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

Geneva, Switzerland
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Vision for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

Background report

**Document prepared by
the Standing Commission, with contributions by the International Committee of the
Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies,
and in consultation with National Societies**

Geneva, October 2015

Background report

For a complex system of organizations like the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (Movement), there are always centrifugal forces acting against the wish of its components to attain unity of purpose and action.

Such unity does not emerge spontaneously, but is a result of the will to create the instruments and mechanisms that underpin unity. Within the Movement, the strongest of these is – without doubt – the Fundamental Principles. Nevertheless, the habit of reaching agreement at the Council of Delegates, a number of shared instruments created by the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (International Conference), and many less formal arrangements and agreements have shaped cooperation in specific regions, on specific themes, or for a concrete purpose.

It is in this context that the 2001 Strategy for the Movement ushered in a decade of significant contributions to the unity, internal relations and development of the Movement. It drew together strands of strategic thinking from within the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (International Federation), and it sought to fill the gaps in this thinking, while also addressing some of the challenges linked to the strength of individual components, the scope for improving effectiveness and efficiency, and the image and visibility of the Movement.

In recent years, processes have been put in place to address these complex issues. The 2013 Council of Delegates resolution on strengthening Movement coordination and cooperation tasked the International Federation and the ICRC to work with a reference group of National Societies to ensure the involvement of all components of the Movement. The Resolution called for strengthened leadership and coordination; scaling up capacity; more coherent communications; and Movement-wide resource-mobilization approaches.

The same Council of Delegates adopted a resolution on the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Branding Initiative, which is meant to address communications, visibility, and image and brand management at the international level.

Overall, what this adds up to is that the ICRC, the International Federation and other components of the Movement have taken ownership of the central points of the 2001 Strategy.

Against that backdrop, the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (Standing Commission) concluded that the Strategy for the Movement could be discontinued and replaced by something much simpler, such as a short, clear, concise vision statement.

It is as a result of that insight that this draft vision statement is being submitted by the Standing Commission to the Council of Delegates for deliberation and decision.

Timeline of developments

The Strategy for the Movement was first adopted at the 2001 Council of Delegates. It was then updated at the 2005 Council of Delegates in Seoul.

At the outset, the Strategy for the Movement set out a 10-year time frame; when the Standing Commission reviewed progress at its meeting of 17-18 September 2012, it concluded that:

“... the current Strategy for the Movement has been implemented, although there are certain actions that are ongoing by nature, incomplete for other reasons, or no longer relevant. Thus a replacement for the Strategy for the Movement needs to

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incorporate those elements that remain relevant and be a much shorter document, be developed as a rolling plan for consideration by each Council of Delegates and with a special focus on strategic issues facing the Movement.”

At a subsequent meeting, held 25-26 March 2013:

“The Standing Commission reviewed a prototype strategy to replace the one adopted in 2001 and updated in 2005. The Standing Commission agreed with the general direction, the format, the focus on “working together” and “working with others” and the idea of a regular updating of the document at each Council of Delegates.”

Six months later, on 16-17 September 2013:

“The Standing Commission reviewed a possible new strategy to replace the one in place since 2005. It commended the work done, and determined to submit the draft to National Societies for comments, in the preparations for the Council of Delegates and at the Council, with a view to developing a new draft in 2015, taking into account the work that is being undertaken on Movement Cooperation, the branding initiative and on Movement Fora.”

The 2013 Council of Delegates in Sydney had the Strategy as an agenda item:

“5. Strategy for the Movement

5.1. Report and draft resolution

The Standing Commission has discussed the Strategy for the Movement and possible avenues for its renewal or replacement and the Council will, when it meets, have before it a report and proposal.”

The outcome of the debate on this agenda item was Resolution 2, whose third operative paragraph reads:

“3. *invites* the Standing Commission, in consultation with National Societies, the International Federation and the ICRC, to continue developing a new Strategy for the Movement, on the basis of considerations set out in the Standing Commission report, and Annex 1 to this resolution, “New Directions for the Movement” with a view to developing a new Strategy for the Movement for adoption at the 2015 Council of Delegates.”

At its first meeting after the 2013 Council of Delegates, on 10-11 February 2014, the Standing Commission dealt with the issue again:

“Decision 6 (Strategy for the Movement):

The Standing Commission discussed the nature of the Strategy it wishes to propose to the Council of Delegates in 2015, and agreed this should be structurally simple and emphasize directions rather than specify actions, and it should be closely aligned with other priorities of the Movement. The Standing Commission agreed to a proposal that, as a first step, further consultations with the two Societies that had the most vocal observations on the question of a new Strategy for the Movement should be organised. Following this, a new draft will be produced in close consultation with ICRC and the International Federation, and circulated as early as possible to National Societies for comment and feedback.”

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Following those consultations, the Standing Commission met in Florence on 3 June 2014 and had an extensive discussion on the replacement for the Strategy for the Movement. It decided to adjust the direction of the work to be undertaken away from a *strategy* and more in the direction of a unifying *vision*, and asked its member Mr Pär Stenbäck to lead the preparations for this work "...in collaboration with the Geneva institutions and involvement of National Societies, including but not limited to, the National Societies of Sweden and the Netherlands, as well as other relevant external expertise, in the initial phase. The draft vision paper would be circulated to National Societies for consultation when available."

Following informal consultations, and a meeting with the ICRC, the International Federation and the Secretariat of the Standing Commission, hosted by the Swedish Red Cross, the Standing Commission received, on 17 November 2014, a briefing on activities undertaken, conclusions reached, and recommendations put forward. The Standing Commission requested the preparation of a draft paper (three to five pages long) for review at its next meeting.

The next discussion of the vision statement took place at the meeting on 26 March 2015, on the margins of the InterAmerican Conference in Houston.

"6. VISION FOR THE MOVEMENT: PRESENTATION OF DRAFT FROM ICRC AND THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION

The Commission reviewed a document containing a draft of a Vision for the Movement created by the ICRC and the International Federation.

Decision:

The Standing Commission asked the ICRC and the International Federation to modify the paper in line with the discussion at the Commission. The paper will be shared with Members at the next meeting before it is circulated to a wider audience for consultation."

At its next meeting the Standing Commission saw a new version of the draft. It made some further recommendations on the text and tone of the document, and requested that, following consultations between the ICRC, the International Federation and the Secretariat of the Commission, the Secretariat circulate the draft to all National Societies inviting them to comment on whether the elements included were the right ones, if some should be deleted, or others added. The paper should be circulated before the end of May.

The draft vision statement was circulated to National Societies during the second half of June 2015, with a request for comments to be made before 15 August 2015.

A number of comments were received and forwarded to the Standing Commission as a contribution to its discussion of the vision paper at its meeting on 9 October 2015.