

**The Federation Governing Board  
September 28, 2005**

**H.E. Dr Mohammed Al-Hadid**

**Chairman**

**Standing Commission**

(Speaking points)

Mr President,  
Mr Secretary General,  
Dr Kellenberger,  
Dear Members of the Board,  
Friends,

- The SC met on September 19, less than 10 days ago. The main item on our agenda was the upcoming Council of Delegates – just as I assume you will concentrate on the coming General Assembly. As we prepare to meet in Seoul, I would like to express my admiration for the tremendous amount of preparatory work already done by our Host National Society, the Korean Red Cross. I'm sure we all look forward not only to an important and constructive meeting regarding the matters we will deal with, but also to a well organised, interesting and rewarding cultural experience.
- The Commission reviewed all reports to be submitted to the Council and draft resolutions already prepared. There are so many I cannot help but wonder at times if we are not over burdening future Council agendas with so many resolutions, which then have to be followed up and reported on to the next Council... Perhaps it is now time to concentrate on some basic all-encompassing major issues at this forum - our highest deliberative body for internal matters.
- From the many reports reviewed I would now like to concentrate on a few, which are of particular concern to the Standing Commission.

- The ad hoc working group chaired by Freddy Pedersen has updated the **Strategy for the Movement**. It is not significantly different from the «original» 2001 Strategy; but hopefully it is clearer and more concentrated when it comes to the expected actions. We have reduced the number of actions from 17 to 10 grouped under the essentially unchanged three strategic objectives. We have further attempted to clarify what we expect - in particular - from National Societies. This we hope will benefit the overall implementation of the Strategy as a tool, with the primary objective of promoting co-ordinated cooperation between the components and overall strategic thinking within the Movement.
- Let me also say that I'm very pleased that there has been close cooperation with the two major Federation-led processes of reviewing S2010 and of looking into a Future Federation to ensure alignment and consistency.
- The **Seville Agreement** working group, led by Janet Davidson, has worked on the major problems in the implementation of the Agreement and looked at what needs to be done to improve cooperation between all components to ensure maximum impact of action and effectiveness in responding to the needs of vulnerable people.
- Since 1997, the Seville Agreement has been the basis for determining the roles and responsibilities of the Movement's components in international emergency operations and in long-term capacity building work. It introduced a coordination mechanism under a Lead Agency and specified Lead Roles. The implementation of the Agreement in the last 6-7 years has, however, revealed weaknesses, which the 2003 Council decided should be looked into by a SC working group.
- The challenges to be analysed included procedures for engaging the components in a given operation, with special focus on the roles and functions of the Host NS and of the NSs working internationally together with the special concerns of neighbouring NS.
- It is evident that there have been a number of successes when the Agreement has been followed. It is also clear that the external environment in which many crises occur is more complex today than in the past and that the internal environment has changed. For example, the capacities of NS have grown considerably and they have significantly increased their involvement in international activities. However, we have also witnessed increasing trends towards bilateralism and occurrences of unilateral action on the part of some NS.
- The working group, which was not allowed to open the Agreement itself, has come up with what it calls <Supplementary Measures> which it submits should be implemented as the Agreement itself, thus giving them a more forceful status.
- These Measures focus on various aspects of the role of the Host NS in relation to the Lead Agency – where there is a Lead Agency other than the NS itself. Under 7 headings covering issues such as roles and responsibilities, general coordination, neighbouring NS and NS operating internationally, transition, problem solving and training, a total of 56 measures are listed which it is hoped will improve the situation.
- Will they do that? It will be up to the Council to judge that. During the working process, it became quite evident that especially NS – be they Host NS or NS working internationally

– perceive the Agreement as something which at the outset doesn't give them equal status with the ICRC and the International Federation. There were many calls for opening the Agreement, which was not possible due to the restrictions set by the Council in 2003. It is now up to the coming Council to decide how the Movement should proceed with this issue. I certainly urge all of you to study carefully the outcomes of the work of the group – this is a vitally important part of our working well together as a Movement.

- As expected, the **emblem** was again prominent on the Commission's agenda - an issue with which you are all well acquainted. Resolutions by Council of Delegates –meetings since 1997 up to 2003 and by the last two International Conferences – the 27th and the 28th held in 1999 and in 2003 respectively - have addressed the question extensively and sought to find a solution.
- The 2003 Council and the 28th IC «requested the Standing Commission to continue to give high priority to securing, as soon as circumstances permit, a comprehensive and lasting solution to the question of the emblem, in cooperation with the Swiss government as depositary of the Geneva Conventions and with other concerned governments and components of the Movement, on the basis of the proposed draft third additional Protocol».
- Following the Council and International Conference, in January 2004 the Standing Commission appointed a Working Group to assist and advise it in its work on the follow-up of the adopted resolutions. Philippe Cuvillier chaired this group.
- Early consultations undertaken by representatives of the Movement and those led since early April by the Swiss Ambassador on Special Mission, Didier Pfirter, revealed broad agreement as to the substance of the draft Protocol, as had been the situation in September 2000. However, countries in the Middle East voiced their concern regarding the timing for bringing the process to conclusion.
- In July the Swiss as Depositary invited States Parties to open consultations in Geneva on September 12-13 to discuss the modalities of a diplomatic conference. Their note restated the main findings that (quote) «the consultations [had] produced a clear result regarding the desired timing of the Conference. The vast majority of responding States Parties are in favour of holding the Conference in October this year. In their replies to the Depositary only very few States argue that conditions at this time are not appropriate for holding the Conference. In the light of this clear result, the Depositary, who is obliged to execute the will of the States Parties as expressed within the consultation process, feels bound to continue with the preparations so as to be in a position to convene the Diplomatic Conference during the last week of October 2005.»
- A total of 123 States Parties were represented at the consultation meeting, which heard over 90 interventions. This high-level participation demonstrates the importance attached to the issue.
- The numerous interventions again confirmed that there were no major concerns regarding the substance of the draft additional Protocol. The question of timing of a diplomatic conference remained a matter of concern for many States.

- Lengthy negotiations followed in which all delegations recognised the need for dialogue in order to arrive at an outcome which meets the needs of all. In its concluding statement, the Depositary expressed its intent to convene a diplomatic conference in the near future, at the latest by the end of this year. For this purpose it would pursue consultations with a view to taking due consideration of the concerns expressed.
- Representatives of the EU countries welcomed the holding of the conference by the end of the year at the latest while the OIC wished to see tangible progress towards solving the concerns expressed before setting a definite date for the diplomatic conference.
- At this point I have to underline to you that although not related to the issue of a Protocol, humanitarian services within the framework of the Movement's Fundamental Principles and policies for the benefit of the people in Palestine and in Israel has become an important element in the emblem negotiations.
- As Chairman of the Standing Commission I initiated a dialogue between the leaders of the two future National Societies way back in April to address the main issues at hand. In addition to the need to change the MDA statutes, the focus has been on the legal frameworks within which and the areas where MDA and the PRCS can operate. Working towards improved operational cooperation and services, it has become evident that the adoption of the Protocol could substantially further the resolution of the current concerns. I therefore strongly support an on-going and continued dialogue towards that goal.
- Yesterday, here in Geneva, MDA made a Declaration in the presence of the three Presidents, in which it confirmed its commitment to the Fundamental Principles and to International Humanitarian Law. It also stated all steps taken to bring its by-laws into conformity with the Movement's principles, policies and rules and its preparedness to conclude operational cooperation agreements respecting the mission, resolutions and decisions adopted by the Movement statutory bodies.
- At its meeting last week, the Standing Commission expressed its support for the process of finalising a comprehensive and lasting solution to the question of the emblem. It further encourages all National Societies, as a matter of urgency, to engage in dialogue with their governments to underline the need for settling this issue exclusively on humanitarian grounds in respect of the Movement's fundamental principles and in particular for that of universality.

Mr Chairman, dear friends,

- The Council agenda is long and covers numerous important issues. Time does not permit me to deal with them all. But in closing I would like to draw your attention to the main questions the Council will seek to analyse and debate: What are the humanitarian challenges we face today? Do our programmes and our work adequately meet these challenges? How should we organise ourselves to ensure that we are able to do that?
- These are the headlines we should keep in mind in the commissions and in our deliberations when we meet in Seoul.

Thank you.