

Introductory Remarks – Council of Delegates 2005

Strategy for the Movement

Professor Freddy Karup Pedersen
Chair of the SC working group for the Strategy for the Movement

Mr. Chairman,
Dear Friends,

In 2001 we adopted a first ever strategy for the whole Movement. We did so in order to work better together, and to ensure that together we do more work, and better, for those we exist to serve.

Four years have passed. We have experience from implementing the Strategy for the Movement. Today we have an opportunity to give some thought to whether we have done what we promised ourselves and each other to do and to discuss where we want to go over the next four years.

With regard to the implementation of the Strategy, you have before you the consolidated report produced by the Standing Commission, which outlines what has been done in the last 2 years by National Societies, the ICRC and the Federation secretariat. Should you wish to have the original and full reports by these components, you can have that at the documentation centre here in Seoul.

To summarise - the report shows positive progress on the various actions.

On action 1, capacity building, all components have made considerable efforts to strengthen and coordinate their work, and positive results are emerging. However, capacity building needs continuous attention and efforts and added precision as to what exactly we want to achieve.

There is a general perception that knowledge sharing has increased, but also questions as to whether this is more systematic than in the past. There is room for improvement.

Integrity remains an issue of much concern and an issue that is taken very seriously by all Movement components. The working group discussed the issue at length and produced recommendations to the Standing Commission on who should do what in handling cases of integrity. The recommendations were adopted and shared with the Geneva institutions and the Federation's Task Force on integrity.

National Society participation in the preparation of statutory meetings has improved and National Societies seem to incorporate Movement decisions into their own decision-making. However, we need an improved mechanism of sharing information as to how National Societies are working with the various decisions taken by our statutory bodies.

Most National Societies feel they have made "strong" or "average" efforts to strengthen their position and image as a humanitarian organisation, while the majority appear to think their links to the private sector could be improved.

There continues to be some confusion between Strategy 2010 and the Strategy for the Movement. This may be an indication that the latter is still less familiar to NS than would be desirable, something the Commission and all components have to address in the way the Strategy is promoted.

To make the ambition of the Movement a reality and to become stronger together in reaching vulnerable people with effective humanitarian action throughout the world, the emphasis on the Movement Strategy as a tool of strategic importance for planning and operational practice needs to be reinforced and further strengthened.

The 2003 Council of Delegates decided that it wanted to review progress and possibly receive an update of the Strategy at its "next session".

The "next session" of the Council is here and now. A report on implementation and a proposal for an Update of the Strategy is before you.

A great deal of consultation, discussion and drafting has gone into the production of this draft update before you. It is the product of the Working Group on the Strategy for the Movement, guided by the Standing Commission. I would like to thank the members of the Working Group for their hard and dedicated work to make this effort succeed. The members of the Working Group were:

Dr Muctarr Jalloh, Sierra Leone (Vice Chair)
Ms Mandisa Williams, South Africa
Mr Ariel Kestens, Argentina
Ms Marguerite Forman, Saint Kitts and Nevis
Mr Hiroshi Higashiura, Japan
Dr. Sameeha Al-Fulaij, Kuwait
Ms Anne Bergh, Norway
Ms Karlygash Amandosova, Kazakhstan

The ICRC and the International Federation were represented by Ms Victoria Gardner and Mr Richard Blewitt, respectively.

The Standing Commission approved the document before you in September 2005.

It builds on interviews with leaders of National Societies, a comprehensive National Society (NS) questionnaire and inputs from the ICRC and the International Federation.

The Update is based on the assumptions that its essence of the «original» 2001 Strategy continues to be valid, that the role of National Societies (NS) in its implementation should be given more prominence and that there is merit in clarifying and reducing the number of “Actions”. The Strategy continues to focus on how to improve cooperation between the components of the Movement; it does not tell them what to do.

The Working Group established by the Standing Commission met on 3 occasions. It:

- ✓ Reviewed reports, interviews with NS leaders and responses to questionnaires from National Societies, as well as input from the ICRC and the International Federation Secretariat,
- ✓ Received analysis from the International Federation Secretariat;
- ✓ Discussed the need for and limits to the updating, and reviewed the text of the Strategy in this light;
- ✓ Reviewed and discussed proposals for updated texts;
- ✓ Mandated the Chairman to finalise and circulate a draft updated Strategy for comments by Working Group members;
- ✓ Submitted the text to Standing Commission for its review in March 2005, and received further guidance.
- ✓ Incorporated changes and circulated text for comments from National Societies
- ✓ Submitted new draft to the Standing Commission at its meeting in June
- ✓ Submitted the final draft to the Standing Commission at its meeting in September

There was a strong feeling in the Standing Commission, the Working Group and among National Societies, supported by feedback from the implementation reports, that the Strategy for the Movement, while a success, still needs time to be fully embedded among the basic tools for planning and action by components of the Movement. Hence emphasis was placed on ensuring continuity between the original Strategy and the update – in contents, structure, language and layout.

At the same time, it became clear, there was a need for simplification of the Strategy with reduction in the number of actions, expected results and implementation points.

Finally, and strongly expressed by many, was a need to provide more “space” for National Societies in the Strategy – this would make it more useful to them and avoid the impression that the document was by and for the Geneva institutions.

There has been a fair amount of debate around the question of image and / or visibility. The solution proposed in the latest draft is based on the feeling that the Movement’s image needs to be improved; secondly, visibility is an issue for many components, but not necessarily for the Movement as such. Finally, it was felt that the Movement in itself does not really have relations with external partners – these relations are attributes of individual components.

The process of combining actions, and reducing their number, was a fairly complex drafting

exercise and can be somewhat difficult to trace. We are confident, however, that the Draft Update before you retains all those elements from the original that remain relevant and valid. The combination of expected outcomes and other elements of the text is somewhat difficult to trace in the document because, in many cases, both the wording and the order of the individual items had to be changed in order to achieve the desired results.

Action 6 in the draft update is not essentially different from the original Action 7. The Action "text" has been kept unchanged. The original introductory paragraph has been kept more or less as it was, while four paragraphs have been added (see the red text above) – some of this has been taken from other actions, expected outcomes and implementation points in the original strategy.

At the level of expected outcomes, there are no substantial changes.

At the implementation level, most of the points have either been updated, modified or added; with emphasis on the creation of Movement co-ordination mechanisms on an operation by operation basis; the need for "loyalty" by components to these mechanisms; the need to build on host National Society priorities in operational planning; proper acknowledgement of all appropriate contributions; relations with other humanitarian actors; the use and development of existing common tools for disaster management. The points about implementing the Ad Hoc Group recommendations and the need for harmonisation have been kept more or less intact.

In several instances, Actions from the original Strategy have been combined in the draft update. The process of doing so was complex, and relied in many cases on cross-borrowing ideas and language from several parts of the text. Hence it is difficult to capture the full implications in a single slide.

Let me now turn to the draft resolution before the Council. This is an expression and summary of what the Council wishes, and what direction it wants to take over the next years, with regard to the Strategy and its implementation.