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## **COUNCIL OF DELEGATES**

### **OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT**

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### **PROMOTION OF NON-DISCRIMINATION AND RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY**

*(Workshop No 1)*

**Concept Paper**

**Document prepared jointly by**

**The International Committee of the Red Cross and the International  
Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies**

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## WORKSHOP ON PROMOTION OF NON-DISCRIMINATION AND RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY

### Concept paper

#### Rationale

Previous statutory meetings have stressed the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's key role in promoting non-discrimination and respect for diversity. Discrimination was officially defined by the Council of Delegates in 2005 as *any kind of adverse distinction or segregation targeting certain individuals for the sole reason that they belong to a particular category*.<sup>i</sup> Respect for diversity means not only accepting that others may be different, but also respecting that difference, that otherness.<sup>ii</sup> Both concepts are rooted in the Fundamental Principles, in particular the principles of Impartiality and Unity. The principle of Impartiality precludes the drawing of any distinction on the basis of nationality, race, religious belief, social standing or political affiliation,<sup>iii</sup> gender,<sup>iv</sup> ethnic origin, social origin, class, philosophy, sexual preference or orientation, age, disability, physical characteristics and language.<sup>v</sup> This is a non-exhaustive list.<sup>vi</sup>

Promoting and putting into practice non-discrimination and respect for diversity, as well as our Fundamental Principles in general, has not been easy, even within the Movement. The main difficulties encountered were highlighted and explained in previous statutory meetings and documents.<sup>vii</sup> The rationale for this workshop is to build on insights gained and decisions taken in the past; and to enable us to step up our action and more effectively promote non-discrimination and respect for diversity. The methods used will focus on sharing our respective experiences while emphasizing in particular the keys to successfully overcome challenges. We will build on the lessons we have learned and formulate recommendations to incorporate non-discrimination and respect for diversity in all Red Cross / Red Crescent activities.

#### Objectives

- Build on the outcome of previous statutory meetings pertaining to non-discrimination and respect for diversity.
- Identify and analyze the key factors for ensuring that all action to promote non-discrimination and respect for diversity is in line with our Fundamental Principles.
- Share within the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement practical examples of Red Cross / Red Crescent activities that promote non-discrimination and respect for diversity, both within the Movement and within the communities where we work.
- Identify potential ways to incorporate non-discrimination and respect for diversity in the Movement's fields of action (e.g. assistance, health, disaster management, protection, social services and education).

**Expected outcomes**

- Renew and enhance commitment to actively promoting and practicing non-discrimination and respect for diversity and apply the Movement's Fundamental Principles.
- Identify practical ways to promote non-discrimination and respect for diversity.
- Identify effective ways to incorporate non-discrimination and respect for diversity in the Movement's work.

**Programme**

1. Introduction by the chair: short overview of decisions taken by previous statutory meetings and new developments relating to non-discrimination and respect for diversity.
2. Sharing practical experiences between the Movement's components.
  - 2.1.Promoting non-discrimination and respect for diversity within the Movement:
    - gender
    - multi-cultural composition reflecting society
    - disabilities
  - 2.2.Promoting non-discrimination in society:
    - migrants
    - ethnic minorities
    - former child soldiers
    - religion
    - people living with HIV/AIDS
  - 2.3.Innovative tools, methods and wrap-up:
    - self-training tool to promote non-discrimination
    - education as a way of promoting humanitarian values and fundamental principles

**List of guiding questions**

- What steps have we (National Societies, IFRC, ICRC) taken to overcome challenges encountered when promoting non-discrimination and respect for diversity within the Movement and in the communities where we work? Where have we been successful?
- How actively have we implemented non-discrimination and respect for diversity within the Movement? Any lessons learnt?
- What tools and strategies have proven useful?
- What are the key factors promoting non-discrimination and respect for diversity inside and/or outside the Movement?

**Background documents**

- 1991, Council of Delegates, Respect for and dissemination of the fundamental principles, Second intermediary report on the ongoing study, ICRC-prepared document.
- 1999, 27<sup>th</sup> IC, Plan of Action for the years 2000-2003, Final Goal 3.2. New initiatives to meet the needs of vulnerable and to reduce discrimination and violence in the community, paras 7 and 12.
- Strategy 2010, To improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 6.3.1. Promotion of the Movement's Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values.
- 2002, Asia and Pacific Regional Conference, Manila, Philippines, November 2002, Action Plan; Action 2.1.3.
- 2003, Inter American Regional Conference, Chile, April 2003, workshop on Youth Violence.
- 2003, Regional Conference, XVIIth Inter American Conference, Santiago de Chile, April 2003, Plan of Action, Objective 4.
- 2003, Council of Delegates, Background paper on tolerance, non-discrimination and respect for diversity.
- 2003, 28<sup>th</sup> IC, Protecting human dignity, Agenda for Humanitarian Action, Final Goal 4.1<sup>viii</sup>
- 2003, 28<sup>th</sup> IC, Non-discrimination and respect for diversity: a pledge by the International Federation.
- 2004, IXth Mediterranean Conference, Cairo, May 2004, Cairo Declaration and Resolutions B (Strategic Resolutions) and C (Specific Resolutions).
- 2004, 8 May: Red Cross / Red Crescent Day, declarations by the ICRC and IFRC presidents on the agenda to reduce discrimination.

- 2005, Council of Delegates, 5/1, Promoting respect for diversity, fighting discrimination and intolerance, Guidance and Guiding Questions - Document prepared jointly by IFRC and ICRC.<sup>i</sup>
- 2005, Council of Delegates, Resolution 3, Promoting Respect for Diversity and Non-Discrimination: a contribution to peace and friendship between peoples<sup>x</sup>.
- 2006; The Federation of the Future, Working together for a better tomorrow, Global Agenda Goal 4.
- 2007, Regional Conference, XVIIIth Inter American Conference, Guayaquil commitments and background document on non-discrimination.
- 2007, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, World Disasters Report, Focus on Discrimination.
- 2009, Youth Declaration adopted at Solferino, "Red Cross and Red Crescent Youth on the Move: Doing more, doing better, reaching further".

<sup>i</sup> CD 2005- 5/1, Promoting respect for diversity, fighting discrimination and intolerance, Guidance and Guiding Questions, Document prepared jointly by IFRC and ICRC, p. 3.

<sup>ii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>iii</sup> *Commentary on the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross*, Jean Pictet, Henry Dunant Institute, Geneva, 1979.

<sup>iv</sup> Spelled out for the first time explicitly in *Strategy 2010, To improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity*, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, p.15.

<sup>v</sup> CD 2005 – 5/1 explicitly mentions *ethnic origin, social origin, class, philosophy, sexual preference or orientation*,<sup>v</sup> *age, disability, physical characteristics and language*. Sexual orientation was explicitly reiterated in the 2007 Guayaquil commitments adopted by the Americas region and the 2009 international Youth Declaration, adopted at the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Youth Meeting, celebrating the 150th anniversary of RCRC.

<sup>vi</sup> CD 2003 – 7.1/1 explained the relation between non-discrimination, respect for diversity and tolerance as respect for diversity encompassing both tolerance and non-discrimination, p.3. It was explained that true tolerance does not take the stance of resignation, passiveness or indifference and that, by allowing an individual to accept him or herself, it leads an individual to accept what in another person is both different and complementary. The relation between tolerance on the one hand and freedom from fear and prejudice on the other was underscored, and tolerance was recognised as "a pathway to compassion, understanding, co-existence and hence peace."

<sup>vii</sup> 1991, Council of Delegates, *Respect for and dissemination of the fundamental principles*, Second intermediary report on the ongoing study, ICRC prepared document, explaining the reasons under 3.1.

<sup>viii</sup> Protecting human dignity, Agenda for Humanitarian Action, Final Goal 4.1 "health services must be based on the humanitarian principle of protecting and respecting human dignity, and provide basic health care without discrimination, on the basis of vulnerability and need, using approaches that encourage tolerance, respect and social inclusion".

<sup>ix</sup> It provides illustrations of National Societies on non-discrimination by setting an example.

<sup>x</sup> Requests that "a. RCM be particularly attentive to discrimination, intolerance, exclusion, dehumanisation and ... d. serve as an example".