

Henry Dunant Medal

Tribute to

Zoy Katevas Lazaratu de Sclabos

Zoy Katevas de Sclabos served the Chilean Red Cross devotedly for 55 years until she stepped down from the presidency in 2004.

Starting as volunteer in a local branch, Mrs Katevas de Sclabos moved to full-time volunteer work for the Chilean Red Cross Central Committee as director general of public relations in 1982. She successively held a range of key positions in various areas, including that of secretary general, before becoming president of the National Society in 1993. During her long tenure, she contributed greatly in many areas to the Movement, nationally and internationally.

Mrs Katevas de Sclabos' thorough knowledge of the entire spectrum of Red Cross activities and her deep belief in the Fundamental Principles helped her to transform the Chilean Red Cross into a strong Society. The many programmes and policies updated under her leadership contributed to a considerable improvement in the quality of life and in the health status of vulnerable people in her country. Experienced in operations, she was always among the first to participate in and supervise relief work carried out in the country whenever disasters struck.

With her excellent interpersonal skills, Mrs Katevas de Sclabos successfully rallied support, from the business and finance sectors especially, for Society programmes such as first-aid training and blood donation. She was also an expert at organizing campaigns to raise money for sister Societies responding to emergencies in countries hard hit by disasters.

Mrs Katevas de Sclabos showed exemplary courage by personally working with and on behalf of political detainees in places of detention during a very tumultuous period in her country's history. She helped detainees maintain contact with their families and assisted them in other ways as well, often at risk to her own safety. To uphold the humanitarian ideals of the Movement, she sometimes had to defy strong pressure from her government.

Mrs Katevas de Sclabos has been a prominent member of many governing bodies of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. In her own region, she played an active role in promoting closer cooperation and exchanges among National Societies. She served two terms on the Governing Board of the International Federation and represented the Federation at UN meetings and other important forums. Her membership in the Standing Commission from 2003 to 2007 concluded her life-long career within the Movement.

Mrs Katevas de Scabos is a person of much warmth and grace. Her unassuming manner, good humour and sincerity put everyone around her at ease. Her unwavering devotion and tireless efforts in promoting the ideals of the Movement have earned her the respect of one and all.

For her personal commitment, her important contribution to the development of humanitarian activities, and for her work in promoting the Movement's Fundamental Principles and ideals, the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent has unanimously agreed to award Mrs Zoy Katevas Lazaratu de Sclabos the Henry Dunant Medal, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's highest distinction.

Geneva, 23 November 2009

H.E. Dr Mohammed Al-Hadid
Chairman

Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

