014, the 9th Asia Pacific Conference in October 2014 and the 20th Inter-American Conference in March 2015. The Board had received regular reports on the preparations and outcomes of those conferences and had approved their respective assessment reports, budgets and agendas.

The former Secretary General had completed his mandate in June 2014 and been replaced by Mr Elhadj As Sy. Mr As Sy had participated in the Board meeting of November 2014, where he had agreed that National Society development was the highest priority, and pledged to do “nothing for National Societies without National Societies”. A framework of objectives and plan of action presented by the Secretary General had been endorsed by the Board.

Overall, he was encouraged by the honest exchange of views and the IFRC’s strengthened commitment to serve vulnerable people. He thanked all the Board members for their cooperation, which had enabled it to overcome differences of opinions and make significant progress.

Item 5 of the agenda: IMPLEMENTATION AND FINANCIAL MATTERS, PLAN AND BUDGET

5.1 Financial matters (AG/5.1/1)

The Secretary General drew attention to the audited financial statements for 2013-2014, which reflected a healthy financial situation. At the end of 2014, IFRC restricted reserves had stood at CHF 220 million, above budget thanks to the funds raised to tackle issues such as the Ebola crisis. Its unrestricted working capital had amounted to CHF 47 million, also above budget thanks to higher-than-budgeted financial income. The IFRC had not incurred any unforeseen costs in 2013-2014, as it had made efforts to ensure that all activities and programmes were within budget. Its annual income and expenditure were in line with expectations and it had not suffered any losses. Despite a number of unfunded appeals and programmes, the IFRC continued to receive a positive fund flow into programmes and coordination, in particular emergency appeals, in accordance with the budget approved in 2013. In 2014, the IFRC had raised CHF 320 million, which was 16 per cent over budget. Sixty-three National Societies had contributed around 65 per cent of the funds raised, illustrating that the IFRC was a true membership organization. Expenditure at the end of 2014 had stood at CHF 296 million, which was 5 per cent above budget and had enabled the provision of direct programmatic support to 109 National Societies. The format of the financial report had been modified during the reporting period to facilitate analysis and decision-making. Expenditure was now presented according to function, illustrating that funds were being used for disaster response and health programmes for National Society development. It could now be traced to specific areas in order to verify that it was in line with approved strategies, ensure better alignment with the budget approved in 2013 and comply with International Financial Reporting Standards.

Mr Chetty (Chair, Finance Commission) said that he was proud to have been given the opportunity to serve as Chair of the Finance Commission for the previous 10 years. Having also served as a Red Cross volunteer for 30 years, he felt that he had a duty to share his experiences. He thanked all those with whom he had worked, including inspiring volunteers around the world, heads of National Societies, IFRC staff, members of the Governing Board and members of the Finance Commission, and emphasized that he would continue to serve the Movement.

Based on the external audit by KPMG and continued oversight by the Finance Commission and the Audit & Risk Committee, the Federation’s finances were healthy. In all cases the recommendations of the Finance Commission had been endorsed by the Governing Board to the General Assembly.

The South Sudan Red Cross and the Cyprus Red Cross Society had been welcomed as new members in 2013 and the Commission had set their statutory contributions at CHF 1,106 and CHF 12,521 respectively, in accordance with the Constitution. It had heard nine appeals from National Societies and had processed each one in a consistent and fair manner on the basis of audited financial statements. The Commission had

recommended that eight National Societies should be declared in default pursuant to the Constitution. Currently, 25 Societies were in arrears, totalling CHF 9.2 million, and one Society was following a payment plan in order to settle outstanding contributions totalling CHF 12.6 million. Sixty-four Societies had yet to pay their statutory contributions for 2015 in full. He encouraged all those National Societies that were in arrears or had outstanding contributions for 2015 to pay them as soon as possible in order to support the Secretary General and ensure a high-performing Federation.

The IFRC continued to invest in line with the investment guidelines set out with the Finance Commission and a benchmark had been established independently for the IFRC investment portfolio. During the reporting period, the portfolio had performed better than the benchmark.

The IFRC's financial statements had been reviewed and discussed internally and with KPMG and had been prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards. Unqualified audit opinions had also been sought.

In line with best governance practices, the Finance Commission had requested an independent assessment of its performance by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC). PwC had reported that the Commission remained a key element in the governance structure, that its activities added value and that its performance was strong. However, it had also highlighted that the role and purpose of the Commission was unclear to many and recommended that efforts should be made to raise awareness of its work among stakeholders, including the General Assembly. It had concluded that the Commission was fulfilling its mandate in line with the Constitution and recommended that it should continue to include independent members with appropriate qualifications and experience.

Ms Forbes (Chair, Audit & Risk Committee (ARC)) said that the Audit & Risk Committee had met six times since the 2013 General Assembly. The Chair had met with the Secretary General after each meeting and reported regularly to the Governing Board and Finance Commission. In order to fulfil its role, the Committee required a broad experience base, including financial expertise, an in-depth knowledge of the Movement and input from external stakeholders.

One of the roles of the Committee was to monitor the work of the IFRC's internal audit function and its effectiveness in providing independent assurances on governance, risk management and internal control processes. It reviewed the internal audit planning process and the resources allocated to it, approving changes to it when necessary. The Committee also reviewed the outcomes of internal audits and the implementation status of the resulting recommendations. Eighty-two per cent of the 600-plus internal audit recommendations had been closed and the Committee was monitoring the timely closure of the remaining recommendations. In 2014, an external quality assessment of the internal audit function had been performed based on the standards of the Institute of Internal Auditors and had confirmed that those standards had been met. A dedicated investigations function had also been established in 2015 and the Committee would be overseeing monitoring the investigations conducted.

The Committee also monitored the scope, planning and outcomes of external audits of the IFRC's financial statements. As there was increasing demand for accountability from governments, partners and other stakeholders, many additional external audits had been requested, the outcomes of which had generally been satisfactory. Accountability also applied to National Societies; it was important to ensure that all Societies had their annual financial statements audited.

Effective risk management and a strong internal control environment would help the IFRC achieve its objectives. A number of measures had been implemented: the risk management culture within the IFRC continued to develop and training sessions on risk identification, assessment and mitigation were offered; an organizational risk register and risk registers for major projects had been established; increasing emphasis was placed on fraud prevention and control; two e-learning modules on corruption prevention had been created following the development of the fraud and corruption prevention and control policy; a dedicated investigations function had been established; and improvements had been made in the development of a formal tracking process for the follow-up of audit recommendations and the implementation of an accountability and transparency framework and plan of action.

Nevertheless, there were opportunities for further improvements. For example, while the IFRC's risk management and fraud prevention culture had improved, that improvement was not consistent across the organization. The Committee had assessed the internal control environment as adequate, but there were opportunities for further development and the Committee looked forward to seeing continued efforts to develop best practices.

Mr Usichenko (Ukrainian Red Cross) said that the scale of the humanitarian crisis faced by Ukraine since late 2013 was unprecedented; it was approaching a humanitarian disaster. The Ukrainian Red Cross had not been prepared for the recent civil strife and military conflict and had been unable to provide help to all of the estimated 1.5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) who had fled from eastern Ukraine and Crimea. While protecting the Fundamental Principles, the National Society had been required to: train volunteers in basic first aid and medical care very quickly; prepare and increase the number of rapid response teams; increase the pool of blood donors and reserves of medications; collect and distribute large amounts of food, clothing and sanitary products; organize searches for missing persons; re-establish family connections; house victims; and attract corporate donors. He expressed appreciation to the IFRC and its National Societies, the ICRC and the United Nations system for the support provided, including the re-opening of the IFRC office in Kyiv. Despite the difficulties faced, the Ukrainian Red Cross continued to fulfil its mission, helping the country overcome its development problems and providing humanitarian assistance to victims.

The President expressed concern about the situation in Ukraine and commended the efforts of the Ukrainian Red Cross to help those in need.

Mr Senent Garcia (Spanish Red Cross) said that it was important to recognize the importance of collective responsibility, accountability and financing. He welcomed the action plan on transparency and accountability and the new fraud and corruption prevention and control policy. The strengthening of the IFRC's governing bodies to ensure Governing Board excellence was a very exciting initiative and all National Societies should contribute to that process by sharing their talent, expertise, good faith and optimism.

Dr Attar (Syrian Arab Republic Red Crescent) welcomed the Secretary General's report, but noted that it did not touch on the ongoing crisis in Syria or mention the 49 Syrian Red Crescent volunteers lost over the previous four and a half years. The report should recognize the indispensable work carried out and the solidarity shown by National Societies in Syria and neighbouring countries, for which he expressed appreciation. It should also be noted that over 9 million IDPs were still facing water and food shortages in Syria. The report should therefore place stronger emphasis on operational plans to address that issue. The IFRC should also conduct more frequent visits to Syria.

The President said that the Federation would work to do more to improve the situation in Syria.

Mr Ngandi (Sierra Leone Red Cross) said that he was grateful to the Federation for its vital support during the Ebola crisis. The dedication shown by volunteers, who had taken on challenges that even the most experienced medics had feared, was worthy of eternal praise. Noting that speed saved lives, he said that it was important to better anticipate and respond to all epidemics and make communities more resilient. He thanked the President for his numerous phone calls and words of encouragement and the Secretary General for his determined support and his visit to the region just a few weeks after he had taken office, which had increased the motivation to fight the virus. He thanked the Governing Board for acknowledging the efforts of those volunteers who had risked their lives so that others could live. The Secretary General had mentioned that savings had been made during the reporting period and he suggested that a portion of those savings should go towards building the capacity of the National Societies of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

The President commended the excellent work of the Sierra Leone Red Cross to address significant challenges.

Ms Benhabyles (Algerian Red Crescent) said that Algeria was facing a huge humanitarian crisis, due to the current situation in the Sahel region. Rather than simply providing relief, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement should act as a pressure group, particularly in the context of the United Nations Security Council, and should urge politicians to reflect before ordering military intervention and consider the humanitarian consequences of their actions.

The President congratulated Ms Benhabyles for her appointment as President of the Algerian Red Crescent and looked forward to working with her.

Ms Souaré (Côte d'Ivoire Red Cross) said that her country was at high risk, owing to its proximity to areas affected by the Ebola epidemic. Her National Society had engaged in mobilization at the community level and capacity-building at the institutional level in order to support the government action plan to combat the epidemic. Despite the spread of the disease, the country had not yet registered any cases of Ebola thanks to its prevention activities.

The President welcomed Ms Souaré to the Red Cross and Red Crescent family and commended the activities of her National Society.

Ms Worku (Ethiopian Red Cross) said that a number of African counties were preparing to respond to the effects of *El Niño* and she urged the IFRC to focus on the areas affected, divert the attention of donors accordingly and provide strong leadership in Africa in order to coordinate the situation and support African National Societies.

Mr Bhushan (Indian Red Cross) said that the Indian subcontinent had been hit by increasingly frequent, serious and unpredictable natural disasters in recent years, including the recent flooding in Tamil Nadu. Given the increasing threats presented by climate change and the unpredictable nature of natural disasters, there was a need to focus more on raising awareness and providing relief to affected communities. He called for ongoing IFRC support.

The President expressed his condolences with regard to the recent death of the former Secretary General of the Indian Red Cross, Dr Satya Paul Agarwal.

The Secretary General reiterated the IFRC's commitment to working with the ICRC to strengthen the support provided to National Societies, even in the hardest-to-reach places. The Ukrainian Red Cross had demonstrated exemplary leadership during the ongoing crisis in Ukraine and the IFRC would continue to support it in its endeavours. He welcomed the comments of the Spanish Red Cross with regard to accountability and transparency, he said that the IFRC applied a zero-tolerance policy in relation to fraud and thanked the Audit & Risk Committee for its assistance in the establishment of the necessary systems and mechanisms. The IFRC would not limit itself to learning and capacity-building, but would also take decisive action when incidents occurred and hold those responsible accountable. He noted that improvements to accountability and transparency could lead to an apparent increase in fraud, since more cases would be detected and communicated. He emphasized the IFRC's commitment to supporting Syria and drew attention to the "Everyone Counts" report for 2015, which summarized its action there and mentioned the deaths of 40 Syrian Arab Red Crescent and eight Palestinian Red Crescent staff and volunteers during the crisis. He commended the efforts of the Sierra Leone Red Cross in tackling the Ebola epidemic and clarified that any surplus funding would serve as the baseline for the subsequent cycle and be allocated according to priority. The IFRC's main focus was to strengthen the capacity of National Societies to design and implement programmes to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable. Replying to the comments of the representative of the Algerian Red Crescent, he said that the political issues referred to required a political solution rather than a humanitarian response. Humanitarian actors could work to mitigate people's suffering and the IFRC was committed to working alongside all other actors in that mission, in line with the objectives set. He welcomed the comments of the Cote d'Ivoire Red Cross, an active IFRC member that had long worked to support its activities throughout the region. Further information would be provided on the strengthening of cooperation with National Societies in disaster preparedness, risk reduction and resilience building.

Decision (GA/15/06)

Report of Governing Board:

The General Assembly,

welcomes with appreciation the report of the Governing Board on the accomplishment of its functions (*Annex 1, Art. 23.1 of the IFRC Constitution*) for the period 2014-2015 (annex 2),

concurs with the decisions and work done by the Governing Board and *discharges and thanks* the Governing Board members for the achievements made.

takes note of the outcomes of the Regional Conferences that took place during the reporting period: the 9th European Regional Conference (4 to 6 June 2014, Florence, Italy); the 9th Asia Pacific Conference (21 to 24 October 2014, Beijing), and the 20th Inter American Conference (27 to 30 March 2015, Houston, USA), as per Annex 2 in AG/2.3/1 and AG/6.4/1,

appoints as members and chair of the Election Committee for the period 2015-2019, the candidates as recommended by the Governing Board (see Annex 3 in AG/2.3/1 and AG/6.4/1).

Decision (GA/15/09 to 14)

Implementation and financial matters:

The General Assembly,

notes with appreciation the report of the Finance Commission (annex 4).

Approval of the audited financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2013:

approves on the recommendation of the Governing Board the audited financial statements for 2013, set out in Annex A (GB/16/1, see annex of Governing Board 32nd Session decision sheet)

Approval of the audited financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2014:

approves on the recommendation of the Governing Board the audited financial statements for 2014 set out in Annex B (GB/16/1, see annex of the Governing Board 32nd Session decision sheet).

Approval of Statutory Contributions for new members for 2014 and 2015:

approves the Governing Board recommendation to establish that the statutory contributions of the South Sudan Red Cross at CHF 1,106 for 2014 and 2015, respectively,

approves the Governing Board recommendation to establish that the statutory contributions of the Cyprus Red Cross at CHF 12,521 for 2014 and 2015, respectively,

Approval of Adjustments to Statutory Contributions heard during 2014 and 2015:

Appeal from the Uruguayan Red Cross to have its statutory contributions adjusted for the years 2012 and 2013:

approves the Governing Board recommendation, as per the proposal of the Finance Commission, that the Statutory Contributions of the Uruguayan Red Cross be adjusted, as follows (GB/11/1, see annex of Governing Board 30th Session decision sheet):

For 2012 from 0.018% (CHF 6,534) to 0.014% (CHF 4,935)

For 2013 from 0.018% (CHF 6,534) to 0.014% (CHF 4,935)

Appeal from the Rwandan Red Cross to have its statutory contributions adjusted for the years 2012 and 2013:

approves the Governing Board recommendation, as per the proposal of the Finance Commission, that the Statutory Contributions of the Rwandan Red Cross be adjusted, as follows (GB/11/1, see annex of Governing Board 30th Session decision sheet):

For 2012 from 0.062% (CHF 22,591) to 0.0005% (CHF 1,693)

For 2013 from 0.062% (CHF 22,591) to 0.0005% (CHF 1,693)

Appeal from The Red Cross of Serbia to have its statutory contributions adjusted for the years 2014 and 2015:

approves the Governing Board recommendation, as per the proposal of the Finance Commission, that the Statutory Contributions of The Red Cross of Serbia be adjusted, as follows (GB/11/1, see annex of Governing Board 30th Session decision sheet):

For 2014 from 0.017% (CHF 13,679) to 0.003% (CHF 8,699)

For 2015 from 0.017% (CHF 13,679) to 0.003% (CHF 8,699)

Appeal from The Red Cross of The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to have its statutory contributions adjusted for the years 2014 and 2015:

approves the Governing Board recommendation, as per the proposal of the Finance Commission, that the Statutory Contributions of The Red Cross of The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia be adjusted, as follows (GB/11/1, see annex of Governing Board 30th Session decision sheet):

For 2014 from 0.020% (CHF 7,362) to 0.005% (CHF 1,679)

For 2015 from 0.020% (CHF 7,362) to 0.005% (CHF 1,679)

Appeal from the Czech Red Cross to have its statutory contributions adjusted for the years 2014 and 2015:

approves the Governing Board recommendation, as per the proposal of the Finance Commission, that the Statutory Contributions of the Czech Red Cross be adjusted, as follows (GB/11/1, Governing Board 30th Session):

For 2014 from 0.196% (CHF 121,050) to 0.195% (CHF 120,529)

For 2015 from 0.196% (CHF 121,050) to 0.195% (CHF 120,529)

Appeal from the Canadian Red Cross to have its statutory contributions adjusted for the years 2014 and 2015:

approves the Governing Board recommendation, as per the proposal of the Finance Commission, that the Statutory Contributions of the Canadian Red Cross be adjusted, as follows (GB/19/1, see annex of Governing Board 31st Session decision sheet):

For 2014 from 3.915% (CHF 1,428,912) to 3.866% (CHF 1,411,254)

For 2015 from 3.915% (CHF 1,428,912) to 3.866% (CHF 1,411,254)

Appeal from the Nigerian Red Cross to have its statutory contributions adjusted for the years 2014 and 2015:

approves the Governing Board recommendation, as per the proposal of the Finance Commission, that the Statutory Contributions of the Nigerian Red Cross be adjusted, as follows (GB/19/1, see annex of Governing Board 31st Session decision sheet):

For 2014 from 0.046% (CHF 16,929) to 0.046% (CHF 16,923)

For 2015 from 0.046% (CHF 16,929) to 0.046% (CHF 16,923)

Appeal from the Latvian Red Cross to have its statutory contributions adjusted for the years 2014 and 2015:

approves the Governing Board recommendation, as per the proposal of the Finance Commission, that the Statutory Contributions of the Latvian Red Cross be maintained as follows (GB/16/1, see annex of Governing Board 32nd Session decision sheet):

For 2014 0.0475% CHF 29,354

For 2015 0.0475% CHF 29,354

Appeal from the Uruguayan Red Cross to have its statutory contributions adjusted for the years 2014 and 2015:

approves the Governing Board recommendation, as per the proposal of the Finance Commission, that the Statutory Contributions of the Uruguayan Red Cross be adjusted, as follows (GB/16/1, see annex of Governing Board 32nd Session decision sheet):

For 2014 from 0.0451% (CHF 16,467) to 0.0448% (CHF 16,351)

For 2015 from 0.0451% (CHF 16,467) to 0.0448% (CHF 16,351)

National Societies in Default

notes that the Governing Board, as per the recommendation of the Finance Commission has declared the following National Societies in Default (GB/16/1, see annex of Governing Board 32nd Session decision sheet):

Brazilian Red Cross

Brunei Darussalam Red Crescent Society
Hellenic Red Cross
Mozambique Red Cross Society
Nicaraguan Red Cross
Peruvian Red Cross
Polish Red Cross
Portuguese Red Cross

The meeting rose at 18:30

Second Plenary
Saturday, 5 December 2015
09:10

Item 3 of the agenda: FACING THE HUMANITARIAN CHALLENGE AHEAD – PANEL DISCUSSION

Dr Conille (moderator) introduced the two panellists. Dr Dambisa Moyo, born in Zambia, was a global economist and author of three books: *Dead Aid: Why Aid Is Not Working and How There Is a Better Way for Africa*; *How the West Was Lost: Fifty Years of Economic Folly – and the Stark Choices Ahead*; and *Winner Take All: China's Race for Resources and What it Means for the World*. She had been a consultant for several global financial institutions and had contributed to various news outlets. Additionally, she had been named among the 100 most influential people in the world, and had been awarded the Hayek Lifetime Achievement Award in 2013. Mr Elhadj As Sy had a long history in international development organizations and was the current IFRC Secretary General.

He noted the increasing demand for humanitarian support, the negative impact on the growth of some developing countries of humanitarian emergencies, and that 90 per cent of humanitarian appeals lasted for more than three years. However, there were also more environmental warning systems, actors, technologies, and middle-income countries able to provide support. In that context, and looking at the projected trends for the coming 15 years, he asked Dr Moyo whether the global humanitarian structure and actions were fit for purpose and ready for future challenges.

Dr Moyo stressed the importance of finding both short-term tactical solutions and long-term structural solutions to humanitarian challenges. Developing countries were home to 90 per cent of the world's population, 60-70 per cent of which was aged under 25 years. However, since the financial crisis of 2008, lower economic growth was also affecting more developed economies, illustrated by concerns about growing debt, decreasing labour quality and quantity, and productivity. There were three key aspects to addressing such challenges and concerns effectively.

First, long-term public policy was required when seeking solutions to concerns such as disease burdens, environmental challenges, or even the radicalization of terrorist groups. Second, it was important to move away from a zero-sum approach and the belief that each solution had winners and losers, which had been particularly evident in recent efforts to combat climate change and in Europe's Common Agricultural Policy. Third, it was time to recognize the importance of global integration, moving away from a sense of 'each nation for itself'.

When applying those considerations to the area of humanitarian response, it was necessary to blur the lines between the need for immediate emergency solutions and long-term structural changes required to promote economic growth. Recognizing the moral imperative for humanitarian action in situations such as the current migration crisis, that action also had to be part of a larger package of economic, social and political development.

Dr Conille (moderator) asked the Secretary General what the IFRC had to do differently over the coming 15 years, based on his experiences, such as during the Ebola and migration crises of 2015.

The Secretary General said that humanitarian crises often resulted from violence and armed conflict. However, unlike previous conflicts, modern conflicts were nameless and did not have geographical confines. Additionally, the red cross and red crescent symbols no longer provided the same degree of staff protection. Humanitarian response was also now a much longer-term investment, as political solutions were often less forthcoming. Regarding the need to blur the lines between short-term response and long-term development assistance, he noted that many communities had both types of need, experiencing conflict and often relapse, and requiring emergency assistance and development support.

For the Movement, that meant increasing preparedness and providing a response in acute crises to alleviate immediate suffering, while understanding that any crisis could develop into a long-term problem. Globalization had affected growth and vulnerabilities equally; the majority of those living in poverty were in

middle- and high-income countries, emphasizing the existing inequalities between the rich and poor, the rural and urban. Development models had to be amended to meet emerging new realities, and provide new coping mechanisms.

Things needed to change globally such as community participation in decision-making governance structures, allocation of resources, or land usage, particularly given the emerging importance of water governance. Governance also meant keeping promises made to communities and building sustainable partnerships to build trust and deliver outcomes.

Dr Conille (moderator) recalled that Dr Moyo, in *Dead Aid: Why Aid Is Not Working and How There Is a Better Way for Africa*, referred to sources of aid having had negative consequences in the past. How should development assistance be provided to communities in the future, given the envisaged repackaging of humanitarian action?

Dr Moyo said that three sources of aid were mentioned in her book. The first was humanitarian aid, which remained valid because the international community had a moral imperative to act when a humanitarian crisis occurred. The second was provided by non-governmental organizations and some governments for specific small projects, for example to build a well. However, while making a small measurable difference in single communities, such aid rarely worked at the scale required to create economic growth and have a meaningful impact on poverty. The third was the hundreds of billions of dollars sent to emerging countries from developed countries and international agencies; that source required greater reform for several reasons. Economic records showed that no country had ever achieved economic growth and meaningfully alleviated poverty while they were relying on such aid. A few, specific aid packages had been successful such as the Marshall Plan, and some countries had created some economic growth such as Botswana and South Korea. However, in those cases, the aid interventions had been finite. Long-term or open-ended aid did not contribute to economic success, because governments were no longer held responsible for economic, social or political success. Democracy created a contract between the taxpayer and the government to provide public services in return for taxes; if the government did not deliver the expected services, then the taxpayers could choose to vote differently in any subsequent election. The systemic aid system broke that contract, as the government was no longer relying on income from taxes to retain power and was therefore no longer required to provide public services. Governments in many recipient countries had sought to make aid a permanent part of their budget, undermining the aforementioned political contract, and limiting economic growth.

While the international community should not stop humanitarian aid, the system needed reform to reward governments for acting correctly and demonstrating developmental progress. However, the current aid system had been described as so corrupt that governments were encouraged to show greater poverty and disease levels in order to receive more aid.

Dr Conille (moderator) asked the Secretary General about the need to build resilience, merging emergency response with preparedness, recovery and development, and what that meant for the Movement.

The Secretary General said that many challenges came in predictable cycles; monsoons, cyclones, flooding and other crises occurred on an annual basis. Success in addressing those humanitarian crises should not be defined by the increasing number of people reached by assistance, but by not having to reach more people each year. It was essential to increase resilience, prepare effectively using available information and develop new or potential information sources such as early warning systems. Preparedness also had to be accompanied by early action, capacity-building in vulnerable communities and learning from each experience. A community's capacity to withstand a reoccurring crisis was an indicator for resilience, as was its capacity to recover and ensure an improved situation in the future.

Put simply, resilience was helping people to understand the crises they could face in the future and to build the capacity to respond, recover and protect lives and livelihoods. Those elements could not happen in isolation, and he agreed that lines needed to be blurred. Resilience required functioning governance structures and a culture of accountability, which ensured that promises were kept and partnerships were sustainable. Many communities were still recovering from broken promises, but he was confident things could change. Aid was a part of the international community's shared responsibility to alleviate human suffering; however, it had to

go hand in hand with government and systemic reforms, global trade, priority setting, a commitment to investment and accountability.

Ms Kim (Kazakh Red Crescent) agreed with the criticism of the ineffectiveness of the billions of dollars of humanitarian aid. After receiving financial support for 20 years, the Kazakh Red Crescent had attained a sufficient level of development for financial support to be withdrawn. A difficult 10-year transitional period had begun, until in 2013 the IFRC had entered a successful partnership with the National Society to develop fundraising in Kazakhstan. Other partnerships had been developed between the Kazakh Red Crescent and corporate business and the Government. Through such partnerships, it was possible for governments to participate in the work of National Societies, while the latter took the lead in guiding action, sharing best practice and encouraging transparency.

Dr Mya Thu (Myanmar Red Cross) said that more emphasis should be placed on the role of young people in combating future humanitarian challenges. As an independent and impartial sector of society, free from economic constraints, young people were able to follow the Movement's Fundamental Principles more closely. She encouraged youth empowerment to make a greater difference.

Mr Simasiku (Zambia Red Cross), recognizing the contribution of Dr Moyo and her family to his country, agreed that nations that had demonstrated an improved economy had received less aid, whereas countries that had shown greater squalor or disease had been treated more sympathetically. He therefore asked what advice Dr Moyo could provide on combating such corruption and the abuse of external aid and internally generated revenue.

Dr Moyo agreed that governments had a role to play and had to be fully engaged, but noted that other stakeholders were becoming involved in humanitarian situations, and that the lines should be blurred between governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. In developed economies, those three elements were often clearly separated, but in other countries, state-owned enterprises were getting involved in delivering social goods and services. Neither method was perfect, and both needed to evolve; however, positive developments had been seen, for example during the Ebola crisis in 2015.

Regarding youth participation, she recalled that up to 70 per cent of the population in emerging markets was under the age of 25 years; and in some African countries, 50 per cent of the population was under. Currently, young people were more engaged and passionate about development issues and youth engagement was essential in future humanitarian action, particularly considering the developing role of technology, as well as in reforming existing structures.

Corruption was the root of many problems facing countries around the world, and the international community was often too forgiving in cases of corruption, where trust was being betrayed and promises were not being kept. While some believed that banishing corruption entirely may have unseen consequences, and others accepted positive corruption (money being obtained through corruption but reinvested in the economy), negative corruption (money being taken out of national systems and depriving the economy of investment) was particularly problematic. More transparent, aggressive punishment was required for corrupt practices, as well as a wider debate on how to identify such practices without discouraging investment.

The Secretary General said that partnerships should be built where they mattered most, at community level, to serve people in need. However, communities should not hold the sole burden of responsibility; governments should also be held accountable. Finally, promises must be kept.

Dr Daoub (Libyan Red Crescent) noted Dr Moyo's comments that permanent development assistance had become a source of corruption and asked how that problem could be dealt with, particularly if governments were unable to develop their communities alone and international assistance was therefore required.

Dr Kerschbaum (Austrian Red Cross), recalling Dr Moyo's criticism of systemic aid that had made Africa more dependent, and which had not reached the most vulnerable populations, asked whether any progress had been made in that regard in the six years since her book had been published.

Dr Abusalih (Sudanese Red Crescent) expressed concern regarding widespread corruption relating to aid, which meant little improvement had been made in the situation in Africa. Poor and vulnerable groups suffered and, as an organization seeking to provide assistance to those groups, the focus should be on building resilience. It was disappointing that resilience had not been adopted as part of the United Nations SDGs, which could have been because of a wider lack of understanding about what resilience was.

Dr Moyo agreed that more specific steps should be agreed to identify and combat corruption. In her opinion, the lobbying system and external financial support for political figures, as seen in the United States, could also be defined as corruption, even at the highest levels. The international community should agree on a definition of corruption, particularly regarding the use of aid, which was designed to support economic development and combat poverty. Three suggestions for dealing with corruption were: 1) a hard line approach, with heavy penalties for corrupt actions. However, it was important to consider any potential future negative impact of such an approach; 2) earmark money for whistle blowing, encouraging a culture where people were able to speak out against corruption without reprisal; 3) reward governments that were acting properly and were able to show improvements in their socio-economic situation. In that case, it would be necessary to agree how progress and government accountability would be determined; such metrics were available and could be viewed objectively. No formal body existed at the international level to strengthen and encourage efforts against corruption; that role was currently played by Transparency International, a non-governmental organization with a mandate to identify and highlight corruption.

Some progress had been made since 2009, but as aid could only provide budgets for development assistance to impoverished countries in the short term, governments should still take action to better fund their budgets in the longer term. In some cases, aid represented over 70 per cent of government budgets, which created corruption and debt burden in recipient countries and relied on donor countries that were themselves experiencing economic challenges resulting from ageing populations and productivity decline. It was therefore important to seek an alternative to aid.

International trade, microfinance and capital markets were three ways to stimulate economic growth and alleviate poverty. Global trade had been decreasing since the 2008 financial crisis, and trade agreements had become increasingly bilateral. There had been a deterioration in trade as a source of capital, and in foreign direct investment. Additionally, economic policymakers were making decisions that benefited their own countries, without thinking of the wide-reaching impact of their decisions, as had been demonstrated by the planned interest rate increase by the United States Federal Reserve, which would affect countries as far apart as Brazil, Russia and India. That would lead to less investment in emerging markets, slower growth and weakened currencies. Decision makers had to remember their broader responsibilities. She welcomed the decision by some countries to issue debt in the capital markets, but reiterated that how that money was used was also important, and encouraged investment in communities and societies. Recognizing the challenges faced by developing countries, she welcomed increased transparency. Finally, it was important to balance the creation of a stronger currency that may have a negative impact on trade with the lack of sustainability of the current aid model.

Mr Lara Tapia (Dominican Red Cross), referring to the *Strategy 2020* mid-term review, said that the Dominican Republic and Haiti shared an island with a population of 20 million people with a high degree of vulnerability and there was a lack of strategic vision in those countries. Strategic vision was not only for the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, but should also be applied by governments, civil society actors and communities, ensuring that priority was given to the limited resources available to build resilience. At the start of the Movement in Solferino, the main problem had been the disaster itself; in the current globalized world, the biggest challenge was combating vulnerability and increasing resilience. The Movement had to work alongside governments to ensure each population's right to be helped and protected, and to achieve development and reach its goals. That was only possible through strategic alliances with decision makers, donors, private sector actors, and those living in vulnerable communities, and it was important to remember that that every one of the world's seven billion inhabitants was vulnerable in some way. A global strategic alliance was possible because of the contacts National Societies had in those most vulnerable communities and because of the Movement's global presence and relationship with governments. That could be achieved through the implementation of *Strategy 2020*, contributing to the sustainable development of those vulnerable communities.

The Secretary General said that many of the issues raised in the discussion would be covered during the General Assembly's discussions. He recalled the launch of the *One Billion Coalition for Resilience*, which sought to ensure that one billion people would become resilient by 2025, having the capacity to withstand shocks, build livelihoods, contribute to social safety nets in their own communities, become active citizens, and hold their governments accountable. He looked forward to further discussion of the SDGs and global development.

Dr Moyo reiterated the need to blur lines, and welcomed the example of resilience. Many of the items at the top of the world's agenda were the same as 50 years ago and, while many improvements had been made in living standards and life expectancy, there had been a failure to implement many decisions and promises. With an increasing global population, current economic challenges would increase and feed political, social and humanitarian challenges. Policymakers and implementers had to be held to account and punished if they did not deliver on their promises. The action on resilience mentioned by the Secretary General and others was a good step towards progress in that regard.

Item 4 of the agenda: **MID-TERM REVIEW OF STRATEGY 2020**

Ms Årehed Kågström (Swedish Red Cross), member of the advisory group on the *Strategy 2020* mid-term review, illustrating her remarks with slides, recalled that *Strategy 2020* had been adopted in Nairobi in 2009, with the mid-term review set for 2015 by the General Assembly. The Secretariat had recruited external consultants to conduct the review, and an advisory group comprising one youth representative, the Americas zone director and five National Society representatives (from Sweden, Afghanistan, Egypt, Burundi and Mexico). The review aimed to assess the relevance and effectiveness of *Strategy 2020*, and the process had taken place in parallel to plan and budget preparations.

There was a strong sense of ownership of *Strategy 2020* among National Societies. Most had found it inspiring, visionary and useful. While some felt it was too broad, with unclear priorities, most felt it was well written. A challenge was the term "strategy"; it was not a traditional strategy, but the term strategy had been used for continuity with *Strategy 2010*, and the authors had wanted to call it a "vision". *Strategy 2020* did not need to be rewritten, although alignment of National Societies with it should be monitored. Some National Societies thought there were gaps or poorly articulated elements (education, blood services, older people as resources and as target groups, and gender-based and domestic violence). The collective feeling was that some priorities should be identified for further implementation: preparing and responding to disasters and crises, disaster risk reduction, and volunteers and communities.

A more holistic approach to National Society capacity development was required. Much work had been done, especially in the Secretariat, to develop good guidelines and tools, but there had not been enough focus on implementation, the knowledge-broker role or the promotion of peer-to-peer support among National Societies. One challenge was a lack of financial self-sufficiency among National Societies. There was a need to improve partnerships and alliances, and National Societies' commitment to coordinate and respond to disasters and crises. National capacity should not determine the scale of a response. Another challenge was National Societies working unilaterally and bilaterally, and partnership work had to be improved, particularly across the Movement.

It would be a challenge to follow up *Strategy 2020*, as it was not a traditional strategy, and it was unclear what was optional and compulsory for National Societies. Monitoring and evaluation had thus far not taken place, owing to poor reporting capacities. The fact that the Plan and Budget did not follow the *Strategy 2020* format had also made the business line activities confusing, especially in terms of the Secretariat staff response. While regional discussions on the themes of *Strategy 2020* had been helpful, little direction about its implementation had been given.

The nine recommendations encompassed four main areas: 1) Strengthening National Society development. Such development had to be holistic, including financial self-sufficiency, skilled leadership and governance, volunteer recruitment and retention, and accountability and integrity. The Secretariat had to produce fewer guidelines and tools; those in existence were of high quality, but implementation had to be improved through peer-to-peer support and knowledge brokering. There should also be more support through an experienced in-region or in-country presence if the budget allowed. The OCAC was an important tool for National Society

development, and the criteria were good. However, when it was reviewed, it should be changed to focus specifically on *Strategy 2020*, rather than strategic planning in general. That would make it possible for National Societies to determine their degree of alignment with *Strategy 2020*; 2) Emergency response and disaster preparedness. It was vital to ensure National Societies were fully coordinated in preparing for and responding to large-scale emergencies, and that there were agreed plans and resources for preparedness, response and recovery. The 20 countries most at risk from disaster and conflict should be mapped and identified based on crisis scenarios and the capacities of their National Societies, in order to identify and respond to gaps as a Movement; 3) Measuring achievements, National Society planning and *Strategy 2020*. Instead of rewriting *Strategy 2020*, 10-12 alignment criteria should be identified for National Societies to implement in their strategic plans. Key criteria to follow up were needed to work as a Federation and see results. National Societies should be encouraged to report to the Governing Board. It was also important to set only three or four Federation-wide targets for achievement by 2020, one per *Strategy 2020* strategic aim. The Plan and Budget should also be aligned with the mid-term review, with resources allocated to National Society development, data management for effective follow-up and assessment, knowledge brokering and coordination of preparedness and response; 4) Effective communication of the unique role and mandate of the Movement, including its auxiliary role, taking advantage of the World Humanitarian Summit. That would further the development of partnerships and fundraising. Improved internal communication was also required to give volunteers and staff a sense of purpose.

Two workshops would give delegates an opportunity to discuss the advisory group's findings and recommendations. She encouraged them to consider the following questions: How could National Societies be better aligned with and contribute to the goals of *Strategy 2020*? Looking towards 2030, what potential areas of focus could the Federation better articulate and collectively work towards?

Item 2 of the agenda: **ACCOUNTABILITY AND FOLLOW-UP REPORTS** (*continued*); and
Item 5 of the agenda: **IMPLEMENTATION AND FINANCIAL MATTERS, PLAN AND BUDGET**
(*continued*)

2.3 Report of the Secretary General; and
5.2 Plan and Budget

The Secretary General began by reading an extract from *What they did yesterday afternoon* by Warsan Shire. The world was hurting, turbulent, and at war. There were conflicts of many sorts, and the words used by people caused hurt and fear. Terror and mistrust were common. Words and behaviours pushed opponents further apart, and marginalization often led to exploitation. Humanitarians were being dismissed as weak or naïve, but there was nothing weak about speaking out on behalf of the most vulnerable, most isolated or most forgotten people. The Movement's Fundamental Principles had stood the test of time, and celebrated their fiftieth anniversary in 2015. The Movement's volunteers were far from weak, and many had made the ultimate sacrifice, giving their lives while trying to save the lives of others. The Statutory Meetings were a safe place to be a humanitarian or idealist, and to discuss peace, human dignity, and humanitarian principles. Humanitarians should feel safe and supported, and should ask how to strengthen their commitment to their work.

Humanity, the belief in the dignity of the human being, was the basis of the Movement's Fundamental Principles. However, humanity was suffering; children and families were fleeing their homes in historic numbers, or braving dangerous journeys or escaping from rising seas and seeking refuge in cities. The Movement's youth leaders were responding to those cries, and young members at an event held in Geneva had talked about trust, respect, motivation, empowerment, commitment, engagement, partnership, collaboration and hope, summing up their ideals in the hashtag #togetherforhumanity, so different from the world's dominant discourse. Those ideals that inspired the young members should also inspire the Federation as a whole, and guide its actions and its Plan and Budget.

The Plan and Budget 2016-2020 reflected the Federation's ambition to improve its support of National Societies, and to work together as one Movement in partnership with other humanitarian actors. Additionally, it had been adjusted in line with some of the recommendations resulting from the *Strategy 2020* mid-term review. Driven by *Strategy 2020* and its three strategic aims, the Federation's ambition was to enable safe and healthy living and promote social inclusion in a culture of non-violence and peace. To that end, the Plan and Budget comprised four strategies for implementation to support National Societies in building resilience at the

community level. Furthermore, eight areas of focus had been identified, thematic areas in which measurable progress could be demonstrated.

Crisis situations were becoming more frequent, and the Federation's role was increasingly needed. Effective international disaster response management would remain a main part of the Plan and Budget (strategy for implementation 2). National Societies were always present in natural disasters, disease outbreaks, or poor communities, and would continue to go the extra mile to make a big difference to the most vulnerable and hardest-to-reach communities. The Federation's responsibility in disaster response included leadership, good practice and early response. Effective coordination would enhance the management of surge capacity and global resources. However, the Federation's tools had to be modernized and adapted to the changing landscape, to ensure a more coordinated Movement-wide response in the future, and tools had to be developed to support National Societies in their long-term responses to protracted crises. It was important to remember that, despite having received a mandate to act, the IFRC did not act in isolation, and the Secretariat had a role in coordinating other actors and promoting appropriate standards and approaches. The IFRC would continue to support National Societies in strengthening their own technical capacities, and to deliver high quality, timely and cost-effective services.

The IFRC was the largest provider of humanitarian shelter and settlement assistance (area of focus 2) in the immediate aftermath of a disaster at the household and community levels. The Federation would help National Societies to adopt enhanced participatory approaches and would provide technical assistance and best practices. The delivery of emergency health services, water sanitation and hygiene (areas of focus 4 & 5) was also a priority. Health system strengthening, which was a key element of resilience, could not occur without community system strengthening, and that required increased support for community health-care programmes, provision of new technology, and pandemic preparedness. The IFRC would continue to support National Societies in their efforts to expand access to water sanitation and hygiene for vulnerable communities.

As National Societies were present in communities before crises hit, they would continue to prioritize disaster risk reduction (area of focus 1), establishing and expanding early warning systems and ensuring that early warning was always accompanied by decisive early action. The severity of a crisis and the path to recovery were heavily influenced by families' capacity to generate and maintain an income. Sustainable livelihoods increased resilience, and further protected the environment and its natural resources. The preservation of livelihoods (area of focus 3) would continue to guide partnerships with resilient communities.

The world was changing at an increasingly fast pace, and the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement had to change to remain relevant. For the first time in history, more people were living in urban and peri-urban settings than rural environments, and that had created new vulnerabilities. The majority of the world's poor now lived in middle- and upper-middle income countries, and many countries had large populations of young people who had little opportunity for work. That situation created growing levels of violence and intolerance, leading to marginalization and exploitation. National Societies therefore had an increasingly important role to play in implementing violence prevention and response activities, particularly in relation to sexual and gender-based violence, child protection, violence against migrants and urban and community violence. The Plan and Budget 2016-2020 would create opportunities and resources to strengthen that work and develop global partnerships and to expand the Federation's efforts towards humanitarian education. The Fundamental Principles remained powerful antidotes to anger and violence.

Recognizing that inequalities and discrimination lay at the heart of social exclusion and often led to violence, there was a need to build greater coherence between the Federation's work in social inclusion and National Society efforts to build a culture of non-violence and peace (areas of focus 6 & 7). The Federation would develop its policy and advocacy agenda with National Societies and the ICRC, thereby ensuring that the Movement had one approach and one voice, and would support National Societies in building advocacy capacity and engaging with governments and other partners.

It was estimated that 60 million people had been forced to flee their homes as a result of conflict or violence; there had been a dramatic increase in migration (area of focus 8). The Federation would increase its support to National Societies as they sought to meet the needs of migrants at all points along their migratory routes, and that had to include assistance as well as protection and public awareness raising.

The IFRC had to rethink its approach to addressing humanitarian needs, in order to tackle the risks and vulnerabilities at the heart of disasters. The impact of a hazard could be mitigated by the level of preparedness and response capacity, and need not become a disaster. The Plan and Budget would enable National Societies to support communities in developing resilience, taking ownership of their future. For that same reason, the IFRC was championing the *One Billion Coalition for Resilience*.

During the final World Humanitarian Summit global consultation, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and Member States had agreed on the need for a humanitarian system that was more inclusive, relied more closely on local capacity and was better connected to vulnerable communities. That need should drive the work of the IFRC, alongside the SDGs, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Paris Agreement on climate change. In that regard, the Federation would strengthen its support for National Societies in ensuring a sustained and relevant Red Cross and Red Crescent presence in vulnerable communities (strategy for implementation 1). Many National Societies were taking steps to mobilize volunteers, strengthen their branches and develop their capacities, and the Federation would increase support for those activities, putting National Society development at the core of its activities. For that to be a success, the IFRC had to be effective, credible and accountable (strategy for implementation 4), and work had begun to simplify structures, revise the Plan and Budget approach, and remove inefficiencies. In collaboration with National Societies, the IFRC would develop objectives, targets and indicators for each area of focus in the Plan and Budget and provide support to ensure reporting was carried out.

It was important to note that each member of the Federation carried out work in different areas, and the Plan and Budget represented the Federation's commitment to support National Societies in all their activities. Many National Societies carried out specific activities to respond to targeted needs in their communities, and such responses would continue to complement the core work of National Societies.

The Plan and Budget 2016-2020 had been prepared in accordance with a needs-based approach, and the budget architecture had been changed accordingly. Restricted and unrestricted funds had been replaced by regular resources, which included statutory contributions and unrestricted voluntary contributions, other resources, which included restricted voluntary contributions for humanitarian response and thematic activities, and supplementary service resources. A total revenue budget of 500 million Swiss francs had been determined for 2016 and 2017 respectively. The 2016 budget included a projected 30 million Swiss francs in voluntary regular resources, 200 million Swiss francs in contributions for thematic areas of focus and 187 million Swiss francs in emergency appeals to respond to humanitarian crises, the latter figure being based on a five-year historic average.

In order to achieve funding for the 2016 and 2017 budgets, existing partnerships would be strengthened to maximize voluntary contributions, and a thematic funding approach would match planned results with National Society priorities and donors. Regular resources remained the most effective way of financing the work of the IFRC and National Societies, but other resources would be raised and allocated according to operational needs, facilitating increased access to funding with fewer restrictions. Accompanying systems and control mechanisms would be established to ensure donor confidence in investment. Thematic funding would be most successful when planned results clearly matched donor priorities. Allocation of thematic funding had to be proactive, strategic, timely and transparent. Additionally, there had to be thematic funding for National Society development, particularly for those 20-25 National Societies to be identified for development following the *Strategy 2020* mid-term review.

The future challenges facing the Organization felt overwhelming, thus it was important to remember the IFRC's history and past successes. As the largest global humanitarian network, the IFRC had overcome every challenge it had faced and had made a difference in the lives of many people. When the League of Red Cross Societies had won the Nansen Refugee Award in 1957, the inscription had read, "The League's timely action on a worldwide basis [...] clearly demonstrated the power of international solidarity when harnessed for the common good". That statement remained true, and the Federation should be motivated by the same power of international solidarity harnessed for the common good. Furthermore, when receiving the 1963 Nobel Prize on behalf of the IFRC, John Alexander MacAulay, then Chairman of the Governing Board, had said, "The League, acting on behalf of mercy, touches a vibrant chord of out-welling sympathy that stretches from land to land, from black to white, red to yellow, from creed to creed, from heart to heart. There is no delay, no finely weighed counting up of plus and minus, no calculation of the terms of trade, or estimate of what we get for

what we give". The IFRC was a powerful force for good, and was stronger when National Societies worked together. The Secretariat remained committed to results, quality and accountability and to working with National Societies and in partnership with the ICRC to ensure a stronger Red Cross Red Crescent Movement.

He concluded by introducing a slide containing the *Strategy 2020* Strategic Aims, and the Plan and Budget strategies for implementation and areas of focus. He said that progress reporting would enable the Federation to better understand its contribution to the lives of many vulnerable people. He encouraged delegates to support the Plan and Budget, and called for resources to be committed thereto. Recalling the young members he had overheard in their meeting, he called on delegates to work #togetherforhumanity.

Mr Chetty (Chair, Finance Commission) recalled that, pursuant to the Constitution, the Finance Commission was responsible for commenting on the budget drawn up by the Secretary General, and had therefore established a Budget Sub-Committee to conduct an in-depth analysis. The Sub-Committee had welcomed that the Plan and Budget reflected the strategies and directions endorsed by the Governing Board, was results-based, reflected the findings of the *Strategy 2020* mid-term review, and took into consideration feedback from consultation with National Societies. The Finance Commission noted the need to mobilize additional voluntary contributions pursuant to the Plan and Budget and requested the completion of a resourcing plan. It was the duty of National Societies to support the Secretary General in mobilizing resources, but it was also the duty of each and every National Society to take responsibility in its own market to do so.

The Finance Commission agreed with the ambition expressed by the Secretary General with regard to expenditure, and noted that the budget included expenditure in excess of historical spending. The Commission supported the presentation of expenditure by areas of focus and strategies for implementation, and welcomed the inclusion of a results matrix in the Plan and Budget, as the change to a results-based Plan and Budget was important and would facilitate resource mobilization. However, it would still require the financial support of National Societies.

The Finance Commission had agreed with the changes to the financial policy proposed by the Secretary General and incorporated into the Plan and Budget, including elimination of corporate and hosting fees, introduction of an earmarked pledge minimum value, and the presentation of logistics and fleet cost recoveries as regular resources. Additionally, the Finance Commission had reviewed the working capital projections, and had noted that the budgeted working capital was adequate, and that the capital budget was consistent with available resources. The Budget was balanced, reflected the advice of the Finance Commission and had been endorsed by the Governing Board.

The Finance Commission's duties included the periodic review of the formula for fixing the financial participation of National Societies, and establishing the annual scale of statutory contributions every two years. The current statutory contribution quota-setting formula had been adopted in 2005 at the 15th General Assembly. That formula had been reviewed in 2012, leading to a simplification of the scale of statutory contributions. At that time, a more comprehensive review of the system had been proposed for 2016, but had been brought forward at the request of the Governing Board and several National Societies. An independent econometrician had studied the system and had presented his results in March 2015. The study had concluded that the current system should be maintained, as it remained fair and equitable, despite its weaknesses. In response, 87 per cent of comments from National Societies had been positive, though many had noted that the strengthened Swiss franc had meant that the cost of statutory contributions were higher in their own currency. As a result, the Secretary General had proposed a revision to the financial regulations, which would be discussed during a later meeting and implemented in 2017.

The Commission had therefore decided to maintain the current formula for calculating the statutory contributions for 2016 and 2017. The Governing Board had endorsed that decision, while requesting that the Finance Commission continue to consult with National Societies with regard to the statutory contribution quota-setting regime. National Societies had received documents indicating the statutory contribution quotas for all National Societies. The statutory contribution quota had not been increased since 2009, although individual changes in financial circumstances could affect quotas. The calculation of those quotas was supported by 136 certified declarations of income, and 99 per cent of the total quota was supported considering UN quota and certified declarations of income. On that basis, the Finance Commission had endorsed the 2016-2017 scale of statutory contributions for adoption by the General Assembly.

As he was addressing the General Assembly for the last time as Chair of the Finance Commission, he wished to comment on three issues facing the IFRC: accountability, resource mobilization and human resource management. In his first year as Chair of the Finance Commission, the Federation had faced a significant funding challenge and, while some National Societies had stepped in to resolve the issue as part of a united family, others had not been punished for their mistakes. At that time, he had decided that the Finance Commission would advocate and champion an accountability culture across the Federation, which had latterly been echoed in *Strategy 2020*. Accountability was not just a buzz word, but was now embedded in the work of the Secretariat and National Societies. He recognized that issues of accountability were still being faced, particularly as mechanisms had been developed to detect and address such issues. However, he dreamed that every member of staff and every volunteer would constantly strive to act in the best interests of the Movement, and he was sure that the Secretary General and Governing Board were committed to good governance and effective management, guaranteeing that the Federation would remain relevant in the future.

The *Strategy 2020* mid-term review had confirmed that National Society development was at the heart of future success, but such capacity-building should be carried out in accordance with a demand-based and impact-oriented approach. He emphasized that the IFRC's role was to provide National Societies with the tools and systems to develop themselves and strengthen their own capacities. However, such development required adequate funding and, while the Plan and Budget 2016-2020 included some resources, only a joint resource mobilization effort would provide sufficient funding for more development. Resource mobilization could be improved by more domestic partnerships. Moreover, better coordination was required to ensure that there was less competition for resources and that National Societies were the first to receive funds from donors in their own countries. It was time to expand the Federation's humanitarian diplomacy role, calling on governments to support the auxiliary role they had mandated to the Federation.

The people within the Federation were important: 16 million volunteers, 452,000 paid staff and 80 million members. The IFRC had served 160 million people through its volunteers and staff. In 2009, he had called on the Secretary General to give due attention to human resource management in the Secretariat and National Societies. While progress had been made, performance was still being hampered by inadequate human resource management. That required urgent attention, as poor management of human resources could have severe consequences for the Organization. Moreover, making efficient use of volunteers and motivating and retaining them was of vital importance, as volunteers made a significant economic contribution. He encouraged delegates to further consider the Global Review on Volunteering in the year ahead. He also urged them to read *Strategy 2020*, which had formed the basis for his intervention, and which remained a relevant document for the future of the Organization.

Mr Mollekleiv (Norwegian Red Cross) said that the Secretary General had joined the Movement at a time when its work was needed more than ever in an increasingly complex humanitarian context. Access to vulnerable people was the main challenge and often National Societies were the only actors with that access. Resilience was more than just a word and it was therefore crucial that National Societies develop sufficient capacity to provide a humanitarian response. The ICRC, IFRC and National Societies had to collaborate more to respond to natural disasters, armed conflict, displacement, urbanization and infectious diseases. He urged the Federation to continue its work in core areas.

Mr Valiyev (Azerbaijan Red Crescent) welcomed the trend towards decentralization, including zone offices and local representatives, and commended the collaboration between National Societies and the Secretariat in recent humanitarian crises. He thanked the Secretary General for participating in regional seminars on *Strategy 2020*, which had formed the basis of his National Society's Strategic Plan 2011-2015 and would form the basis of its Strategic Plan 2016-2020. For many affected by severe humanitarian crises, the IFRC was a last hope and the Federation must keep their trust.

Dr Esterabadi (Red Crescent Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran) said that rapid and unplanned urbanization, coupled with climate change, often led to humanitarian crises. Common underlying risk factors included migration, environmental degradation, poor urban planning and outdated building regulations. Livelihoods and economic growth were being threatened in vulnerable communities, and there was a need to scale up the Federation's work on urban disaster risk reduction. He encouraged the Movement to prioritize and invest in knowledge and resources to support that work at all levels, and called upon external stakeholders and

governments to strengthen efforts to build community resilience in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) *Making Resilient Cities* campaign. He recommended that the Movement establish priorities on resilience and ensure that a common position was clear to other stakeholders worldwide.

Ms Brakman (Netherlands Red Cross) said that the Secretary General's report increased the transparency and visibility of the work of the Federation, and recognized that the challenge was to carry out that work. The Secretary General had reminded the Federation of the people it was seeking to help, and of the hope it shared, and she supported the goal of greater effectiveness and efficiency within the Federation.

Mr Adamson (British Red Cross) welcomed the Plan and Budget, which would enable the Federation to fulfil its potential and carry out its work nationally and internationally. Refugee movements demonstrated the regional and global nature of humanitarian challenges and crises, which needed regional and global responses and coordination. In that regard, the Federation should continue to work hard to ensure the Movement was collectively stronger and better positioned to assist vulnerable communities. The 2015 International Conference and the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit were opportunities to reiterate to governments the need to invest in National Societies, which played a unique role in providing local humanitarian assistance. That investment would require a focus on good governance and accountability. Every National Society should confront and resolve integrity and governance issues, which had implications for the Federation as a whole. Many of the world's most protracted and serious crises involved conflict; to work better in that area, the IFRC had to improve cooperation with the ICRC, ensuring that each component of the Movement had a clear role. He recognized progress made thus far, and encouraged the IFRC to continue its efforts.

Ms Huber-Hotz (Swiss Red Cross) said that the world's increasing humanitarian needs called for all to collaborate and support one another in action. She commended initiatives to unify the Movement, which would enable the Organization to remain relevant and defend the interests of the most vulnerable at the grass roots level. She welcomed the Plan and Budget, which had National Societies and vulnerable communities at its core. Partnering for more resilient communities would require greater collaboration and increased quality, professionalism and integrity. She welcomed the adoption of a results matrix, but more work was needed to streamline the Secretariat structure and ensure effective leadership. She commended the Plan and Budget's eight areas of focus and the inclusion of migration, which had been neglected for many years on the operational level, despite the publication of strategic documents. The Movement was in the unique position of being present at all points along the migratory routes, and so a global, coherent and integrated approach was required. The Secretariat had to play a coordinating role in that and support National Societies.

Mr Paniah (Togolese Red Cross) recognized the need for cooperation and the sharing of experiences to address the challenges highlighted in the Secretary General's report. The German Red Cross had partnered with the Togolese Red Cross in 2008 to develop a disaster management pilot project to develop early warning systems along water courses in Togo at risk of flooding. That project had been a great success, and the partnership had developed. Warning markers had been installed and volunteers had been trained to act as focal points in their communities. The Togolese Red Cross was currently developing an integrated disaster management system with support from the Ministry of the Environment, which included sharing traditional methods for identifying risks such as alerts to populations about climatic changes. He thanked the German Red Cross for its support and cooperation in efforts to adapt to climate change, and said that the Togolese Red Cross was also constructing 2,000 homes for those affected by the flooding in 2007-2008.

Professor Schöpfer (Austrian Red Cross) noted that the *Strategy 2020* mid-term review had identified four main gaps: education, blood service, older people and gender-based and domestic violence. Those areas were important in the Europe region and therefore he was pleased to note they had been addressed by the Plan and Budget 2016-2020. Humanitarian education sought to ensure that every child and young person developed humanitarian values, enabling individuals and communities to consider situations from a humanitarian perspective and empowering them to take action, in line with the Movement's Fundamental Principles. The ongoing Humanitarian Education Initiative provided added value to the Movement's activities. However, funding would end in 2015, and it was unclear whether it would be provided under the Plan and Budget 2016-2020. Many of the world's current challenges did not have easy solutions, and the humanitarian education of young people would ensure their vital contribution.

Mr Kparh (Liberian Red Cross) reiterated his thanks for the role played by the IFRC, the ICRC and other partners in enabling Liberia overcome the unprecedented West Africa Ebola outbreak. Without the support of the Federation and other partners, it would not have been possible. Resilience was his National Society's and the Movement's most valuable asset. However, following the success of the humanitarian action during the outbreak, non-compliance and integrity allegations had been made about financial management and procurement procedures, and several officers from the Liberian Red Cross had been suspended. A committee had been established to study the allegations and its report would be published in December 2015. The situation in his National Society was not unique, and it was important to demonstrate character, commitment and willpower during the investigation process. Just as National Societies had worked together to overcome the Ebola outbreak, a similar unity would be required to overcome current challenges.

Ms Fowler (The Canadian Red Cross), speaking on behalf of the three Red Cross Societies of North America (United States, Mexico and Canada) welcomed Secretariat efforts to improve the Plan and Budget presentation and consult with National Societies. She hoped that work would continue to facilitate National Society participation in financial discussions. She commended the steps taken to streamline the Federation's finances and thematic activities, and reiterated the need to ensure all activities were pursuant to the Federation's two constitutionally mandated areas of activity, namely disaster management and response and National Society development. Activities in those areas should be allocated more resources and, given the increasing levels of need, she recognized that the budget may need to grow. However, she remained unsure about where those additional resources would come from, and whether there was sufficient capacity to spend the resources effectively. She requested more information in that regard. Moreover, the revised format of the budget made historical comparisons difficult, and she hoped that would be resolved in the future. The bareme formula required a fundamental review, a position held by many National Societies, and she welcomed the Governing Board's decision in that regard. The National Societies of the United States, Mexico and Canada were three of the largest overall supporters of the Federation and would continue to support its work, including through voluntary contributions to the emergency appeals system. She encouraged the IFRC to undertake a review of its sources of income and consider how to develop collaborative emergency response operations. She looked forward to participating in future efforts to develop the Federation's vision and clarify the roles and responsibilities of all actors.

Dr Guiteau (Haiti Red Cross) welcomed the relevance of the Secretary General's report in referring to resource mobilization, disaster risk reduction and migration. He commended the work of the American Red Cross, which had supported his National Society in migration activities, but called on the Federation to increase support to the Haiti Red Cross and Dominican Red Cross and to improve the quality of staff assigned to implement activities in those countries. He commended the control mechanisms established for risk management and corruption prevention. Welcoming the Plan and Budget, he looked forward to the development of follow-up mechanisms to assess results relating to the targets to be developed. The IFRC had a difficult road ahead, and it had to ensure alignment with National Society policies.

Dr Daoub (Libyan Red Crescent) said that current violent humanitarian crises were having an impact on the implementation of the Fundamental Principles, particularly unity, impartiality and neutrality, and the Federation's ability to respond. Ongoing conflicts required significant humanitarian assistance across the board. Recognizing that war also destroyed a society's infrastructure, unexploded bombs, uncontrolled arms trade and the threat of violence were all factors in an increasing migration flow. As a country of origin and destination for migrants, the Libyan Red Crescent had a responsibility to obtain legal support and protection from the State, to support the young people working within the National Society, to foster partnerships with civil society actors and to encourage a culture of reconciliation. He hoped the Federation would continue working in partnership to support his National Society's efforts to implement *Strategy 2020*, in order to overcome the humanitarian crisis affecting his country.

Mr Torstila (Finnish Red Cross) welcomed the recommendations made following the *Strategy 2020* mid-term review and hoped they would also form a basis for any subsequent strategy, which should be more focused. Events in Europe related to increased migration had demonstrated the need for more robust and faster responses to emergency situations, the Federation's core mission. The improved coordination of humanitarian response and developing National Society capacity must be priorities. He recognized the value of diversity and targeted actions specific to National Societies and their contexts, but noted that fewer diverging priorities would lead to a stronger, more unified Movement. The Secretariat required sufficient funds to fulfil its roles as coordinator,

providing support to National Societies, including through enhanced use of technologies and advocating for the work of the Federation at the global level. Moreover, all of the Secretariat's roles should be more clearly defined, ensuring it did not become an implementer in the field.

Mr Sugai (Japanese Red Cross), recalling the upcoming anniversaries of the Chernobyl and Fukushima nuclear accidents, welcomed the launch of the IFRC's Operational Guidelines on Nuclear and Radiological Emergencies, pursuant to General Assembly decision 11/46. Nuclear power plant construction was on the rise and therefore the probability of accidents would also increase. National Societies were not sufficiently prepared to provide effective assistance in the case of radiation, and each should develop a contingency plan to cope with radiological and nuclear emergencies and provide training to staff and volunteers. Following the Fukushima accident, the Japanese Red Cross had carried out that work, and had also created a digital archive system to share experiences and good practice with other National Societies, remaining committed to supporting National Societies in increasing their capacity to deal with radiological and nuclear emergencies.

Mr Bak-Jensen (Danish Red Cross) welcomed the commitment to building strong National Societies, the positioning of the Federation on the humanitarian map, and the increased coordination with the ICRC and other actors from inside and outside the Movement. The Plan and Budget was in line with the United Nations SDGs and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and would make the Federation's contribution to resilience more visible. National Society development was crucial for ensuring effective responses, and National Societies had to be flexible and agile. Every day he was asked what the Red Cross was doing to help refugees; that demonstrated the need for greater communication to inform the world of the Movement's work and the support required for it to continue.

Ms Hao (Chinese Red Cross) commended IFRC efforts in institutional reform, resource mobilization, community resilience and the *Strategy 2020* mid-term review. The Chinese Red Cross, having successfully hosted the Asia Pacific regional conference, which had resulted in the "Beijing Call for Innovation", had been working to develop its own capacity and had completed the OCAC process at headquarter and provincial levels and had established 21 operational emergency response teams. It had collaborated on community development programmes in Africa and Asia, provided humanitarian relief to the Russian Red Cross and the Ukrainian Red Cross, and had organized capacity-building training for National Societies in developing countries. It would continue to expand bilateral and multilateral cooperation in humanitarian affairs and support other National Societies in developing countries to deliver quality humanitarian services. The IFRC should provide better guidance for National Societies to deepen strategic partnerships to build capacity, encourage National Societies to join the *One Billion Coalition for Resilience*, which would help to achieve the SDGs at the community level, and strengthen the Secretariat's coordination role and broker resources to make the greatest impact. She encouraged National Societies to work together to ensure no one was left behind.

Mr Traoré (Guinea Red Cross) welcomed the recommendations on implementing *Strategy 2020* and its objectives. Clearer guidance should be provided to ensure National Society strategic plans were aligned with *Strategy 2020*. He recommended that national strategic plans also cover the same time period, in order to harmonize approaches and facilitate support plans. He thanked the IFRC for its support during the West Africa Ebola Outbreak, including the Secretary General's visit to the country, which had promoted cooperation between the IFRC, the Guinea Red Cross and State actors, and which had facilitated the National Society's actions in the field. He commended the President for his regular telephone calls regarding the Ebola outbreak. The Red Cross had been the only organization present in many communities, particularly in efforts to ensure safe burials.

Mr Mpapele (South African Red Cross) said that his National Society had returned to the General Assembly with a new Governing Board, having missed the previous Assembly because of internal challenges. Members had recently discussed the sustainability of the National Society, identifying income-generating activities in the form of social enterprises as an area of focus. His National Society was seeking to expand its partnerships in that regard, and he urged partners to help it learn to become self-sufficient. He thanked the Secretary General for visiting South Africa, and hoped that Africa would soon host the International Conference. In the words of Nelson Mandela: "Like slavery and apartheid, poverty [...] is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings".

Ms Razafimanantsoa (Malagasy Red Cross) congratulated the Secretariat, National Societies and volunteers for their achievements for beneficiaries. It was International Volunteer Day, and she quoted the Secretary General: “We’ve always been there, all the time, accompanying the affected populations and communities, helping them face their challenges. When the world experienced Ebola, we were there, when there was indifference to migrants, we responded with humanity, and when a disaster comes, we are on the front lines. Because this is who we are, this is what we must always be, and this is only possible with volunteers”. She would share those words on the Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers Facebook page; volunteers, particularly young volunteers, were the heroes of the Movement and the world.

Mr Alushi (Albanian Red Cross) said that his National Society had focused on building resilience, humanitarian education and humanitarian diplomacy. Albania had suffered frequent flooding, and he thanked the German Red Cross and the UAE Red Crescent for their support in building resilience and meeting the needs of over 10,000 people. In the past 10 years, the National Society had provided first aid training to over 300,000 people, one-tenth of the population. It had worked effectively in disaster risk reduction and had partnered with the Government on preparedness and response. Additional activities had been undertaken in health and sanitation and social inclusion, but the future focus would be on developing National Society capacity to increase the number of people it could help.

Mr Peña y Lillo (Bolivian Red Cross) emphasized that National Society development was the most important priority area identified by the Secretary General. National Societies should aspire to greater sustainable capacity within an integrated framework. National Societies were responsible for their own development; however, almost half of the National Societies in the Americas region had problems with self-sufficiency and sustainability, including his own. Those challenges existed not because of a lack of interest or desire to grow capacity, but a lack of financial capital. Seed capital was required to begin to strengthen National Societies, be that in the form of soft loans, income-generating projects or specific appeals, or some other form of financing. However, without that financial support from the Federation, many National Societies would not be able to progress.

The Secretary General said that he had taken note of all the comments and recommendations. Some issues would be raised in workshops or other General Assembly discussions, and the results of all discussions would be used to further improve implementation of programmes. He particularly noted areas for improvement and emphasized that words would, indeed, be put into action. He reiterated his commitment to the non-implementing role of the Secretariat; it would only work to support National Societies when requested to do so. The Federation would continue to coordinate joint emergency operations, upon the request of the host National Society. However, as the Federation was not able to implement any activities directly, National Societies had to develop trust in the IFRC, use traditional wisdom and strengthen preparedness, so as not to unnecessarily delay humanitarian response. He had proposed activities to address the migration increase as early as February but, as a membership organization, the response had not reached the required levels until the severity of the situation was fully revealed some months later. As the IFRC had won awards in the past for its refugee and migrant assistance, he was sure that the current crisis could be addressed.

Regarding budget funding, he said that 65-70 per cent of resources came from National Societies, as the IFRC was a membership organization, and he hoped that figure would increase. The IFRC would support National Societies in their resource mobilization efforts, for example facilitating access to international funds. Direct fundraising had been part of his previous job, but that had not been in a membership organization. The IFRC had to respect its commitment to being member-led. Further cooperation was required to ensure the high quality of human resources, as 90 per cent of staff came from within National Societies. He encouraged National Societies to provide staff that met the rigorous recruiting standards, as every member of staff in every role was accountable for their actions and results. No activity appeared in the Plan and Budget without a baseline budget allocation from statutory or planned voluntary contributions, and no activity would be left to voluntary contributions or appeals alone. The Federation would continue to work with and for National Societies, and would be accountable to its members at all statutory meetings.

He thanked ICRC staff for their collaboration, openness and partnership, including sharing resources from joint appeals and working together on the front line. He showed his appreciation for the *Strategy 2020* mid-term review advisory group, and reiterated that the review would be ongoing in order to remain strategic and relevant. He thanked Mr Chetty and the Finance Commission for their dedication and for freely sharing their

expertise, support and guidance. He welcomed the generous support he had received from the three previous Secretaries General and other members. He thanked his own staff, many of whom had been working with the Movement for over 20 years, and the senior management team and regional directors, for their hard work and dedication. He looked forward to continuing to work with National Societies, learning from one another and making every effort to improve the work of the IFRC and deliver quality activities on time, with accountability, transparency and efficiency.

Decision (GA/15/07)

Report of the Secretary General:

The General Assembly,

notes with appreciation the written (annex 3) and oral reports of the Secretary General.

Decision (GA/15/08)

Mid-term review of S2020:

The General Assembly,

welcomes the midterm review (MTR) of Strategy 2020,

expresses its appreciation for the work of the MTR Advisory Group and the MTR review team,

notes the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the MTR,

acknowledges that the IFRC 2016-2020 Plan and Budget builds on the findings and recommendations of the MTR.

Decision (GA/15/15 to 18)

Plan and budget:

The General Assembly,

upon recommendation of the Governing Board *adopts* the Plan and Budget 2016-2020 “Partnering for More Resilient Communities”, and the first two years of the budget (annex 5),

notes that the remaining three years of the budget are indicative and subject to the approval of the General Assembly 2017.

Approval of Scale of Statutory Contributions for 2016 and 2017

approves on the recommendation of the Governing Board, as per the proposal of the Finance Commission, the proposed scale of statutory contributions for 2016 and 2017, attached as Annex C (GB/16/1, see annex of Governing Board 32nd Session decision sheet)

approves the Governing Board recommendation that the Statutory Contributions of the Tuvalu Red Cross Society be established as 1,000 Swiss francs for 2016 and 2017,

Appointment of External Auditors for 2016 and 2017

appoints on the recommendation of the Governing Board, as per the proposal of the Finance Commission, KPMG SA, Geneva as auditors of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies for the years 2016 and 2017 (GB/16/1, see annex of Governing Board 32nd Session decision sheet).

The meeting rose at 13:30

Third Plenary
Saturday, 5 December 2015
15:00

International Volunteer Day

The President, thanking and offering his best wishes to the millions of Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers on International Volunteer Day, said that volunteers were at the heart of the IFRC's work and the day provided an excellent opportunity to reflect on the Organization's work and ambitions.

The Global Review was the largest study ever undertaken on volunteering in the Movement. More than 600 volunteers, managers, staff and external experts from 158 countries had been interviewed or surveyed. In his report to the seventieth session of the United Nations General Assembly, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon had said that the Global Review would "strengthen volunteer management knowledge in the Organization and wider humanitarian sector". Volunteers represented 98 per cent of the workforce, but the changing nature of volunteering meant the IFRC had to adapt. Within most National Societies, people were volunteering for shorter periods; they were less likely to stay beyond two years, and many left within six months. As a result, National Societies had to increase recruitment and training just to maintain numbers. Greater investment was needed to help volunteers take on more complex responsibilities and encourage them to stay for longer.

Another important issue for the IFRC was the safety and security of volunteers. A resolution on volunteer safety and security would be presented during the International Conference. More than one million Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers were working in conflict-affected environments, including thousands working regularly on the front line. Twenty-four volunteers had been killed in the line of duty in 2015; while that figure had remained consistent over the previous four years, 80 per cent of those killed in the previous two years had died from conflict-related injuries. Many more had been injured, detained or exposed to psychological trauma. There was an urgent need to raise the profile of local volunteers, in conflict settings and globally, and provide them with appropriate safety and security measures, including suitable equipment, advanced training, management support, psychological care both during and after the event, safety net provisions and assistance with building community acceptance for their role.

He invited Professor Matt Baillie Smith to take the floor, who was Professor of International Development at Northumbria University and a specialist in research on volunteering and co-author of the Global Review.

Professor Matt Baillie Smith (Northumbria University) said that working on the Global Review had been a personal highlight and an opportunity to learn about the Movement and the remarkable work of its staff and volunteers. As the Review was both from and to the Red Cross Red Crescent, it would enable the Movement to shape its policies and decisions with some of the most comprehensive and important research ever done on volunteering. That work had been produced thanks to great leadership. Its foundation was the amazing things carried out by volunteers every day, in every country: their ideas, imagination and innovation. It was based on unqualified respect for volunteers and staff, for both their commitment and the risks they took, and the ultimate price that some paid through their commitment to serving through volunteering, often throughout their lives. The Review built on those elements and the diversity and passion of volunteers by being a co-produced piece of research. It was not, therefore, by him as an 'outsider', or by the Federation, but by a team of staff and volunteers from National Societies across the world. It was important to note that the volunteers and staff were not the object of the research, but part of the Global Review process. The Review was also about helping academia, volunteers, policymakers and decision makers find new ways of working together.

At the heart of the Review was a commitment to listening to the staff and volunteer voices, and taking seriously the challenges they faced as they negotiated a rapidly changing and dangerous world. One finding was that volunteering should not be taken for granted; it did not come easily and was not free. The challenges must be approached sensitively, in a cross-cultural manner, with respect for the different ways that volunteering was understood in different places.

The first theme was the relationship between the global and the local. The Red Cross Red Crescent was the largest volunteer organization in the world by a long way. It had an unbelievable capacity to learn and lead, and transform and adapt volunteering in a changing world. There was incredible innovation across every

continent. The scale of the Movement, and the way it worked in villages and communities, and nationally, cross-nationally and globally, meant it had a chance to build new forms of volunteering that linked the local and the global in a way nobody else could. That was an exciting opportunity, but it had challenges. How should a National Society with diverse ideas of volunteering be managed? How did global ideas and cultures of volunteering fit with the work of National Societies?

The second key theme of the Review was the changing nature of the communities in which volunteers worked and from which they came. The Review highlighted the following changes in communities: ageing population, urbanization, expanding slums and increasingly networked and virtual communities of volunteers and volunteer managers.

An important theme was increasing migration. While new communities were emerging, other communities were being broken up, producing very different and changing community needs. The Review showed how some National Societies were stretched as the influx of new populations meant they could no longer meet existing community needs. Population movement also represented an opportunity to recruit new volunteers; but volunteering had to fit around the lives of new, changing and mobile communities. Those communities often contained people from diverse professional backgrounds who desperately needed income, but who still wanted to serve.

The Review had revealed how people were volunteering for shorter periods, meaning that innovation was required not only in how volunteers were recruited, but how they were retained over time. Migration and urbanization showed that volunteering no longer existed in isolation; different types of volunteering were interconnected and coming into contact, offering opportunities and challenges. What would happen if some ideas of volunteering came to dominate? What could be learned from being open to uniting different types of volunteering? New and innovative ways of volunteering were emerging in response to challenges, but it was essential to listen to what they did and what they could teach. That meant listening to small projects too; quiet innovations could often be incredibly rich.

How the local and the global interacted was important for the theme of paid volunteering. It was a contentious issue, striking at the heart of the intuitive view of volunteering. However, the Global Review had highlighted the need to discuss the issue carefully, as the terms used to describe payment, incentives, remuneration and other subjects were often more slippery than credited. The Review had found that paid volunteering was becoming more commonplace in many parts of the world; that had to be accepted. Often, international donors paid volunteers to deliver projects quickly, as they needed a flexible, local army of labour. The evidence showed that paid volunteering was not only relevant in terms of retaining or engaging volunteers, but that it created competition between volunteer-using organizations and hierarchies between volunteers and different projects. That made recruitment and retention difficult. In some places, those forms of paid volunteering were undermining and marginalizing community-based volunteering and long-term volunteering. There might appear to be a simple solution, but the picture was not simple. Payments could also be used to help inclusion, meaning that the poorest in societies had the capacity to participate and contribute.

The final theme was the experience of volunteers in conflict settings. Local volunteers were critical to humanitarian action in conflict situations. In such situations, international donors often left and infrastructure was destroyed, meaning local volunteers were the only ones remaining. They had critical local knowledge and ideas that ensured services could continue to reach people. The Review had shown, however, that in some circumstances, volunteers were not involved in decision-making and received much less support than was commensurate with their pivotal role. They faced unbelievable risks and often paid a terrible personal price, but continued to show incredible commitment.

It was important to thank and recognize those individuals, but the Movement had to think about the kinds of support and protection it could offer, and how it could raise the profile of volunteers so they received the respect they deserved from outside the Red Cross Red Crescent. It was also important to understand their experiences and needs. Groundbreaking work was already under way, and he encouraged a visit to the VICE project exhibition to find out about an innovative listening project led by the Swedish Red Cross and the IFRC.

The Global Review also had implications beyond the Movement. The Red Cross Red Crescent had the capacity to shape the future of volunteering in a changing global world, simply because it was the biggest volunteering

organization and people would listen to it. In the Global Review, its volunteers and staff had spoken; they deserved attention.

A short video by Soja Films of the Swedish Red Cross was shown featuring Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers in action.

Item 7 of the agenda: THE CONSTITUTION OF THE IFRC AND RELATED STATUTORY TEXTS

7.1 Revision of the Constitution of the IFRC and related statutory texts (AG/7.1/1 and AG/7.1/2)

The President said that document AG/7.1/1 contained the Governing Board recommendations regarding the Constitution and related statutory texts, and document AG/7.1/2 the proposals submitted by the Qatar Red Crescent and Venezuelan Red Cross, each supported by five other National Societies. Since the distribution of these documents, further discussion had taken place in hopes of reaching a single set of proposals for adoption at the General Assembly. In consequence of these discussions, the Qatar Red Crescent had agreed to defer consideration of their proposed amendments for further discussions during 2016 and 2017. The President said that the Venezuelan Red Cross may be considering the same direction.

The Governing Board had also amended their proposals; recommendation 1A regarding a regional slate for Governing Board elections and the recommendation on all language clarifications had been deferred for further consideration in 2016 and 2017. The Board had also agreed to inclusive reflection on the Constitution and statutory texts to further consider the political and strategic issues which had been raised during this process, including those raised by the Qatar and Venezuelan National Societies, and technical and clarification issues in our statutory texts. The Secretariat had been asked to support the process by providing a first background paper for reflection on the governance models and good practices of international humanitarian organizations, as well as setting up an interactive site for National Society feedback.

The recommendations tabled for adoption were therefore an important first step and would bring about reforms that could be applied immediately, including to electoral processes in 2017. More work and reflection was, however, needed to ensure full satisfaction with our systems and mechanisms.

The President summarized the work of the Governing Board that had led to recommendations to the General Assembly for consideration: The Governing Board had launched a limited constitutional review following calls for change in Sydney, focusing primarily on electoral, integrity and governance issues. The proposals under consideration were the result of two years of reflection and consultation by the Governing Board and a high-level working group comprising himself, the Vice-Presidents, the chairs of the constitutional commissions and committees and representatives from each region. Three rounds of consultations with all National Societies had been held. The comments and recommendations from National Societies had been vital, and the Governing Board hoped that the reduced set of recommendations from the full set of proposals submitted in July 2015 would be generally supported by the membership as per the feedback received. Their adoption would significantly simplify the Organization's electoral processes, strengthen its integrity and risk oversight and help it achieve greater gender diversity in its governance. Some of the reforms proposed required constitutional amendments, and would therefore need to be passed with a qualified majority vote of 75 per cent of members present and voting. Other recommendations would only change the rules of procedure, rules for travel assistance or financial regulations, which only required a simple majority for their adoption.

Recommendation 2 was a series of interrelated proposals to reform the timing and organization of voting processes. It would simplify the rules of procedure to reduce the number of elections and hold them in a single day of the General Assembly. It would also stop candidates putting themselves forward during the Assembly itself. Discussions had also been held to reform electoral standards, and a first draft of qualified standards submitted to the Board by the Election Committee. Following the General Assembly and the adoption of the reforms, a final draft would be submitted by the new Election Committee to the next Governing Board for adoption. It would then be circulated to National Societies to ensure its application in the 2017 electoral cycle.

Recommendations 3.1 and 3.2 set out heightened standards for governance candidates, whether serving in a personal or institutional capacity. Under Recommendation 3.1, National Societies declared in default or that had, without justification, failed to comply with their constitutional obligation to provide audited financial

statements or annual reports for three consecutive years would lose their right to run for office or nominate candidates. On the recommendation of the Compliance & Mediation Committee, the Governing Board would also be granted the right to suspend National Societies under investigation from running for office or nominating a candidate. Recommendation 3.2 would require all candidates running in a personal capacity to provide attestations regarding their compliance with the relevant codes of conduct and rules on harassment and abuse. Recommendation 3.3 sought to ensure greater diversity of vision and regional representation by adopting a maximum two-term limit for the function of President.

Much discussion had taken place on reforming the Compliance & Mediation Committee, and more work was required, particularly on mechanisms for handling governance integrity allegations. As a first step, three reforms were being proposed. Recommendation 5.1 would allow constitutional commissions and committees, including the Finance Commission, to directly submit a matter to the Compliance & Mediation Committee, so that serious integrity risks could be handled more quickly and effectively. Recommendation 5.2 would grant the Compliance & Mediation Committee, in exceptional circumstances and under conditions to be agreed by the Governing Board, the right of “initiative” in considering serious integrity breaches posing a risk to the collective Federation image or reputation. Recommendation 5.4 would formalize the role of the Vice-Presidents in integrity matters.

Recommendation 6 called for the formal separation of the Audit & Risk Committee from the Finance Commission, strengthening what was a vital oversight mechanism and ensuring its independence. Recommendation 8.1a would oblige the Election Committee to seek a gender balance when appointing members to constitutional commissions and committees. Recommendation 9 would enable travel assistance for Governing Board members to ensure they could participate in its meetings. The final recommendation was to amend the financial regulations to change the date of the barème payments from 15 February to 31 March and expand the authorized payment currencies.

Mr Villarroel (Venezuelan Red Cross) said that the Venezuelan Red Cross had presented a proposal to amend the IFRC Constitution, supported by the Guatemalan, Salvadorean, Bolivian, Nicaraguan and Costa Rican National Societies, as per article 46 of the Constitution. The proposal suggested changes to 12 articles of the Constitution and would bring about structural changes to IFRC governance. One of the amendments concerned the ex-officio Vice-President position described in article 22(c), held by the President of the National Society of the host country of IFRC headquarters, as per article 26. The position was discriminatory, as it gave Europe two votes on the Governing Board. The rule should be deleted or changed to make it a non-voting representative. The Governing Board’s proposal was insufficient and had several weaknesses. The Venezuelan Red Cross and the supporting National Societies had agreed to defer consideration of their own proposals in a spirit of cooperation. It sought transparency for each Federation action.

Mr Al-Muhanadi (Qatar Red Crescent) said that the main proposal by the Gulf group aimed to enhance IFRC collaborative efforts and improve leaders’ sense of responsibility and capacity to undertake projects in their region. He thanked the Assembly for its attention and expressed the hope that greater impetus in 2016 and 2017 would lead to qualitative improvements in Federation activities.

The President asked Mr Villarroel to confirm whether he had agreed to defer all proposals except that regarding the ex-officio Vice-President.

Mr Villarroel (Venezuelan Red Cross) confirmed that he had agreed to defer all the proposals, pending further discussion over the following two years.

Ms Brakman (Netherlands Red Cross) said that her National Society welcomed the amendments given in recommendations 1 to 9, strongly endorsing the proposals on integrity and compliance reforms, but considering that recommendation 5.1 should be altered so that all constitutional commissions and committees entitled to submit claims directly to the Compliance & Mediation Committee should only have to notify, rather than consult, the President. That would emphasize their right and avoid unnecessary delays. It also supported the obligatory consideration of gender. Regarding the new electoral process, it strongly supported the proposed introduction of a maximum two-term limit for the President. Concerning the proposal from the Venezuelan Red Cross, having the ex-officio Vice-President was crucial within the Movement, as it was an independent position on the Governing Board and a presence in Geneva, which was the seat of the IFRC, the ICRC and

other diplomatic posts. In times of conflict, the ex-officio Vice-President played a vital role; hopefully future discussions would call for maintaining that important position.

Mr Bak-Jensen (Danish Red Cross) said that the Danish Red Cross strongly supported the recommendations, and saw the separation of the Audit & Risk Committee from the Finance Commission as a positive step towards improving financial management and accountability. Integrity and compliance reforms were necessary. It was appropriate that some of the more fundamental questions had been deferred to allow deeper and more inclusive discussion. The Constitution should only be amended where change was really necessary, and where consensus or at least a solid majority was possible. While National Society leaders were temporary figures, the Constitution needed a much longer scope. The Danish Red Cross cautioned against any proposals to regionalize IFRC governance, which required global unity. The Secretary General was working on the principle of one Secretariat; the same principle was required for governance, otherwise the unity, cohesion and global character of the IFRC would be undermined. In discussions about constitutional change, members should avoid personal prejudice and bias and look at the bigger picture. He urged involvement in the ongoing discussion; only 19 National Societies had responded in the last consultation process.

Mr Mirzayev (Azerbaijan Red Crescent) said that making relevant amendments to the Constitution was extremely important, as had been evident from the way National Societies had called for changes after the 2013 General Assembly. He thanked the IFRC management team, the President and the Vice-President of the Europe Zone for their support and the establishment of a working group, which had included the President of the Azerbaijan Red Crescent. The process of amending the Constitution had been organized fairly and transparently, and the matter had been discussed at regional meetings. The amendments would clarify the Constitution and the process had been a success.

Mr Casella (Italian Red Cross) called strengthened youth participation in communities and National Societies. In the Italian Red Cross, several humanitarian challenges were being addressed with youth-led activities. They had not waited for senior leaders to provide opportunities, but had demonstrated commitment and the capacity to perform different roles. Many other National Societies viewed youth as a resource and priority, but the Federation, while making commitments, was not putting words into action, and that had to change. Being a Red Cross Red Crescent youth did not just mean being a social media expert or running appeals; they could do more, as they represented over 50 per cent of Movement volunteers. Appropriate resources should be allocated to developing youth structures and improving participation at national and international level. As part of the constitutional review, National Societies should ensure that the voice of youth was represented in Federation governance, and not just in a technical body. The next Youth Commission should be elected by youth to ensure youth representation in the Governing Board and Federation.

Mr Giles (Canadian Red Cross) said that the Canadian Red Cross was pleased to have participated in the consultation process and thanked the working group for soliciting and synthesizing the diverse feedback from the membership. It welcomed the decision of the Governing Board to limit the proposals, and supported the proposed amendments. It would support any measures to improve IFRC accountability, transparency and governance, and looked forward to engagement in future consultations on the important matters that had not yet been resolved.

Mr Backman (Finnish Red Cross) said that the Federation's strength lay in its universal nature and approach, and it had to stay united to respond to larger, more global crises. Adding a regional layer to elections would be detrimental to the cohesion and unity of the Organization, and could at their worst lead to candidates taking a narrow view of its work, concentrating on regional humanitarian issues rather than global and cross-regional crises. The Finnish Red Cross would not support such proposals for a regionalized model either currently or in the future. It was disappointed that the recommendation on gender equality in governance positions only encouraged consideration of gender and did not make any serious attempt to ensure gender equality in practice. Without external incentives, women were often not encouraged or actively sought as candidates. He hoped that the issue would remain on the agenda and be revisited if changes did not happen. He called on all National Societies to actively ensure that both genders were adequately represented when presenting candidates for governance positions, at both Federation and National Society level.

Dr Schön (German Red Cross) thanked those who had participated in the constitutional review working group and consultation process, and the Venezuelan and Qatar National Societies for their cooperation. The German

Red Cross welcomed the proposals to strengthen existing mechanisms, notably those regarding the capacity of all constitutional commissions and committees to directly submit claims to the Compliance & Mediation Committee and the latter's own right of initiative. It also welcomed the establishment of an independent Audit & Risk Committee, and was willing to contribute to future constitutional reform processes, which would hopefully lead to a comprehensive revision of the Constitution by 2017. It supported the current recommendations.

Mr Ortega (Guatemalan Red Cross), speaking on behalf of young people from all National Societies, but particularly those in the Spanish-speaking world, paid tribute to the IFRC Secretariat and Youth Commission, which not only enabled a strong youth discourse, but allowed youth to make a practical contribution. However, although a number of young representatives had been able to meet at the General Assembly, many faced language problems. While Spanish was an official language of the Federation, many of the youth events organized had not had interpretation into Spanish. Although the Secretariat had worked hard to ensure that youth could participate alongside their National Society delegations, as had the Guatemalan Red Cross, some missed out when Spanish was not included in the meetings.

Professor Millat (Bangladesh Red Crescent) welcomed in particular the recommendation to establish an independent Audit & Risk Committee, which would help ensure the Federation's transparency and accountability within the Movement, and to the people it served. He also welcomed making it compulsory to consider gender in governance appointments, which would bring a new dimension to the Movement and help include the voices of all concerned.

Ms Souaré (Côte d'Ivoire Red Cross) said that the Côte d'Ivoire Red Cross supported the proposed amendments, which would promote transparency, particularly recommendation 5.4 calling for a regional approach to dealing with National Society integrity problems.

Mr Abbass (Iraqi Red Crescent) supported all the recommendations, especially those on integrity and the Compliance & Mediation Committee, and recommendation 3.1 on mandatory integrity criteria for *in personam* and National Society elected and appointed positions. Violation of statutes should make it impossible to hold a position in the Movement. Respect for the Fundamental Principles was essential, so that humanitarian work was respected and not misused. In addition, the reputation of the Federation or National Societies should not be hampered in any way.

Mr Aslani (Red Crescent of Islamic Republic of Iran) said that some of the recommendations were insufficiently clear and ambiguous, and required further discussion and analysis by National Societies, such as "grave integrity violations concerning National Societies" and the reference to a decrease in Governing Board members. A quantitative change to the Board could have positive and negative consequences, but any final decision would depend on comprehensive consideration by National Societies and the IFRC. Regarding the recommendation on electoral reforms, electing the Governing Board members from IFRC regions would not maintain the global accountability of the Board, as they would be elected by their respective regions and thus accountable to the National Societies that had elected them. Some recommendations were positive, however, particularly the obligatory consideration of gender balance in governance appointments, which would encourage gender balance within both the Federation and National Societies.

The President invited the members to adopt the Constitution, Rules of Procedure, Financial Regulations and Rules for Travel Assistance by consensus.

Applause.

Decision (GA/15/22)

The Constitution of the IFRC and related statutory texts:

The General Assembly,

adopts the amendments set out in AG/ 7.1/1 rev to the Constitution, Rules of Procedure, Financial Regulations and Rules for Travel Assistance (annex 9).

requests the Secretary General to disseminate the revised statutory texts.

notes with appreciation the decision of the Extraordinary Governing Board of 4 December:

“requests, the President and Vice Presidents to lead an inclusive process of continued reflection on the Federation’s statutory texts as guided by this 20th Session of the General Assembly.

requests, the Secretary General, under the leadership of the President and Vice Presidents, to prepare for discussion purposes a background paper setting out models and best practises of governance structures of international humanitarian organizations, including issues such as the role, structure and composition of governance mechanisms.

further requests, the Secretary general to establish a collaborative platform for National Societies to dynamically participate in future Constitutional reflections

The meeting rose at 16:20

Fourth Plenary
Sunday, 6 December 2015
11:25

Item 6 of the agenda: **REPORTS OF COMMISSIONS, COMMITTEES AND REGIONAL CONFERENCES**

6.1 Report by the Youth Commission (AG/6.1/1)

Ms Osborne (Chair, Youth Commission) thanked the General Assembly for the past six years, during which time she had been honoured to serve the Federation, specifically its nine million youth, and more broadly its 16 million volunteers. She thanked the Secretariat for its constant support and facilitation of ideas, and its faith in young people and the value they brought to the Movement. She thanked her Youth Commission colleagues, who had given their all to champion the priorities, ambitions and objectives of youth globally; their work had made a big difference.

Entering the post-2015 sustainable development agenda, National Societies needed to ask: Were they prepared? Were their institutions ready? Did they have the right strategies and policies in place? And had they invested adequately and meaningfully to ensure they were well placed to serve the communities on a need-driven basis?

While discussing and making decisions on governance excellence and *Strategy 2020*, the IFRC should remember that it was nothing without its volunteers, particularly as it sought to strengthen volunteerism as a critical element of progress. How it implemented the approved Plan and Budget would testify to its claims of intent and form a basis for judgement of the leadership's work in transforming the Federation and Movement. Young people, both at international meetings and at home, were committed, energetic and visionary partners in that transformation. The genuine, meaningful engagement of youth and volunteers would ensure the Red Cross Red Crescent's continued relevance in society.

The future Youth Commission should focus on providing the strongest possible voice and representation for youth and volunteers globally in a way that reflected current dynamic and challenging environments. It should provide guidance and leadership for people everywhere and challenge itself to make every day over the following four years deserving of the trust and responsibility conferred on it. That would not be easy, but it could look to its networks, the Governing Board, National Societies and the Secretariat to provide it with guidance, leadership and inspiration. It should be guided in each action by asking whether it was truly in the best interests of the people it served.

Professor Khasawneh (Jordan National Red Crescent) said that, as a former university professor, he had seen that young people worldwide believed themselves to be marginalized and lacking the opportunities they deserved, and were given tasks as implementers rather than leaders. Educational institutions did not really understand young people; the new generation thought in an unconventional way, which was not taken into account. Many movements throughout the world, including the IFRC and ICRC, had failed to deal with youth in the best way to give young people the space they deserved and help them to reach decision-making and leadership positions. That was a real problem for volunteering.

Mr Charles (Grenada Red Cross) pointed out that those currently speaking as youth members would before long find themselves being referred to as seniors by the next generation of young people, who would be calling for the very same things. He had been attending General Assemblies since he was a youth, and each time had heard the same message from young people. The IFRC had begun to recognize young people, who were already part of the process; they should acknowledge that and move forward. It was difficult, however, to understand why youth conferences were held at the same time as General Assembly plenary sessions. If youth were part of the process, they should be present at all plenary sessions and therefore youth meetings should not be scheduled at the same time.

Mr Gullet (Kenya Red Cross), speaking in his capacity as Federation Vice-President, said that he, too, had been attending meetings since he was a youth volunteer. Youth involvement and empowerment was still being

discussed, and he thanked Ms Osborne for her efforts. It was possible to be a young person in the Organization and in the future become President or Secretary General, given the opportunity. The main call was for National Societies to recognize that young people were not seeking favours to come to the General Assembly. Young people were, and would continue to be, the backbone of society. Empowering young people meant giving them the resources, coaching and ability to deliver. If not, their young people would join competing institutions that were more attractive and reactive. Youth participation in Movement major events should not be treated as a favour for young people, with National Societies needing to be reminded that they must allocate spaces for youth members. As custodians, how could current leaders enable youths to become leaders? It should be mandatory for each National Society to have a vibrant youth department, provided with resources and able to stave off the competition.

Mr William (Singapore Red Cross), supporting previous speakers, said that the Organization should recognize that young people should play a key role. It was not just about participation, support and them being the backbone; they should be seen as leaders and the driving force of the Organization. The environment was changing rapidly, and it should be recognized that young people were sometimes best suited to deal with it. The matter should be dealt with at both National Society and Federation level. In disaster response, there was often a National Society response and a Federation response, but young people seldom took leadership in managing the response. Retired people were even called back to take over the leadership. If the Organization was serious about youth, it should look to leadership from young people; otherwise, it would lose out to more forward-looking humanitarian organizations.

Mr White (Dominica Red Cross) said that, in 2012 in Vienna, 98 young people from different countries had helped prepare the Youth Engagement Strategy (YES), which had been approved by 114 young people in 2013 in Sydney. Yet, in 2015, only 83 young people were participating, less than before adoption of the YES. The YES should be implemented worldwide, as it represented the shared experience of all youth. Youth should be involved in all Movement projects in the present, not in the future; youth was the present, not the future. It needed more tangible support, not just theoretical support on paper, and there should be real implementation of youth issues.

Mr Esfandiari (Red Crescent Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran) recognized the importance of young people in National Societies and their work in vulnerable communities, and recommended focusing on three areas: (1) Given recent armed conflicts, and attacks on civilians and health centres, youth could play an important role in promoting international humanitarian law in communities, particularly in the Middle East, and raising awareness about violations, acting as humanitarian actors at all levels; (2) Youth had easy access to social media, which could give them a key role in peer-to-peer training. It could also enable them to share concerns and opinions, and jointly help resolve problems. Youth interaction could even inspire society; (3) Regional and international cooperation and knowledge-sharing could be developed through youth members, who could disseminate humanitarian values and beliefs. National Society leadership should recognize the role of young people in strengthening the resilience of local communities, resource mobilization and lifestyle improvements and in preventing vulnerability and violations.

Mr Joseph (Antigua and Barbuda Red Cross) disagreed with the comments made by the Grenada Red Cross. As President of the Antigua and Barbuda Red Cross, and as an outgoing member of the Youth Commission, he knew that youth had been calling for acknowledgement, so it was hard to hear the criticism that they were already part of the process. While the IFRC had made room for youth, many National Societies had failed to do so. Less than half of the National Societies present were represented by young people, which was a serious problem. Youth representatives did not consider it counterproductive to attend the General Assembly; rather, it lacked the right atmosphere, which was why they had their own meeting. The young people speaking in the General Assembly spoke on behalf of those who were absent but wanted to be heard. He had considered it mandatory to bring a youth representative to the General Assembly. It had not been easy, as his National Society was not eligible for travel assistance, but it had raised funds so the youth representative could attend; other National Societies could do the same. As a new President, he had been given space by his predecessor and, with IFRC support, the National Society was seeing success, rebuilding the neglected relationship with the Government and undertaking a constitutional review. For the first time in over 20 years, its Government was attending the International Conference. Those were examples of successes brought about by young people.

Ms Srour (Lebanese Red Cross), addressing adult leaders in particular, said that youth members did not wish to compete with, but to complement them; together they could achieve more. She agreed it was a concern that less than half of National Societies were represented by youth members. She thanked the adult leaders who had participated in the intergenerational event to bridge gaps between youth and adult leaders. Young people were present not only as youth representatives to talk about youth needs, but improving their National Societies. She urged members to give youth an opportunity; they would not be disappointed.

Ms Kovamo (Cameroon Red Cross) said that the problem of recruiting and retaining young people lay with adopting and implementing the youth strategy and policy. Since 2014 in the Cameroon Red Cross, the leadership had encouraged the adoption of the youth policy and decentralization, creating small structures such as primary school clubs. That had led to recruitment at all levels. The experience had been shared with other National Societies, notably by encouraging young people to act beyond social networks and go out to share experiences, which had led to real understanding and taking back lessons learned to their own National Societies. Young refugees represented a new challenge; the subject needed reflection. They wanted to be included and supported in schools and the workplace, but National Society programmes did not yet encompass the issue. She hoped that efforts would be focused on helping that vulnerable group.

Ms Burlot-Bourdil (French Red Cross), supporting previous speakers, said that her National Society had taken a different approach, not differentiating between youth members and older members. Rather, it had reflected on the idea of intergenerationality; the different generations supported each other and joint discussions helped everyone understand how societies were changing. It was better and more productive to take an intergenerational approach rather than create opposition between generations; together they could achieve more and be more effective.

Mr Cortés Fabregat (Spanish Red Cross) said that there were two levels of promoting youth participation: (1) in the Federation, where the issues concerned participation, support for youth proposals and for young volunteers in facing challenges; and (2) the influence the Federation, National Societies and governments could exert to improve youth policies and the status of young people. The current economic situation was difficult, affecting young people the most, and the Movement and National Societies could offer solutions to both national and regional governments. It was vital to have strong efforts on youth issues as a society and to implement and monitor youth policies to provide effective responses. The Red Cross Red Crescent was leading the way in finding solutions for society; they should not forget that they were working to make a better world, not just to improve vulnerable communities. According to the Global Review on Volunteering, it was cause for concern that 75 per cent of volunteers, almost 13 million people, were concentrated in 10 National Societies, while another 100 National Societies had only 1.25 per cent, or 200,000 volunteers. He proposed that the Governing Board formally ask the Secretariat to draw up a medium-term plan to look into the problem. There were 190 National Societies and their volunteer force was their muscle.

Ms Jackson (Samoa Red Cross) said that, as a former Red Cross youth, she saw the problem as largely stemming from adults not being open to young people; they should allow them to join as volunteers at any given time or recruit them when needed. Many countries had problems with crime and unemployment, so volunteerism could provide an opportunity for youth to develop. With the Federation's help, they could receive an education and subsequently be allowed to join the Red Cross and become better members of society. It was important for each National Society to consider what they could do for young people; if they needed resources, the Federation could help. Rather than money, some National Societies might need human resources, or experts to draw up a strategic plan to encourage young people to become volunteers, explore employment options or become better citizens.

Decision (GA/15/19)

Report by the Youth Commission (annex 6):

The General Assembly,

notes with appreciation and congratulates the Youth Commission on its report and the accomplishments achieved during 2013-2015,

requests the IFRC Secretariat to provide on-going relevant and sustained technical support to National Societies in developing their national strategies for strengthening youth engagement in line with the IFRC Youth Policy (2011) and the IFRC Youth Engagement Strategy (2013) and

further requests the IFRC Secretariat to make this report central to its global and regional approaches to advancing youth engagement,

recognises the important role of youth in contributing to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Sustainable Development Goals, and *calls on* National Societies to implement the 32nd International Conference IFRC-sponsored pledge “Youth engagement for a better world” to strengthen the resilience of local communities in partnership with their state parties,

congratulates National Societies which have a youth engagement strategy guided by the IFRC Youth Engagement Strategy, and *calls* on the membership to continue investing in youth development and encouraging young people to introduce innovation in community resilience strengthening and in addressing global humanitarian challenges,

calls on National Societies and the IFRC Secretariat to increase their participation in the Regional RCRC Youth Networks and to commit resources to facilitate peer approaches and joint initiatives to increase knowledge sharing and development,

congratulates the IFRC Youth on the Move Award 2015 winners and runners-up;

6.3 Report by the Compliance & Mediation Committee (AG/6.3/1)

Mr Weber (Chair, Compliance & Mediation Committee (CMC)) said that accountability, transparency and integrity, linked to good governance and effective organizations, had long been major themes. In the 1990s, the IFRC had taken the lead among international organizations by producing a guide to good governance in National Societies, developed cooperatively with the Secretariat and National Societies, and identifying the characteristics of a well-functioning National Society. Since then, the expectations of their various publics and stakeholders had grown, and would likely continue to grow. They needed a willingness to act individually and collectively to continue to improve their organizations. The problem was always in the execution and implementation; more action was required in the future.

Since its establishment in 2008, the CMC had made much progress in the cases referred to it. The many lessons learned were included in the written report, which he commended. It contained insights that should be noted as an example of precautions to take within organizations. Cases had generally arisen due to deficiencies in four dimensions: (1) the statutes and legal basis of a National Society; (2) relationships, whether between governance and management, between headquarters and branches, or within governance; (3) finances, including external audits and verification of accounts; and (4) organizational effectiveness, together with the interplay between all those dimensions.

With the rise in public expectations and increased competition for resources, the Movement would have to be even more vigilant to ensure that its institutions functioned well and its human activities were beyond reproach. It also had to act faster when integrity issues arose. The accelerating digital world meant that negative stories went viral in milliseconds, raising doubts about the Movement’s trustworthiness and effectiveness, and potentially tarnishing its reputation as a force for good. He therefore thanked the General Assembly for approving additional authorities for the CMC, notably the right of initiative in certain circumstances. Instead of just being a reactive body dependent on cases brought by five different groups, it could take the initiative under certain conditions to resolve a potential case.

He expressed thanks for the exceptional support provided from all quarters, without which the CMC could not have progressed. He also thanked his fellow Committee members; it had been a pleasure and honour to lead them. He wished their successors the very best, expressing confidence in their ability to build further on the existing base.

Ms Hristova (Bulgarian Red Cross) said that her experience as a youth volunteer, leader and president had shown her that volunteering was changing, and youth was the reason. Youth was demanding more; it wanted to see the results of its work and be trusted with responsibility. Young people were not just to be shown off occasionally during big events, or heard only as an exception. She asked how youth could be protected and supported daily, beyond training and fieldwork protection. The Fundamental Principles were not enough; it was hard to remember “humanity” when reading about “humanity washed ashore” and seeing photos of refugee children, and hard to protect “neutrality” and “impartiality” on Facebook walls after the Paris events. How could young people be sure about their beliefs when faced with peer or parental differing opinions? Young people were on the front line of attacks, whether literally, on social media or in their communities. They had to be equipped to protect themselves and their beliefs, and trusted and accepted as equal stakeholders and partners. The Secretary General said that current leaders were merely the custodians of the Movement for the next generation; she urged members to believe in young people and give them a space.

The President offered his assurances that young people would be heard, not as an exception, but on a regular basis. Hopefully mindsets could be changed to achieve that.

Decision (GA/15/21):

Report by the Compliance and Mediation Committee:

The General Assembly,

takes note of the report presented by the Compliance and Mediation Committee (annex 8),

thanks the members of the Compliance and Mediation Committee for the work accomplished during their past mandate.

6.2 Report by the Election Committee (AG/6.2/1)

Mr Cárdenas Guerrero (Vice-Chair, Election Committee), speaking on behalf of the Chair of the Election Committee, said that the General Assembly was tasked with appointing the members of the Finance Commission, Youth Commission and the Compliance & Mediation Committee. In total, the Election Committee had received 18 nominations for the Finance Commission for 10 available positions (nine and one chair); 31 nominations for the Compliance & Mediation Committee for 13 available positions (three per region and one chair); and 32 nominations (one subsequently withdrawn) for the Youth Commission for nine available positions (two per region and one chair).

As per article 33 of the Constitution, the General Assembly appointed members of those bodies based on lists presented by the Election Committee. Article 32.2(d) stated that the Election Committee should establish lists of proposed candidates following consultation with the Governing Board. Consultations had taken place in October 2015, and the Board had concurred with the Election Committee’s recommendations. The Election Committee was also required to establish an election timetable, receive applications and submit the list of candidates for appointment by the General Assembly. The call for nominations had been launched by email on 16 March 2015 and by post on 19 March 2015, with a deadline of 1 May 2015. The Election Committee had reviewed the nominations to ensure the highest level of expertise in each domain as per the criteria laid down in the Constitution and rules of procedure and with a view to geographical and gender diversity and credible membership of governance bodies.

The Election Committee had five members (one per region, and one chair) and had been appointed by the General Assembly based on a list selected by the Governing Board. He expressed appreciation to all National Societies who had put forward candidates; the quality had been impressive, and hopefully the expertise of those not selected could be used elsewhere. He thanked the members of the Election Committee for their dedication, and duly submitted the proposed lists of candidates for the three bodies.

The President took the opportunity to thank the members of these outgoing Committees and Commissions, for their excellent work and dedication. According to the Constitution, the General Assembly had to appoint the

new members. The Governing Board, at its October 2015 session, was consulted by the Election Committee and approved the list of nominees (Finance Commission/Youth Commission/Compliance and Mediation Committee) that had been communicated to the Assembly members. Regarding the appointment of the members of the Election Committee, the Constitution had tasked the Governing Board to make a proposal to the General Assembly. Members were projected on the screen a slide with the names that the Governing Board proposed, according to its decision in October.

Decision (GA/15/20):
Report by the Election Committee:

The General Assembly,

welcomes the report of the Election Committee (annex 7),

notes the ongoing process of revising the Electoral Standards, and

requests the Election Committee to finalize this work as soon as possible, taking into account the relevant constitutional amendments, for approval by the Governing Board, and dissemination to all National Societies,

thinks the members of the Election Committee for their work accomplished during their past mandate;

Decision (GA/15/23 to 26):
Appointment of the Finance Commission, Youth Commission, Compliance and Mediation Committee (Constitution article 33/7) and Election Committee (Constitution article 33/8):

Finance Commission:

Chair: Mr. Abdulkader Husrieh (Syria)
Ms. Adèle Congo-Kabore (Burkina Faso)
Ms. Patel Sheena (Kenya)
Mr. Andres Terrero Alcantara (Dominican Republic)
Ms. Gesly Lévêque (Haiti)
Mr. Byron Pollitt (USA)
Mr. Horace Kwan-hor Chau (China)
Mr. Armand Arreza (Philippines)
Mr. John Dorrian (Australia)
Mr. Erkki Liikanen (Finland)

Youth Commission:

Chair: Mr. Bas van Rossum (Netherlands)

Africa

Ms. Sameh Hattab (Tunisia)
Ms. Amintsoa Razafimanantsoa (Madagascar)

Americas

Ms. Sandre Barrett (Jamaica)
Mr. Auner A. García García (Nicaragua)

Asia

Ms. Pearl Li (Australia)
Ms. Lama Srour (Lebanon)

Europe

Mr. Azamat Baialinov (Kyrgyzstan)
Ms. Marie Esther Rouffet (France)

Compliance and Mediation Committee:

Chair: Dr. Muctar Amadu Jalloh (Sierra Leone)

Africa

Mr. Jean Kabahizi (Burundi)
Mr. Peter H. Katjavivi (Namibia)
Mr. Oforbuike Nwobodo (Nigeria)

Americas

Mr. José Juan Castro Hernandez (Honduras)
Ms. Vindra Amar (Trinidad & Tobago)
Mr. Joseph Pereles (USA)

Asia

Mr. Rodolfo O. Reyes (Philippines)
Ms. Leili Khaleghi (Islamic Republic of Iran)
Mr. Axel Chan (Singapore)

Europe

Ms. Sabina Mahbubi-Iran (Azerbaijan)
Mr. Wolfgang Kopetzky (Austria)
Mr. Volkmar Schön (Germany)

Election Committee:

Chair :

Mr. Fernando José Cardenas Guerrero, Colombian RC

Members

Africa

Mr Cisse Abdourahmane, Mali Red Cross

America

Mr. José Benjamin Ruiz Rodas, El Salvador Red Cross

Asia Pacific

Mr Fawzi Oussedik, Qatar Red Crescent

Europe

Ms Jelena Darmanovica Dubak, Montenegro Red Cross

The President congratulated the newly appointed chairs and members of the committees and commissions, reminding them that they would be fully supported in their important work.

Item 9 of the agenda: **IFRC POSITIONS: THE COUNCIL OF DELEGATES AND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE (AG/9/1)**

The Secretary General, illustrating his remarks with slides, said that the two main aims for the preparations for the Council of Delegates and International Conference had been: (1) to increase participant ownership, notably National Societies, but also States and observers; and (2) to revitalize the Conference as the premier forum for strategic humanitarian debate. Together with the ICRC, the planning committee had proposed innovations to achieve those aims.

The Council of Delegates would convene for one day and there would be panel discussions on: (1) the Movement vision; (2) strengthening Movement cooperation and coordination; (3) the Movement branding initiative; and (4) the Movement's message for the World Humanitarian Summit. The Movement vision would be presented in a concise strategic document drawn up by the Standing Commission. It outlined the increasing scale of humanitarian needs and growing demands on the Movement and articulated its ambitions to continue to protect and support those in need. The draft resolution on strengthening Movement cooperation and coordination was the result of extensive Movement-wide consultations and would seek to strengthen operational Movement coordination, focusing on four areas: (1) leadership and coordination; (2) tools and mechanisms; (3) communication; and (4) resource mobilization. The process had been overseen by a Movement reference group of senior leaders from National Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC. The Movement branding initiative proposed the adoption of a new Movement logo and called for continued work on the Movement-wide principles for resource mobilization. The message to the World Humanitarian Summit would reaffirm the central role the Red Cross Red Crescent played within the wider humanitarian sector and welcome the summit as an opportunity to improve humanitarian operations. It would also emphasize the need to invest

in local humanitarian response and call for local and international actors to work in a complementary way, ensuring that the important role of local actors was supported. The message would also highlight the need for predictable, sustainable resources to enable work across a continuum and address protracted crises, and highlight the need to build resilience.

The Council would also be prompted to adopt several other significant resolutions, including on disability inclusion, preserving the Movement's historical and cultural heritage, and the agenda and officers for the 32nd International Conference. At the request of several National Societies, an additional item – a statement on migration – would be put forward for adoption; the document would be shared with all National Societies before the Council opened.

The focus on migration would also carry over to the International Conference, with a special plenary session to build on the Movement's long-standing commitment to working with governments, host communities and other stakeholders to meet the humanitarian needs of vulnerable people on the move. The aim was to present the scale and range of humanitarian needs and highlight the contribution made by Movement components to address those needs. The 31st International Conference had adopted a far-reaching resolution on migration, and that resolution remained relevant; it was vital that the Movement and States continued to promote and support its implementation.

The draft resolution on strengthening legal frameworks for disaster response, risk reduction and first aid addressed three main issues: (1) improving the facilitation and regulation of international disaster response; (2) strengthening coordination and laws for disaster risk reduction; and (3) promoting enabling laws for first aid education and practice. The resolution would build on the substantial progress already made in certain National Societies, and the previous International Conference had also called for a focus on law and disaster reduction. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction highlighted laws as one of the most critical tools available to States in organizing society-wide efforts to reduce vulnerabilities and risk and promote safety. The comments received during consultations had been supportive and productive; hopefully that spirit would help reach a consensus during the Conference.

The draft resolution on the safety and security of humanitarian volunteers came as volunteers faced increasing demands and threats to their safety. They were present where needed, which was generally where it was hardest to work. The Movement was responsible for their well-being, especially as many had paid with the ultimate price. The resolution called on the membership to ensure that volunteers had adequate training, equipment and planning, and notably insurance or another safety-net provision against injury, disability or death in service. No volunteer's children should be left without support if their parents died serving the Red Cross Red Crescent. To help meet costs and achieve goals, the resolution also requested State support for the Red Cross Red Crescent and other volunteer-deploying agencies. It had received positive feedback and he called for support in reaching a consensus at the Conference.

The resolution to strengthen the Movement response to growing humanitarian needs was sponsored jointly with the ICRC, and called for State support in a number of decisions that would be taken at the Council of Delegates. The resolution should ensure that the Movement components had the full backing of their governments as they embarked on important initiatives, including efforts to strengthen cooperation and coordination, develop Movement branding and engage effectively with the World Humanitarian Summit. A key aim was to draw the Conference's attention to the revised and adopted principles and rules for humanitarian assistance. Feedback on the resolution had been positive, and he was confident that a consensus text could be reached during the Drafting Committee.

Mr Staehelin (Deputy Director-General, ICRC) said that the draft resolution on strengthening compliance with international humanitarian law was based on the recognition that it presented a fundamental current challenge, and one that all members of the International Conference agreed should be addressed. As an observer at the General Assembly, he had noted how many National Societies had to face challenges linked to a lack of compliance with international humanitarian law. The resolution proposed setting up a regular, voluntary meeting of states on international humanitarian law based on dialogue and cooperation. It would aim to operate on a non-politicized, non-contextual basis, and have two main functions: (1) voluntary periodic reporting; and (2) thematic discussions.

Feedback on the initial draft resolution included the call from some members for a stronger, more ambitious text, while others had expressed reservations. The revised draft resolution was a middle ground and recommended a basic outline for State meetings, while recognizing that further work was needed to finalize the modalities of the platform, to be convened by Switzerland in 2016. Though most National Societies and States were supportive, some States had expressed concerns that the State meetings could become politicized, and suggested that existing mechanisms should be strengthened instead. The draft resolution sought to address such concerns, and attempted to safeguard against politicization by ensuring that the guiding principles, with which all States agreed, were explicitly built into the operation and features of the State meetings and the preparatory processes. It was important for the Movement to stand united and adopt a resolution that would advance the initiative so that work could begin the following year on building the foundations of a new compliance system for international humanitarian law. Support for the draft was crucial.

The draft resolution on detention was an important milestone in the initiative to strengthen legal protection for people deprived of their liberty in the context of armed conflict. The objective was to build on consultations held over the past four years and open a new phase in 2016 to develop a non-binding outcome to strengthen the protection of persons in relation to non-international armed conflict. Most National Societies and States had supported the initiative and draft resolution, although some States had flagged issues that would require attention in the Drafting Committee. The first was State leadership of the process; some States had called for it to be clear that any further work towards an outcome would be State-driven. The Drafting Committee would identify ways to revise the text, but it was important to maintain a way for the ICRC to facilitate and provide expertise in its capacity as an independent humanitarian organization. The second issue was how to phrase the invitation to States to engage in further work towards one or more non-binding outcomes. Some States had suggested that the resolution should not prejudice the nature of an outcome, so the final text would have to clearly convey that the form and nature of possible outcomes was completely open at that stage. The third issue was how the resolution could convey that the initiative focused on detention in non-international armed conflict. Some feedback had suggested that the process focus on international armed conflict in addition to non-international armed conflict. The unified support of all Movement components would be important in moving the initiative forward, as it would secure a mandate to open a new phase of consultation.

Many National Societies had been actively involved in the draft resolution on health care in danger, which followed up on Resolution 5 of the 2011 International Conference, and made practical recommendations for the safer delivery of health care in armed conflict and other emergencies. He hoped that it could be resolved without controversy, and called on National Societies to make related pledges to show that the Movement was acting on the practical recommendations. The pledges would be crucial in framing the draft resolution at the Conference.

The Secretary General highlighted another joint IFRC and ICRC initiative: the draft resolution on sexual and gender-based violence. Such violence caused terrible suffering for too many and it represented a wound on humanity. The proposed resolution recalled relevant existing obligations under international law and raised awareness of aspects that could have been overlooked. It highlighted concrete prevention and response measures, including adequate law enforcement, access to justice, and training for the military, police and disaster managers to ensure they understood that protecting people from sexual and gender-based violence was as important as any other life-saving measures. It also underlined the need to provide comprehensive responses to the multi-faceted needs of victims, and urged collaboration with all actors to build on existing momentum to strengthen collective efforts. Substantial feedback had been received, demonstrating a strong, shared interest in the issue. The suggestions received had been considered, particularly concerns regarding the situations addressed in the draft resolution and the need to clarify the application of proposed actions in the various existing contexts and legal frameworks. He called for support for the draft resolution; the subject was as important as any other life-saving intervention.

Mr Staehelin (Deputy Director-General, ICRC) detailed the changes made to the format of the International Conference, which aimed to make it more attractive, interactive and visible to all. Based on feedback from States and the membership, there would be a greater media presence and connectivity. The changes would be: (1) a plenary session with a formal seating order, but only for sessions at the beginning of the Conference: the welcome addresses, the keynote speeches and a panel on the power of humanity. At the end, there would be the election of the Standing Commission, the commission reports, the resolution adoptions and a panel examining the results and next steps. There would also be a session on migration; (2) the rest of the Conference

would emphasize space for exchange rather than formal plenaries. There would be four commission sessions, each taking place twice. Rather than scripted statements, there would be interactive dialogue on the themes, including the Fundamental Principles in action, challenges in international humanitarian law, prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence, health care in danger, and building resilience, with the launch of the *One Billion Coalition for Resilience*. The smaller sessions would be fed back to the final plenary session; (3) delegations would be able to make their official statements, limited to three minutes, in the general debate. Screens would make it possible to follow proceedings at certain places in the Conference centre, and the verbatim would be included in the official Conference records – that was where statements for the records could be made, and those statements should be linked to the overall aspirations of the Conference; (4) those wishing to influence the draft resolutions would be able to attend the Drafting Committee, which had a large space to allow engagement in negotiations; (5) there would be over 30 side events, which would not conflict with the commission meetings; and (6) a significant innovation would be the “Humanitarian Dialogue: Vision Lab”.

The Secretary General said that the agendas for the Council of Delegates and International Conference were ambitious. The power of humanity should be powerful, but diverse, innovative and exciting too, which was why there would be so many innovative aspects. He encouraged delegates to visit the different areas. Together, they hoped to demonstrate the power of humanity, with mutual support and consensus on the vital agenda items and results that would guide the Movement response effectively in the future.

Decision (GA/15/27):

IFRC positions at the Council of Delegates and International Conference:

The General Assembly,

notes the IFRC positions as approved by the 20th Session of the Governing Board in this paper as reference for the negotiations of the text of resolutions, with regard to the following themes, understanding that Movement and Governmental consultations are on-going:

- For the CoD: Strengthening Movement Coordination and Cooperation optimizing the Movement’s humanitarian response (SMCC), Adoption of the International Red Cross And Red Crescent Movement logo, Vision for the Movement, Message for the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), Adoption of the Disability Inclusion Strategic Framework by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
- For the IC: Strengthening Compliance with International Humanitarian Law, Strengthening Compliance with International Humanitarian Law, Sexual and gender-based violence: joint action on prevention and response, Health care in danger, Safety and security of humanitarian volunteers, Strengthening legal frameworks for disaster response, risk reduction and first aid, Strengthening the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement response to growing humanitarian needs, Migration;

The meeting rose at 13.10

Fifth Plenary
Sunday, 6 December 2015
14:45

Henry Davison, youth and volunteering award ceremony

Mr Senghore (Regional Director, Africa), speaking as Master of Ceremonies, said that the awards celebrated the many volunteers who worked to make the Red Cross Red Crescent a success. While everyone deserved an award, the ceremony would honour few among many. Three awards were: (1) Youth on the Move Award; (2) Volunteering Development Award; and (3) Henry Davison Medal.

Youth on the Move Award

Ms Osborne (outgoing Chair, Youth Commission) said that the Youth on the Move Award had grown significantly since its creation in 2005. There were four categories: (1) Live our principles, celebrate our diversity, change our community; (2) healthy youth makes a healthy world; (3) adapting to climate change and addressing catastrophes; and (4) bridging the digital divide – connecting people through technology. A total of 57 nominations had been received from 36 National Societies. The winner and runner-up in each category would receive a laptop computer and cash prize to help their respective youth groups prepare, implement and evaluate their project ideas. Awardees would be encouraged to use the laptop to capture the development of their project, and the Federation looked forward to seeing pictures, videos and reports on its social media platforms. They would also receive 20 hours of coaching and technical support, which would hopefully be used in a dynamic, sustained way; although National Societies had expressed initial interest, the scheme had not been used as hoped.

Their projects would be promoted on the IFRC website and they would be given advice on profiling their project, both internally, and externally to promote their National Society. Those opportunities would allow the award-winning initiatives to be shared widely and replicated. The initiatives themselves would further meaningful youth engagement and set an example for youth worldwide. She thanked the Secretariat for its technical support in reviewing the nominations and contributing to the cash prizes, and Interconnection (United States) for its donation of the laptops.

Mr Senghore announced the winners and runners-up, who came on stage to receive their certificate from the President.

1st category: Live our principles, celebrate our diversity, change our community
Winner – Malagasy Red Cross
Runner-up – Pakistan Red Crescent

2nd category: Healthy youth makes a healthy society
Winner – Egyptian Red Crescent
Runner-up – Burundi Red Cross

3rd category: Adapting to climate change and addressing catastrophes
Winner – Fiji Red Cross
Runner-up – Philippine Red Cross

4th category: Bridging the digital divide – connecting people through technology
Winner – British Red Cross
Runner-up – Costa Rican Red Cross

Volunteering Development Award

Mr Senghore said that the Volunteering Development Award recognized a National Society for its strong volunteer management systems. It had been expanded in 2011 to cover three categories: (1) Use of IT in mobilizing and managing volunteers; (2) volunteer management in urban environments; and (3) volunteer mobilization and management in emergencies, fragile environments and crises. In 2015, the “use of IT”

category had been amended to focus on the “use of innovation in mobilizing and managing volunteers”. A special element of the award recognized coaching between National Societies. The recipients of the award would have an opportunity to help another National Society strengthen its volunteerism. He announced the winners, who came on stage to receive their certificate from the President.

1st category: Use of innovation in mobilizing and managing volunteers

Winner – Irish Red Cross

Winner – Kenya Red Cross

The Irish Red Cross had set up a project to recruit and train prison inmates as volunteers. It had fostered peer support in health issues, and taken an innovative approach to improving the conditions of prisons through volunteer engagement. It was an extraordinary example of empowering and supporting marginalized groups. The Kenya Red Cross had created a platform called iVolunteer to encourage volunteers to report road accidents and other traffic-related incidents via social media, which facilitated efficient rescue efforts. It was a flexible, accessible platform that enabled volunteers to drive their own engagement, and he had found it very useful living in Nairobi.

2nd category: Volunteer management in urban environments

Winner – Chinese Red Cross

The award recognized the Chinese Nightingale Nursing Volunteer Corps, a professional nursing volunteer organization made up of certified nurses across the country. They reflected the spirit of Florence Nightingale, showing humanity, fraternity and dedication. Three of their hallmark activities were: (1) first aid and emergency training; (2) the Sichuan service to empty nesters; and (3) chronic disease management support services.

3rd category: Volunteer mobilization and management in emergencies, fragile environments and crises

Winner – Pakistan Red Crescent.

Extensive conflict experience had enabled the Pakistan Red Crescent to make transformational changes in the Mohmand Agency and federally administered tribal areas, supporting internally displaced persons. Volunteers were actively engaged in continuing and strengthening their services to support the communities in the affected areas.

Henry Davison Award

The Secretary General said that the Henry Davison Award, dating back to 2003, was named after their founder. After World War 1, Henry Davison had seen the need for a new organization to coordinate the work of the growing number of National Societies. The idea had stood the test of time, perhaps exceeding expectations, as the IFRC had just welcomed its 190th member, the Tuvalu Red Cross. Henry Davison had realized that National Societies needed a permanent platform for international cooperation and solidarity, recognizing that together they were stronger. The award was given to individuals or National Societies that had given outstanding service to benefit the IFRC, including through the provision of services to improve the lives of vulnerable people and initiatives to build the capacities of National Societies and help them work together effectively.

The award embodied the spirit of togetherness, and the awardees not only worked through National Societies to serve people in need, whether of their country or simply in their country, but also contributed as active members to the common good of the whole Movement.

Mr Senghore announced the first medallist, Mr Paul Birech of the Kenya Red Cross, and welcomed him on stage to receive his medal from the President.

Mr Birech (Kenya Red Cross) said that he was honoured and humbled to receive the Henry Davison medal, which was named after a great man and visionary leader. In 1919, describing the Movement, Henry Davison had said: “That which calls itself international, has grown rather provincial. New blood, new methods, a new and more comprehensive outlook: these things are necessary.” That message was still true. They had a strong Federation that risked being weakened by a failure to celebrate its collectiveness and constituent entities. The

individual nature of its National Societies was its greatest strength. If each National Society worked to address the needs of vulnerable people in its own territory, and invested in its own capacity and that of its volunteers, together they could build a strong Federation.

When he had begun his life as a volunteer, he had not expected a medal and such recognition; he had simply wanted to do his part to make the world a better place for his children. Volunteers all over the world aspired to serve their fellow humans in need, without expecting compensation. There had to be greater recognition of what their strength was, namely the young people who served as volunteers and leaders in their own right. They expected no rewards, but needed to be recognized for who they were. They were the backbone of the Movement.

He dedicated his award to all those who tirelessly served the Movement, particularly those who served in risky conditions, putting their life on the line for the Movement and humanity. He saluted his fellow volunteers; the award was also theirs. He looked forward to continuing to serve the Movement.

Mr Senghore announced the next medallist, Dr Aisha Yousuf Al Mannai of the Qatar Red Crescent, and welcomed her on stage to receive her medal from the President.

Dr Al Mannai (Qatar Red Crescent) said that she was honoured to receive the Henry Davison medal, and thanked the Qatar Red Crescent for nominating her. She also thanked the Qatar Council and the whole country of Qatar, which offered everyone an opportunity to succeed. The Movement had always been, and would continue to be, her destiny; she had tried to give her all. Her specializations were in sciences, the religious sciences and Islam, and her commitment went all the way down to community level. All people, regardless of their religion, should work to better humanity. Kant had said about humanitarian duty: “Two things fill the mind with admiration and awe: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me”. He had an intuitive sense of duty, without believing in a religion or other philosophy.

As the first woman Dean of the University of Religious Sciences and the first woman in Qatar to be a member of parliament, she had presided over many conferences and studied people’s situation in the world and their relationships with others and their creators. She had also founded the Doha International Centre for Interfaith Dialogue, which strived to raise awareness of the need for mutual respect for diversity; differences were enriching and made life more interesting. Cooperation among diverse peoples could take many different forms and lead to many different dialogues.

The Qatar Red Crescent was trying to decrease suffering; National Societies had a mission to respect all humanitarian values, across all religions, through laws and international instruments. Losing sight of those values would make the world a sadder place, one of destruction and suffering. That could be seen currently in terrorism, destruction and bloodshed. The Federation should not simply try to tackle problems as they arose, but go further and act preventively to improve relations before man-made disasters took place. The IFRC also had to remain neutral and impartial; it could not choose sides in political conflict, but could establish dialogue among political actors to prevent more victims.

Mr Senghore announced the final medallist, the Sicily branch of the Italian Red Cross, represented by its leader, Mr Rosario Valastro, its volunteers and the President of the Italian Red Cross.

Mr Valastro (Italian Red Cross – Sicily branch) said that he was honoured to receive such a prestigious award for efforts to help people on the move. With the hard work of thousands of volunteers and staff members, they had tried to act upon the noble idea of their founder by helping vulnerable people with humanity and impartiality, saving their lives, providing safe livelihoods, restoring family links, assisting with psychological support and fighting against discrimination. He thanked the President, Governing Board and Secretary General of the IFRC, and the President of the Italian Red Cross, for thinking of them. He also thanked the National Societies for their encouragement and resources; they had demonstrated the universality of the Movement. Fifty representatives of the 8,000 Sicily Branch were present. Their faces were the first faces migrants saw after their violent and traumatic journey. The volunteers were on the harbours, where they were needed, to welcome people as they arrived and try to restore their dignity.

The President said that the Henry Davison and youth and volunteer awards recognized the outstanding dedication of exceptional people, who gave their time to improve the lives of vulnerable communities in the name of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. He congratulated the awardees for their achievements, courage and commitment, and paid tribute to them and all other Movement volunteers. Volunteers required support and good management to make a difference; he therefore called on all Movement components and their governments to provide a favourable internal and external environment that would protect, encourage and facilitate the work of volunteers, and promote volunteerism across civil society.

Report of Drafting Committee

Ms Loladze (Red Cross Society of Georgia), speaking as Chair of the Drafting Committee, praised the quality of the debates held, noting the outstanding participation of youth members and the enriching side events, experts' lounge and exhibitions. She noted that the decisions of the General Assembly remained as per the prepared drafts; no changes had been proposed in plenary. There had been strong engagement in all eight workshops, and detailed reports would be published at a later date. The discussions before and during the workshops had led to a series of findings and recommendations that would direct the Federation's collective work over the following two years.

The workshops on the mid-term review of *Strategy 2020* had focused on two questions: (1) What could National Societies do to ensure their work was more aligned with and contributed to the further advancement and measurement of *Strategy 2020*? (2) In relation to the four areas where the Federation could better articulate its collective ambition, namely education, blood services, the elderly and gender-based and domestic violence, which of those, or other areas, should it collectively focus on further in the run-up to 2030?

In response to the first question, the workshops had found that the problem of cohesion between National Societies and the approximately 165,000 local units was increasing due to the complexity of local contexts. Needs, capacity and priorities differed within countries and between National Societies. However, rather than a weakness, that was a strength of the Organization. Some had suggested that a shorter time frame was more manageable when facing obstacles, while others saw long-term planning as central to continuity and progress. Flexibility was key; clear time frames could both pose a challenge and be practical. Many National societies had been using *Strategy 2020* as a tool to prepare their own strategic plans, with some adapting it to a more appropriate form. It had been noted that *Strategy 2020* should be seen as a framework and visionary guide. It was important to consider the changing international environment; there were new challenges to address. One was that of recruiting, developing and managing 17 million volunteers, although National Societies also recognized that youth could be agents of change. It was also the generation that would inherit the consequences of any actions.

National Societies continued to make substantial efforts to implement *Strategy 2020* in their local communities, emphasizing the alignment of their programmes with both *Strategy 2020* and local priorities as part of a holistic, integrated approach. They had requested support from the Secretariat to facilitate alignment with internal plans where necessary. It was important to emphasize accountability, monitor and evaluate programmes and identify common key performance indicators and balance scorecards, including financial indicators. That would measure implementation and increase the communications impact of local actions and the global advocacy efforts of the International Federation. Key performance indicators should be supported by national statistics. National Societies should maintain humanitarian diplomacy efforts, emphasizing partnerships, and strengthen their capacity for humanitarian diplomacy. They should also use innovative means to disseminate *Strategy 2020*, such as cartoons or online courses, and share resources.

In response to the second question, it had been noted that education services made a big impact and were provided on a large scale by National Societies in internal and external operations. However, that was insufficiently reflected in *Strategy 2020*. In particular, humanitarian education formed part of most local efforts, and there had been a debate as to whether that should be clarified or left vague for interpretation by individual National Societies according to needs and capacity. Many saw sexual and gender-based violence as a priority, with substantial energy required to address the gap. The status of blood services varied; some National Societies were accomplished in that area, others struggled with cultural stigma and resources, and some did not provide those services, meaning it was not a priority. It was important to understand that individual National Societies had their own priorities, which should remain their focus, as implementation was

critical and could be negatively affected if new areas were added. However, the workshops had highlighted some potential new areas for attention: community resilience, complex emergencies and migration.

The following recommendations were made on the mid-term review: (1) to map National Societies' efforts in those areas identified as gaps: education, blood services, the elderly, and gender-based and domestic violence; (2) to consider whether the potential new strategic aims addressing the gaps identified could be funded in the short- and long-term; whether the gaps had already been addressed by others; whether National Society contributions were needed; and whether they could work with others in strategic partnership; (3) to keep it simple by limiting the number of areas to be addressed, involving National Societies in the decision-making process, emphasizing what was already operational; and taking an integrated approach, avoiding silos; (4) to continue strengthening National Societies' capacities regarding climate change, complex emergencies and migration, with emphasis on community empowerment, sustainability, holistic and integrated approaches and accountability, monitoring and evaluation; (5) to continue strengthening the National Societies' volunteer management capacities, with a special emphasis and investment in youth.

The second workshop on achieving governance excellence had covered three themes: (1) The role of governance and the strength of the IFRC, which came from both its international status and the domestic identity of National Societies, and how global IFRC governance could be strengthened through national governance; (2) Was there a common understanding of IFRC compliance mechanisms, what was the IFRC's role in ensuring compliance, and did it have the right tools to achieve that aim? (3) The relationship between representation and the specific expertise required to fulfil the Governing Board's mandate.

On the first theme, the workshops had concluded that good governance needed to exist at branch and national level, in addition to international level; where one layer was weak, it would undermine the others. Certain key principles were required to achieve good governance, including legitimacy, responsibility, transparency, internal and external communication and balanced representation in terms of gender, age, race and political opinions. Participation, bottom-up learning based on field experience for informed decisions, effectiveness and efficiency, and the accountability and credibility of both institutions and individuals in governance roles were also considered important. Those elements were interlinked and interdependent, making aligning governance in a global movement a challenging task. That was further complicated by the fact that the Federation had no legal authority over National Societies and did not really use sanctions. More attention should be paid to the adoption of an internal IFRC sanctions regime. The Organization, and therefore its governance members, also faced increasing demands regarding accountability and global standards. It was important to examine how it should be equipped to keep pace.

Regarding compliance, it was vital to examine why compliance gaps still existed, in spite of the tools that existed. Did they need more tools or a different approach to implementation? Recognition was needed of the fact that many National Societies operated in unstable environments, and that it was harder to guarantee high standards of compliance when funds were short. Those realities should be addressed.

Governance members should know the rules of the Organization and how to work with them and apply them. They should receive appropriate training, particularly on the Fundamental Principles and governance more broadly. The Red Cross Red Crescent brand came with a promise and trust; further efforts were required to ensure it was used appropriately. It had been noted that individual members of governance bodies ought to meet high standards of personal honesty and integrity and be committed to the humanitarian cause. They should not focus on their personal interest, or exclusively on the interest of their National Society, but be committed to the broader purpose of the whole Federation. Regarding the Governing Board specifically, it was important to strengthen certain areas, while respecting the democratic decision processes of National Societies. The early identification of talent, career-path planning for members and rotation should be a core agenda, while the selection process should be based on key skill sets, gender and diversity. Technology should be used more widely for discussing Board issues, and high-value positions reserved. Key people should be profiled to remove the uncertainty of elections, at National Society level too.

The following recommendations were made for each theme:

(1) Role of governance:

(a) To provide further guidance and clarification on the difference between governance and management;

(b) In the process of reviewing the statutes, the Joint Commission should take note of the recommendations of the IMD governance analysis.

(2) Compliance:

(a) To strengthen compliance mechanisms, including sanctions, and ensure adequate training on the general body of Red Cross Red Crescent law, rules and regulations so members understood how to apply and implement it;

(b) To create external channels for processing complaints in National Societies;

(c) To strengthen mechanisms for the self-assessment and review of governance systems, including the OCAC process, which should be mandatory not voluntary, and the accountability framework.

(3) Structure:

(a) To strengthen training and coaching for members of governance bodies at all levels;

(b) To cement internal and external communications on the operation and role of governance bodies;

(c) To give Federation Vice-Presidents a greater role in strengthening dialogue between National Societies and the Governing Board, and to maintain the same numbers of Board members to ensure representation was not lost;

(d) To encourage greater participation of youth in governance, and have youth conferences connected to the statutory meetings;

(e) To focus on training and the prevention of non-compliance.

The Drafting Committee recommended to the General Assembly that its report be annexed to the decision sheet adopted, and that the Governing Board follow up on its reflections and recommendations.

Decision (GA/15/28):

Report of the Drafting Committee:

The General Assembly,

notes the report of the Drafting Committee of the General Assembly

decides to annex this report to this decision sheet (annex 10)

and invites the Governing Board to follow up on the reflections and recommendations,

A short video presentation was shown on the Youth Conference

Item 10 of the agenda: MISCELLANEOUS

10.1 Date and venue of the next General Assembly

The President said that, in May 2015, the Governing Board had accepted a proposal by the Turkish Red Crescent to host the 2017 General Assembly. The 21st session of the General Assembly would therefore take place in Turkey at a place and date to be set by the Governing Board.

A short video presentation was shown on the history of humanitarian aid and Red Cross Red Crescent assistance, together with images of previous General Assemblies, including the one hosted by Turkey in 1969

Decision (GA/15/28):

Date and venue of the next General Assembly:

The General Assembly,

takes note that the 21st Session of the General Assembly will take place in Istanbul, Turkey in the timeframe of 7 to 13 November 2017 and

mandates Governing Board to decide on the exact dates at its the next ordinary session.

Closure of the General Assembly

The President thanked the General Assembly for its engagement, energy and discipline. It had reviewed and assessed the IFRC's activities and priorities, measuring them against the external humanitarian landscape, and asked many questions; they were stronger for the process. As a result, the IFRC was in a better position to define and understand its courses of action for the coming two years, while the Plan and Budget had set a clear path for the Secretariat, combined with the lessons and insights of the mid-term review of *Strategy 2020* and its adaptation by individual National Societies.

There were also intangible benefits to gathering, namely the opportunities to renew acquaintances, find inspiration and make new friends. The familiarity that came with shared principles and identity made the General Assembly very special. Good progress had been made on revising and strengthening the Constitution; that demonstrated the strength of the institution, and individual commitments. As requested by the General Assembly, the President and Vice-Presidents would lead an inclusive reflection to continue the reflection on the statutory texts, and explore models of best practice for governance with the Secretary General. They would provide regular updates.

The IFRC was stronger when everyone worked together; he encouraged all to demonstrate that strength when returning to their National Societies and promised to support them in that endeavour. He looked forward to a good Council of Delegates and International Conference; the events would be an important opportunity to advance the Movement's agenda.

The meeting rose at 16:10