

Together for humanity
Ensemble pour l'humanité
Juntos por la humanidad
معاً من أجل الإنسانية



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TOGETHER FOR HUMANITY

DRAFT DECLARATION (REV 1)

Draft Declaration agreed by the Drafting Committee

Geneva, 29 November 2007

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TOGETHER FOR HUMANITY

Gathered in Geneva for the 30th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent we, members of this Conference, have focused on the humanitarian consequences of four great challenges facing the world today which affect the individual and specifically the most vulnerable:

- environmental degradation and climate change;
- humanitarian concerns generated by international migration;
- violence, in particular in urban settings;
- emergent and recurrent diseases and other public health challenges, such as access to health care.

The global scale of each of these challenges requires a collective response as it exceeds the coping capacity of individual States or humanitarian organizations. In addressing the humanitarian consequences of those challenges, and in the spirit of the slogan of this Conference, “Together for Humanity”, we need to intensify operational interaction and partnerships among ourselves, and with other institutions – e.g., intergovernmental, supranational, non-governmental, academic – as well as media and the private sector. For the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (Movement) this must be in accordance with the Fundamental Principles and policies of the Movement.

Humanitarian consequences of environmental degradation and climate change

We are deeply concerned that people everywhere, especially the poorest of the poor, face an increased burden due to the rise in disasters and the scarcity of resources induced by multiple factors such as environmental degradation and climate change, contributing to poverty, migration, health risks and aggravated risk of violence and conflict.

We are resolved to work with partners to raise awareness about these serious humanitarian concerns, including their causes, and to provide humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable people, in particular in affected developing countries.

We will capitalize on the community base of National Societies to decrease the vulnerability of communities where environmental hazards and degradation are severe and adaptive capacity is low.

We reaffirm that preparedness for disaster is a key element in the management of response, and will seek to improve individual and collective capacity to respond swiftly to humanitarian challenges induced by environmental degradation and climate change.

We are resolved to ensure that environmental degradation and adaptation to climate change are integrated, where relevant, in disaster risk reduction and disaster management policies and plans. We will seek to mobilise the necessary human and financial resources to implement them, giving priority to actions for the most vulnerable people.

We acknowledge the commitment of States to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) as the core mechanism for addressing climate change at the global level, and we affirm that aspects of the Movement’s work support and complement elements of the UNFCCC.

Humanitarian concerns generated by international migration

We, while acknowledging the many benefits of international migration as well as its complex and multifaceted nature, recognize that migration may generate issues of humanitarian concern in all regions of the world. We are particularly concerned that migrants, irrespective of their status, may live outside conventional health, social and legal systems and for a variety of reasons may not have access to processes which guarantee respect for their fundamental rights.

We reaffirm the importance of examining ways and means to reinforce international cooperation at all levels to address the humanitarian concerns generated by international migration.

We acknowledge the role of Governments, within the framework of national laws and international law, especially international human rights law, refugee law and international humanitarian law, to address the humanitarian needs of persons negatively affected by migration, including families and communities and to take effective measures. We are deeply concerned by all forms of human trafficking and exploitation, in particular, involving children and women and we acknowledge the role of governments to prevent such practices, to provide protection and assistance to all victims of such practices and to ensure respect for the national and international instruments prohibiting them. We also acknowledge the role of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in this respect.

When addressing the humanitarian needs of persons negatively affected by migration, particularly migrants and members of their families in countries of origin, transit and destination, we take into account, where relevant, the considerable experience of the Red Cross and Red Crescent with respect to:

- (a) Humanitarian assistance: e.g., providing food, shelter, clothing, health care, first aid, psycho-social support, etc.
- (b) Protection: e.g., restoring family links, legal and administrative advice, acting against exploitation and deception, providing information on the risks of irregular migration, visiting migrants in detention with a view to helping improve their detention conditions and their treatment when necessary.
- (c) Advocacy: providing the humanitarian perspective to policy decisions, combating racism, xenophobia and discrimination, promoting international norms in that respect.
- (d) Integration and reintegration: e.g., reception services, fostering social participation and solidarity (e.g., as Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers).
- (e) Human dignity: promoting respect for human dignity.

Taking into account the negative consequences of large scale influxes as a result of humanitarian crises, international actors should consider the needs of host country communities.

We acknowledge the role of National Societies, based on the principles of humanity and impartiality, and in consultation with public authorities, to provide humanitarian assistance to vulnerable migrants, irrespective of their legal status.

Violence, in particular in urban settings

We recognize that violence is a leading cause of preventable death, injury and human suffering worldwide. Violence in urban areas poses a particular challenge, where problems are often aggravated by rapidly growing populations, poverty and economic inequalities, unemployment, social exclusion and marginalization, insufficient public security and services, and the easy availability of drugs and weapons.

We acknowledge that States are responsible for providing safety and ensuring adequate care and support for the victims of violence, to the extent feasible, and for the creation of policies and legal frameworks which aim at prevention and mitigation of violence. Such policies and frameworks may also need to address cases of urban armed violence between organized groups.

We are resolved to work together to develop at all levels comprehensive violence prevention and reduction programmes in order to build safer communities through practical measures that take into account social and economic development objectives, and to facilitate the rehabilitation of youth affected by violence in order to reduce their alienation and radicalisation and reduce their vulnerability to drugs and crime. We will intensify efforts to mobilise community respect for diversity and action against racism, discrimination, xenophobia, marginalization and other forms of exclusion, faced by all vulnerable groups, also empowering volunteers and youth in humanitarian activities to prevent, defuse or mitigate violence, particularly in urban settings, basing ourselves on the considerable experience of National Societies.

Emergent and recurrent diseases and other public health challenges

We recognize that HIV, pandemic influenza, tuberculosis and malaria and other communicable diseases as well as other public health threats endanger individuals and communities everywhere in the world, and particularly women and children. We also note the disproportionate impact of HIV, tuberculosis and malaria on communities in Sub-Saharan Africa. The decline in capacity of the public health infrastructure in many countries and its ability to cope, as well as demographic change, water and sanitation shortcomings, food insecurity and poor nutrition and their consequences for increased morbidity and mortality have also exacerbated these threats, with a particular impact on the poorest of the poor.

We stress the need to strengthen health systems and develop national health plans with the involvement of National Societies, and to include the empowerment of volunteers and affected groups to ensure that programming and its implementation reaches all affected and vulnerable populations - such as people living with HIV, drug users, communities exposed to the threat of emergent and recurrent diseases, victims of sexual exploitation and human trafficking and other forms of violence, prisoners and former prisoners and orphaned children.

We acknowledge the need for these vulnerable people to have access, without discrimination, to prevention, health promotion and curative care as well as to essential medicines, vaccines and other healthcare products. Access to safe blood through voluntary non remunerated blood donation is and will remain an essential public health objective.

We also stress the importance for medical services to have access to any individual in need based on accepted domestic and international norms, regardless of his/her legal status, and that such services enjoy the necessary protection.

We are resolved to include public health as an integral part of effective disaster management (comprising public health, water and sanitation, epidemic control and public health emergencies).

We recognise that a comprehensive public health approach must address the issue of tuberculosis, HIV and other health threats in prisons, including the necessary follow-up of former prisoners.

In responding to all of these challenges, we will:

- take into consideration the varying capacities of States and National Societies;
- strengthen our operational capacity and resources accordingly;
- optimise the role of the National Society as auxiliary to the public authorities at all levels in the humanitarian field;
- capitalize on the community and volunteer base (particularly the youth) of National Societies to influence positively and act upon vulnerable communities from within, particularly in situations beyond the reach of the public authorities;
- take into account considerations of diversity;
- ensure that gender considerations are mainstreamed into all programmes and activities;
- learn from the experiences and best practices worldwide of the various components of the Movement;
- promote knowledge of and respect for the relevant provisions of international law such as international humanitarian law, international human rights law and refugee law;
- build on the unique ability of the components of the Movement, in acting at all times in accordance with the Fundamental Principles, to gain the confidence of all in order to have access to those in need;
- intensify and coordinate operational interaction and partnerships among ourselves, the members of this Conference, and with other institutions, whenever there is a clear benefit for the victims and most vulnerable.

Our work together needs to be measurable, with transparency accompanying action at the national level and through sharing best practices and experiences. The International Federation and the ICRC agree to support National Societies in their work, including through representation of their interests and concerns at the international level, and will provide the necessary knowledge-sharing mechanisms to facilitate these tasks.