



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

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### **Workshop Report Meeting the humanitarian challenges in Africa: A global challenge for the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement**

#### **Workshop Officers**

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#### **Rationale**

Africa will remain high on the humanitarian agenda for decades to come. Meeting today's humanitarian challenges in Africa is a great task that requires participation of all sectors of the society. In addressing these challenges, African National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have a central role to play. The three workshop sessions looked at how to boost National Societies sustainability and capacities to meet future humanitarian needs in Africa.

#### **Challenges**

The following challenges have been identified during the workshop:

- **Leadership** is the issue as much as the driver is to the vehicle. Leadership is vision, commitment and integrity, and the lack thereof has hampered the development of African National Societies.
- **Development model:** There are many good development models as there are many good engines. The challenge there is how African National Societies can acquire development models adapted to their specific situation.
- **Money** is not *the* issue, but it is needed to fuel the engine. The vast majority of African National Societies have financial difficulties, but availability of funds is not the problem. The main challenge is therefore the development of fund raising capacities in and for Africa.

#### **Leadership**

- **Leadership** makes the difference, whatever the money available or the model you adopt.
- **Vision, commitment and integrity** are what make good leaders.

- Leadership must be focused on **mobilising** resources and grass roots capabilities, in particular the Volunteers and Youth.
- There is a need for a change of mindset both at the level of the donors and of African National Societies. In particular, African National Societies need to free themselves from dependency and assume their responsibilities.
- Skilled human resources are available in Africa. However, we need to run our National Societies in a **competitive** manner in order to attract the cream of leaders.
- Good people do not join institutions because they are well paid, but because it offers them a **career** future.
- Training leaders are useless if we are not able to **keep** them within the National Societies, which implies that a sustainable human resources policy be developed and implemented irrespective of the leadership changes.
- Leadership cannot depend on one individual, **leaders turnover** has to be planned.
- Indeed we need to develop a **culture** of good human resources management.

### Development models

- There are National Society success stories in Africa. The challenge now is that how to **attract and adapt** the knowledge and success to weaker National Societies.
- On the other hand one can argue that here is **no single model of what can be successful National Societies**, as each National Society is at a different development stage and evolving in a different environment.
- We have to acknowledge that we are part of an industry. The bottom line is: we need to be **competitive** if we want to survive in the humanitarian business.
- In this regard a spirit of **humanitarian entrepreneurship** needs to be developed in Africa.
- We need to clarify the notion of **auxiliary** to the governments, not only in what we can give to our governments, but also in what we expect from them.
- The concept of **equal and responsible partnership** needs to be implemented in the way the Movement deals with African National Societies, including at the level of technical expertise. Indeed Africa has plenty of competent consultants.
- Unsustainable programmatic interventions and Movement delegates with little experience overshadow National Society development. This needs to be addressed.
- We cannot afford not to learn from our failures because we are a humanitarian movement. We therefore have an obligation to **transfer knowledge and exchange experiences** not only on successes but also on failure. This is also a matter of accountability and transparency.
- **Reputation** is a key asset that needs to be managed in order to enhance the powerful branding of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent.
- **Positioning** through humanitarian action and diplomacy in line with the International Federation Strategy 2020 is a key to the relationship with domestic government and public, and to the allocation of national and international funds.

### Money

- Over the long term, the solution to African NS core costs financing is **African**.
- This lies in ability to raise sufficient funding as start up capital.
- **Transparency** is a key factor of financing, because donors have a legitimate demand for transparency.
- We need to be **accountable** for the use of our funds, including our running costs. Golden handshakes for instance are difficult to justify.
- **Administrative and reporting competences** at the NS level are as important as operational capacities in order to attract international funding.

- African NS have to become the **preferred partner** of their governments for humanitarian action in line with their auxiliary status in order to be selected for international or national operational mandates.
- **Corporate fund raising capabilities** need to be enhanced if we want to benefit from the business money which is massively available in Africa.
- **Corporate partnerships** are keys to accessing corporate funds; these imply a return on investment in terms of image or service for the donor company.
- There is a general need for National Societies to develop business plans, as it is No **business plan** means no money. The capacity of elaborating a business plan is a key to fund-raising.
- NS needs to mobilize the **solidarity of ordinary** people as conduits of humanitarian response and funding source.
- The **volume** of funds allocated by the Movement to capacity building for African Societies does not meet the development needs of African NS.
- The International Federation and the ICRC are **honest brokers** in distributing development funds available for African societies. These must be allocated with clear and fair priorities through a transparent dialogue.
- The establishment of some sort of a minimal **solidarity tax** on the revenues of wealthy National Societies was suggested as a form of creative contribution of the Movement towards Africa.
- More is expected from the International Federation in terms of **tapping international funds** to the benefit of NS development.
- In the long run, the dependency of African National Societies on PNS, ICRC and International Federation to **access foreign government funding** must be revisited within the rules of the Movement.
- The ICRC and International Federation should advocate that donors contribute towards **meeting the long term sustainability needs of African National Societies**.
- Some African National Societies feel "**abandoned**" by the Movement and call for the establishment of a special fund to cover their core needs.

### **Actions**

- Leaders of African National Societies need to take the destiny of their NS in their hands and commit themselves to the development of their organisations. The answer for Africa lies in Africa.
- Leadership training in Africa needs to be set as an operational and financial priority by the Movement.
- Best practices as well as failures need to be better shared with and among African National Societies.
- Resource mobilisation capacities need to be developed at National Society level in Africa, while international funds need to be better channelled towards African National Societies.
- Plans to cover core costs over the medium term must be developed by each African NS as a way to achieve self sufficiency and autonomy
- Human Resources policies need to be developed and implemented in order to ensure the sustainability of African National Societies leadership.
- We have to make choices for Africa at national and Movement level in order to move beyond commitment towards action.