

## **General Assembly**

### **Address to the Secretary-General in response to the submitted report**

#### **Dear Mr. Secretary General, dear friends!**

With great interest we listened the report presented by our Secretary General, Mr. As Sy about implemented activities and achieved results, and using an opportunity, I want to express my gratitude for carried out work and steps taken towards the development and strengthening of the International Federation structure for further provision of effective, timely assistance to the National Societies. We still warmly remind your visit to Azerbaijan, meetings held at the high level, which finalized with signing of a tripartite agreement. I also want to note the increased attention and support of the IFRC Europe Regional Office, the high work of its leadership and employees and to thank for the decision to open the IFRC Country Cluster Office in Georgia for the countries of the South Caucasus and the actions taken in this regard.

Noting these examples, I want to touch on the importance of following the consistency of taken actions, strengthening relations within the Movement, following a unified strategy, and observing a single strategic direction. Why I am paying attention to this aspect, because it is important from the point of perceiving us as a unified stable structure, which follows given direction and continues to implement well-coordinated work at all levels, regardless of who is at the helm of power. Presented Strategy 2030, in my opinion, is a well-developed and well-thought-out document, a logical continuation of Strategy 2020 and an updated vision of decision-making at the national and local level in cooperation with internal and external partners.

We also heard about other documents that have been developed and are necessary to improve our common work, taken initiatives, but I want to note that there is not only a need to create a new one, but also to review the existing one. For example, to review our long-term programs and processes in terms of assessment of their real effectiveness and feasibility. In the current financial and crisis situation, challenges, problems that we face with during implementation of our humanitarian mission (natural disasters, conflicts, climate change, migration), we should be especially selective in allocating finances for initiatives that do not significantly help our development or the relevance of this assistance is not entirely clear. Isn't it better to direct our resources to more efficient areas where we can have more visible results? Initiatives like the Organizational Capacity Assessment and Certification (OCAC) process, which started up 10 years ago, are powerful and relevant if they contribute or focused not only on identifying our strengths and weaknesses, but to help us solve these issues. Philosophy of this initiative is clear, but does it practically correspond to this? As noted in the Secretary-General report, over 120 NSs completed the capacity assessment process and only three societies were certified by the Governing Board. 260 NS departments used the OCAC system, 45 adopted a new process for an effective preparedness and emergency response (PER). Despite given numbers, I wonder what the practical benefit of the process was. If we will ask NSs, which passed OCAC process, what has changed in their NSs, what are the successes, are there evident results, was the process relevant and effective for them, what has been improved or has the number of donors increased, can we share these examples with others? What the certification process led to, or better to say, what does the process indicates? That someone is working better or carries out more or less fruitful work?

After passing through certain stages of the assessment, has any substantial assistance been provided by the International Federation to the NSs? What was after the assessment? Has there been a proper evaluation of the long-term work done throughout the OCAC process? Maybe yes, then shared results, concrete examples will help to attract and inspire others, including us, to join this assessment in the future.

And at the end, I want to once again thank Mr. As Sy for all huge work he has been carried out, to tell that we will remember him and would like to wish him every success in his future activities.

**Thank you for your attention!**

## **GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

### **FEDERATION CONSTITUTION**

**Dear Mr. President, dear friends!**

I would like to note that we emphasized the expediency and timeliness of this process at the last General Assembly. Making amendments and modifications to the Constitution of the International Federation is an important necessity both for the current situation and for the future of the International Federation and National Societies. This necessity is dictated by the complex and diverse conditions in which we all carry out humanitarian operations in favor of the affected population, and to provide timely assistance, we need strict and clearly defined systems.

Drawing attention to the proposed amendments like the issue of gender equality, improvement of governance, integrity issue and adopted sanctions with the strengthening of obligations to comply with the procedures of National Societies and statutory bodies in favor of preserving the integrity, the requirements of a universal solution to the issue of the International Federation logo, applied during communication and on various products, I would like to underline their relevance. In regard with each separate issue, for example, it should be noted that it is very important to achieve a higher gender balance in all structures of the Movement. And we in the Red Crescent Society of Azerbaijan strive to ensure this important condition for harmonious development and management within the organization, reminding that gender issue, being an understanding of the equal approach, provides a balanced attitude and presence at different levels (management, leadership, staff and volunteers). We strive to adhere to this approach in the issue of involving young people in our society and ensuring their participation in decision-making at all levels of management, the development of policies and programs. Young people represent more than half of our employees and volunteers in our national society as well as in most other National Societies.

On the issue of integration, compliance, integrity and application of sanctions in case of violations, as well as in the presence of fraud and corruption, our common task is to strive to strengthen the ability to effectively and efficiently deal with these phenomena. We, as leaders of the National Societies, should guarantee on the ground the seriousness of addressing all kinds of violations that cast a shadow over the work of our societies. This is necessary to ensure their holistic and efficient functioning in accordance with all operating statutory documents at the level of each individual National Society and the Movement as a whole.

I think that all work carried out to revise the Constitution of the International Federation, the Rules and Procedures should contribute to further coherent, balanced, fair, efficient and clear working mechanism, both at the level of the International Federation and the National Societies, to protect the reputation of the Movement, both at the national and international levels.

**Thank you for your attention!**

## **GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

### **STRATEGY 2030**

#### **Dear Mr. President, dear friends!**

Before expressing my opinion towards our Movement new Strategy 2030, let me thank all those who participated in the preparation of this project and, first of all, you, Mr. President, for your support to this strategy, as well as all members of the International Federation Governing Board, whose advice and recommendations supported to create this document, which will be a road map of our Movement actions for the next 10 years.

There is no need to mention the importance of the document we are discussing today. Having correct understanding, this strategy reminds me a movie about the future where actors, producers, technicians and directors are exist, and this movie is far from being a dream, it is a reality that we can realize together taking into account clear understanding of the concept of this strategy.

I don't want to draw your attention on general words about a globally changing world, where events occur at an incredible speed, where the number of conflicts escalating into wars is increasing and bring a lot of sorrows and suffering, climate change, create a shortage of resources and food, migration, internal displacement, emergencies and even more as it have been told by previous speakers and will probably be mentioned afterwards. All this is the reality we are leaving in and have to take into account. This strategy, which is based on the previous period, is our century-old experience, knowledge and skills. This is an obligation to be always around when there is a need to provide impartial assistance, maintain our independence and neutrality, this is a new vision for decision-making at national and local levels, this is an expansion of our cooperation with various partners and organizations, this is an effective response to emergencies and crises, promotion of a healthy lifestyle, provision of security, prosperity and positive changes in the social sphere and many other opportunities within the scope of activities we are implementing.

We strive to ensure safety for people during their migration and internal displacement, humane treatment and respect to their dignity, to bring information about their needs and problems. And here we would like to make a proposal in the Global Problem 4: Migration and Personality section and note that along with migrants and refugees, we need to focus on internally displaced people as one of the vulnerable groups. I would like also to note that our country has many years of experience in this matter, since as a result of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, about a million people became internally displaced persons and refugees.

We strive for more independent and stable funding, because we recognize the complexity and scope of humanitarian challenges. I am fully confident that the issues of funding, material and technical support will be relevant over the next 10 years. And above all, our local strategies must reflect any changes that may arise and they should be developed in accordance with a generally accepted strategy taking into account local and regional specifics, thereby demonstrating coherence, a common approach and desire to jointly reduce the impact of difficulties and vulnerabilities.

**Thank you for your attention!**

## **Council of Delegates**

### **STRENGTHENING OF COORDINATION AND COOPERATION WITHIN MOVEMENT 2**

#### **Dear Mr. President, dear friends!**

We have been able to achieve certain progress in strengthening coordination and cooperation within Movement by consolidating our mutual efforts for the past years. Nevertheless, we need to join our capacities in a more active manner, particularly in contexts where, for example, there is ongoing armed conflict or natural disaster happened.

The reality we are faced with is a crisis related to global warming, drastic decrease of food supplies, water resources and shortage of financial means. This all will not only affect one given country, but everyone in general. Despite of our financial security, means cannot be always enough and capacity of one given country might be limited. A special place in our programs belongs to volunteers, and here, referring to the appeal of the ICRC president, Mr. Peter Maurer, I want to agree that in unstable, complex situations a question arises with their motivation and the need for more active support. The essence and philosophy of the entire Movement is based on the idea of volunteering, and investments made in developing their potential and skills, and providing them with compensation for participation will give good results in the future.

We have taken the same direction and approach within our country by establishing coordination between the three components of the Movement, analyzing available and future capacities (for example, availability of volunteers, opportunities for the mobilization of resources, relationship with authorities and partners) and increasing the level of our preparedness. We are very glad to hear that the South Caucasus Country Cluster Office of the International Federation was opened in Georgia and happy to see actions taken in relation to this. We hope that we will be able to achieve the opening of the office in the country, but it should be mentioned that in the absence of Federation, ICRC has been and is supporting the development of Red Crescent and its capacity building activities. I think that this is the way it should be. It would be enough to cite as an example, the establishment of well-trained emergency mobile volunteer groups and First Aid groups in the frontline. Our national society and other several National Societies are a real example of cooperation between International Federation and the ICRC and real following the provisions of the Seville Agreement, which is the cornerstone of the philosophy of our Movement in the sphere of coordination in the field. This Agreement, being a wonderfully developed document often needs more flexible application through well worked out mechanisms and procedures in the field. And if in the future, under any circumstances, a decision is made to discuss and revise the Seville Agreement, Supplementary Measures, then I consider it necessary to emphasize that this should be done together and with the mutual participation of all three components of the Movement - the International Federation, the ICRC and the National Societies as a single joint action.

Referring to the foregoing, we express our full readiness to actively participate in the development and practical implementation of mechanisms and activities related to priority areas for strengthening coordination and cooperation within the Movement.

**Thank you for your attention!**

## **Council of Delegates**

### **Movement approach to strengthening National Society statutory and constitutional base and complementary frameworks such as the Volunteer Charter**

**Dear Mr. President, dear friends!**

I would like to share with you our opinion on this issue and draw your attention to its importance from the perspective of strengthening each National Society, which in general means strengthening the entire International Federation.

The resolution welcomes the adoption of a new Guidance document for National Society Statutes, setting new standards within the Movement, which national societies must adhere to and apply in their own legal framework and related rules, mechanisms and processes. It also suggests to the International Federation, the ICRC and the Joint Commission of the ICRC/International Federation on the Statutes of National Societies actively use the new guidance document to support national societies in strengthening their legal and constitutional documents.

All this, of course, is important and for the active implementation of this Resolution it is necessary in those countries where there is no corresponding legislative base on national societies, through humanitarian diplomacy, contribute to the adoption of the National Societies' laws, update the statutory framework and supporting regulatory documents and at the same time make a decision on strengthening their material technical base. By developing their National Societies from financial perspective, governments will have large, well-provided humanitarian structures through which they can carry out the necessary assistance and support to vulnerable population, and respond to emergencies in a timely and effective manner.

For example, our National Society, with the assistance and in consultation with the International Federation and ICRC, the Joint Commission has already revised the existing Statute and introduced amendments in order to follow generally accepted norms and Minimum Standards. We were glad to note that some amendments made to the updated Guidance document have already been reflected in the Statute of the Red Crescent Society of Azerbaijan.

In conclusion, I would like to say that it is well noted that for us and with our active explanation for our governments, a National Society with a strong legal base means a developed society, which carries out transparent activities, is able to follow the Fundamental Principles and capable of delivering effective, timely, humanitarian services appropriate to the needs of our communities. At the same time, it is very important to ensure the comprehensive involvement of the communities themselves and their active participation in the development of programs and projects taking into account the principle of respecting gender equality and diversity.

**Thank you for your attention!**

## Council of Delegates

### Strengthening the implementation of the Movement Policy on Internal Displacement: ten years later

#### Dear Mr. President, dear friends!

The issue of internal displacement, which occurs as a result of various situations and events, such as natural and man-made disasters, armed conflicts, crises, is urgent. Thereby, to solve this issue it is necessary to take purposeful and timely actions.

Azerbaijan has many years of experience in the issue of internal displacement, since as a result of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, about a million people became internally displaced persons and refugees. Thus, every tenth resident has this status. The government has taken and is taking the necessary steps to improve their living conditions and well-being. There is a law of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On the status of refugees and internally displaced persons”, there is a state program to improve their living conditions, provide employment with a view to integrating and adapting to the urban environment until a political solution to the conflict is found and people return to their places of residence. A repatriation program has been developed with the participation of state bodies and international organizations and taking into account their opinions and suggestions and international experience.

All above is mentioned as an example of the actions that governments can take to improve the situation of refugees and displaced persons. Another proposal is about amendments to this Resolution namely, in the part of the preamble, submission of the paragraph 6 in following revision: “Stressing the importance of respect for international humanitarian law, which applies in situations of armed conflict, *especially Article 49 of the Geneva Convention relative to the civilian persons in time of war* and for human rights law, which applies at all times, in preventing, *and addressing* displacement, and recalling that these bodies of law, within their respective spheres of application, protect all persons affected by displacement, such as IDPs and resident and host communities.” And after this paragraph, adding the following: “**Emphasizing the necessity of taking effective measures to address the root causes of internal displacement, and preventing any action that will prolong displacement period and aggravate the humanitarian situation of IDPs, as well as providing IDP’s right to voluntary, safe and dignified return to their homes or places of habitual residence**”.

And at the end of my speech, I want to give an example of the action taken by our President, Mr. Francesco Rocco, during his mission to Syria. I am referring to the fate of an eleven-year-old boy who lived in the camp of al-Khol in northern Syria and who was repatriated to Italy as a result of joint efforts, with the active participation of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, the Italian Red Cross and national governments. Although Mr. President noted this work as a drop of relief in an ocean of suffering and in comparison with the total number of refugees in the camps in Syria, but for us it has great importance. And in the same context, we want to pay tribute to the work of the Turkish Red Crescent, its leadership in the person of the Vice President, Mr. Kerem Kınık, staff and volunteers for the huge work towards the Syrian refugees and the attention of the Turkish government.

Following given examples analyzing existing processes, I think that each of us should take this mission and due to joint efforts, help reduce suffering and obtain positive results.

**Thank you for your attention!**

## Council of Delegates

### **Restoring Family Links: Strategy for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement 2020–2025**

**Dear Mr. President, dear friends!**

We are all aware of the suffering that people have been experiencing for many years, being separated from their relatives as a result of armed conflicts, natural disasters and other emergency situations without having any information and ability to contact or send a message. And we, as the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, referring to our mandates and by all possible means, are trying to support to the restoration of these links and the reunification of families. The ICRC plays the main role in this matter in active cooperation with our national societies and public authorities.

As a result of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, more than a million Azerbaijanis became refugees and internally displaced persons, thus, every tenth resident of the country is considered in this status. More than 4,500 people went missing: this means that about 25,000 people live in uncertainty about the fate of their loved ones, so it is important to give families answers to direct questions about the whereabouts and fate of their loved ones.

The Red Crescent Society of Azerbaijan, in close cooperation with the ICRC delegation in Azerbaijan, is trying to contribute to this issue. Civilians living in the frontline areas benefit from the assistance provided as a result of our joint activities. I am the member of the working group at the State Commission on Prisoners of War, Hostages and Missing Persons. The Red Crescent Tracing Service is engaged in restoring family links. On the issue of missing persons, the work is carried out mainly by the ICRC delegation in close cooperation with the State Commission. According to its mandate, the ICRC representatives visit individuals detained in relation to the conflict on a regular basis to monitor treatment and conditions of detention and ensure that the detainees can maintain contact with their families. And here we would like to make a concrete proposal on the use of more modern methods of informing: not only messages and letters, but for example, telephone and video communications could be applied. This can have a psychologically positive effect on both the condition of prisoners and their families and help maintain the fulfillment of their human rights.

Also we would like to do amendment to the resolution on **“Restoring Family Links: Strategy for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement 2020–2025”** namely in preamble after 2 paragraph add following: **“Noting with regret that hostage taking, illegal detentions and enforced disappearances which are prohibited by international humanitarian law and international human rights law, are still taking place and continue to disperse families, and recalling in this regard the importance of immediate release of hostages and illegally detained and forcefully disappeared persons for restoring family links”**.

And in the Strategy itself, part **“Armed conflict violence and internal displacement”** as a reason to mention hostage taking and illegal detentions.

**Thank you for your attention!**