

# Engagement Guide for National Societies



## How to engage in the 33rd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

Geneva, Switzerland

9 - 12 December 2019

<http://rcrcconference.org/>

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## ● Introduction

This Engagement Guide outlines the **major steps of the preparatory process** and contains **practical tips** for National Societies to be well prepared and contribute to the successful outcomes of the 33rd International Conference. As one of the leading global humanitarian platforms, the International Conference aims to bring together the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement components together with States parties to the Geneva Conventions and other humanitarian actors. In order for the International Conference to reflect current and emerging humanitarian concerns, **we strongly urge you to engage in Conference preparations at an early stage.**

## ● Preparation: It starts now!

The preparatory process consists of **consultations** with the members of the Conference, and is crucial for the success of the Conference in order to bring key humanitarian concerns **from a local level to the global platform of the Conference.** The more National Societies are engaged in defining the decisions and discussions, the more relevant the content and the outcomes will be. The crucial phases of consultations are as follows:

- **Consultation on the concept note and agenda:**
  - Feedback on the concept note, by **12 October 2018**
  - Outline of agenda expected in December 2018
  - Mailing of provisional agenda and program (early June 2019)
- **Consultation on resolutions:**
  - Sharing elements of resolutions, receiving inputs (March/April 2019)
  - Sharing the zero draft resolutions with background documents; receiving inputs with concrete language proposals (May/June 2019)
  - Joint preparatory meeting on draft resolutions (June/July 2019)
  - Sharing the official documents (Oct 2019, 45 days prior to the Conference), i.e. progress reports, outlines of the Commissions etc.
- **Consultation on pledges:**
  - Pledges to be discussed and agreed, and model pledges put forward on specific topics (Jan-Dec 2019)

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## ● Key events and consultations to engage in:

- **Webinars:** These aim to increase involvement of National Societies and clarify their questions. The webinars deliver **relevant guidance** on the Conference, the topics of the agenda and how to further engage.
- **IFRC regional conferences:** These represent a good opportunity to strengthen and promote regional priorities.
- If any **regional meetings** arise, make sure to have either a time slot to discuss relevant matters or a side-event dedicated to the International Conference.
- We urge you to take advantage of **other relevant platforms and events** occurring in your region, to inform potential partners about the Conference, to share updates and garner additional inputs.

Let us know how else we can support you!

## ● What are the expected outcomes and how can you use them as an effective humanitarian diplomacy tool?

### Resolutions:

- Resolutions are the instrument through which **decisions are adopted** at the International Conference. They are consulted upon in the months leading up to the International Conference and shall be negotiated among the Conference members in the Drafting Committee.
- The resolutions are limited in number and should be focused, concise and provide for **meaningful and measurable impact**. By adopting a resolution, governments and the Movement components make clear **commitments**.

- The Conference endeavors to adopt the resolutions by consensus; if no consensus is reached, a vote shall be taken in accordance with the Rules of Procedure.

## ● What can resolutions achieve?

- Increased **government support** for humanitarian activities, and the work of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.
- Create opportunities for **dialogue** on policies and humanitarian issues important to the mission of National Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC.
- Establish agreements on new policies.
- Position the Red Cross Red Crescent as a leader in certain fields, or create new mandates.
- Strengthen the **auxiliary role** of National Societies through new or increased partnerships (e.g. with governments).
- Increase participation of National Societies on related boards and committees.

## ● How can you contribute to their development?

- Ensure that your National Society has a **position** on the subject-matter according to your experience.
- Understand in what way(s) your Society might be able to **support the resolutions** and their implementation.
- Understand any **current limitations** to progress on the thematic area of proposed resolutions and how to overcome these limitations.
- In discussions with your government, please consider: What change would your National Society like to see? What support or cooperation do you need?
- Make sure your points are supported by **relevant data and evidence**.
- Contribute (if, and where possible, together with your respective government) to the development of **progress reports** on previous resolutions adopted by the Conference.


**Pledges:** You are encouraged to make **voluntary humanitarian commitments**, known as 'pledges'.

- Pledges cover **specific, measurable actions** that address humanitarian needs in a national or regional context. They may include actions to implement the Conference resolutions and/or other priorities not necessarily linked to a resolution.
- Pledges are a powerful tool of humanitarian diplomacy and can be used to **initiate or advance dialogue** with public authorities and other humanitarian partners before, during, and after the Conference.
- Joint pledges amongst National Societies, governments and other humanitarian actors provide a mechanism to set out **joint plans, actions and commitments**.
- Conference members are requested to **report on pledges** made and signed at the 32nd International Conference in 2015. Reporting should be done through the online platform with pre-assigned user accounts. Contact us in case you do not have an account yet.

For further information on pledges, types of pledges and their processes, please visit our website.

## ● Why consult with your government?

- Where National Societies and governments wish to develop a pledge together, it is recommended that they **begin discussions well in advance** to **identify topics of mutual interest and concern** and agree on the specific commitments they will jointly undertake.
- This dialogue continues during the Conference and beyond, as National Societies and governments work together **to implement, monitor and review the progress** on the implementation of the pledge(s).
- This process facilitates cooperation and builds the existing relationships between the National Society, its government and public authorities.

 National Societies and States are strongly encouraged to make joint pledges.

## ● How to develop effective pledges?

- Engage at an early stage and take into consideration the themes of the Conference. **Reflect on specific issues** you would like to address in the form of voluntary pledges.
- Submit individual or jointly prepared "specific" pledges, or sign "open" pledges.
- Specific pledges should be **submitted online** in any of the official working languages of the Conference (English, French, Spanish, and Arabic). Have a look at our model/example pledges, available on the pledge database of our website in all four languages.
- Petition-style "open pledges" should be initiated through the pledge database, where the initiator can indicate that the pledge is **open for signature** by any other Conference participant. All open pledges available for signature are visible to all Conference participants on the pledge database.
- Continue to raise awareness and find **partners** to join your cause!



## ● Other outcomes?

To ensure that the most pressing and emerging humanitarian concerns are properly addressed, other outcomes may result from the International Conference. We would like to hear from you about other possible outcomes: please feel free to share your ideas and proposals!

Do you have questions? Contact us here:  
[conferences@rcrcconferences.org](mailto:conferences@rcrcconferences.org)



Stay tuned and visit our website at  
[www.rcrcconference.org](http://www.rcrcconference.org)