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**32nd INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
OF THE RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT**

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**Strengthening legal frameworks for disaster response,
risk reduction and first aid**

Resolution

**Document prepared by the
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies**

RESOLUTION

Strengthening legal frameworks for disaster response, risk reduction and first aid

The 32nd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent,

recalling Final Goal 3.2 of the 28th International Conference, Resolution 4 of the 30th International Conference and Resolution 7 of the 31st International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent,

recalling relevant resolutions of the United Nations, which encouraged States to strengthen their regulatory frameworks for international disaster assistance, taking the Guidelines for the domestic facilitation and regulation of international disaster relief and initial recovery assistance (“IDRL Guidelines”) into account,

noting the completion of the final “Model Act on the Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance” by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (International Federation), the United Nations Office of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union in 2013 and the initiative of the International Federation and OCHA to develop a “Model Emergency Degree on the Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance”,

noting with satisfaction that some 23 States have adopted new laws, rules or procedures drawing on the IDRL Guidelines since 2007 and that a significant number of regional organizations and initiatives have increased their support to their member States in preventing or resolving regulatory issues in international disaster response operations,

noting with concern the findings of the background report by the International Federation that regulatory problems nevertheless continue to impact the timeliness and effectiveness of international disaster response operations and that there are still many States that lack comprehensive laws, rules or procedures for managing international disaster assistance,

noting that the International Law Commission has completed the first reading of its “Draft articles on the protection of persons in the event of disaster” and has requested States and some organizations, including the International Federation and the International Committee of the Red Cross, to provide their comments by 1 January 2016,

recalling the critical roles played by the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World in 1994, the Hyogo Framework for Action in 2005 and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015 (Sendai Framework) in mainstreaming disaster risk reduction, which was made possible with the facilitating role of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR),

welcoming the Sendai Framework, which encourages States, *inter alia*, to strengthen the content and implementation of their laws, regulations and policies related to disaster risk reduction, underlines that a gender, age, disability and cultural perspective should be integrated in all risk reduction policies and practices and that women’s and youth leadership

should be promoted, and recognizes the importance of reviewing national laws and procedures in light of the IDRL Guidelines,

taking note of the progress made at the first meeting of the Open Ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Indicators and Terminology, as a practical step to implement the Sendai Framework,

welcoming the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which calls for commitment, *inter alia*, to build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and disasters and other economic, social and environmental shocks,

noting the initiative of the International Federation and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to undertake comparative research on best practices and common gap areas in domestic law related to disaster risk reduction, as described in the report entitled "Effective law and regulation for disaster risk reduction: a multi-country report" published in 2014, and *noting* their findings that there has been encouraging progress in the strengthening of legislation for disaster risk management in recent years, but gaps still remain in many countries, particularly with regard to addressing financing, capacity building, community participation, implementation, and accountability for disaster risk reduction,

noting the consultation and pilot process conducted by International Federation and UNDP from 2012 to 2015 on the "Checklist on Law and Disaster Risk Reduction," which sought feedback and contributions from a broad range of governmental and non-governmental practitioners,

acknowledging that widespread training and individual practice of first aid is a cost-effective way to ensure that life-saving help is close at hand in the first moments of a sudden health crisis,

welcoming the strong contribution provided by National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in promoting first aid,

noting the findings of the International Federation background report that targeted mandates for first aid training can increase the chance that a person with appropriate skills will be available in a situation of crisis, but that there is substantial variability among States in the degree to which such mandates are imposed,

noting further the finding that many States lack minimum standards for the quality and content of first aid training and *welcoming* in this respect the International First Aid and Resuscitation Guidelines developed by the International Federation in 2011, as an important reference tool,

noting further the finding that even trained volunteers are hesitating to provide first aid out of fear of potential liability in the event that their good faith efforts are unsuccessful and that there are, in fact, no special legal protections for them in many States' laws,

recognizing that women and their participation are critical to effectively managing disaster risk and building resilience,

emphasizing that the affected state has the primary responsibility in the initiation, organization, coordination and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory and in the facilitation of the work of humanitarian organizations in mitigating the consequences of natural disasters,

Accelerating progress in the facilitation and regulation of international disaster response

1. *commends* those States that have adopted comprehensive laws, policies, rules and procedures for facilitating and regulating international disaster assistance and *encourages* them to share their experiences with others;
2. *calls on* those States that have not yet adopted appropriate laws, policies, rules and procedures to do so at national and subnational level in order to avoid being caught unprepared in the event of a future disaster and *encourages* them to consider developing their own institutional measures to ensure adequate discussion and planning relating to the management of international disaster assistance;
3. *welcomes* the support that National Societies and the International Federation have provided to interested States to make use of the IDRL Guidelines and *encourages* them to continue their efforts, including integration with their national plans, in collaboration with relevant partners, including the United Nations and relevant regional organizations;
4. *invites* National Societies and States to collaborate in disseminating information to the public about the most appropriate donations of goods in the wake of a major disaster and to discourage the shipment of unnecessary and unsolicited items;
5. *welcomes* the International Federation's initiative to foster dialogue on further options to accelerate progress in resolving regulatory problems in international disaster response operations, including country-level efforts as well as the potential for further strengthening global and/or regional legal frameworks, and *invites* it to continue to lead consultations with States and other stakeholders in this regard;

Strengthening cooperation and laws for disaster risk reduction

6. *recognizes* that National Societies, as auxiliaries to the public authorities in the humanitarian field, have an important role to play in supporting their States to achieve a number of the goals, targets and priorities set out in the context of the Sendai Framework, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and outcomes of the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, including those related to building community resilience, reducing disaster risks and adapting to climate change;
7. *encourages* National Societies and States to consider ways to enhance their cooperation to achieve these goals, targets and priorities, including cooperation to address urban risks and to promote strong and well-implemented domestic legal frameworks;
8. *commits* to work together to strengthen community-driven, holistic resilience efforts, including by encouraging partnerships and alliances and, in this respect, welcomes the One Billion Coalition for Resilience;
9. *recognizes* the Checklist on Law and Disaster Risk Reduction as a useful and non-binding assessment tool to help states, when applicable, to review domestic legal frameworks for disaster risk reduction at the national, provincial and local levels and

notes its utility to States in carrying out related commitments set out in the Sendai Framework;

10. *invites* States to use the Checklist to evaluate and, as needed, improve the content and implementation of their laws, regulations and public policies related to disaster risk reduction, with support from National Societies, the International Federation, the United Nations System, local civil society, the private sector, academia and other partners;
11. *encourages* National Societies and States to cooperate in generating greater public awareness about disaster risk reduction and related rights and responsibilities of relevant actors under national and international law;

Providing supportive legal frameworks for saving lives through first aid

12. *encourages* States to promote regularly refreshed first aid education across the life-span of their citizens, in particular, to the degree capacity and national systems allow, through mandatory training for school children and teachers and driver's licence applicants and to ensure equal participation of women, girls, men and boys in first aid training;
13. *further encourages* States to adopt and regularly update official guidelines as to the minimum content of first aid education programmes, taking into account standards already in use, including the International Federation's International First Aid and Resuscitation Guidelines, as well as the results of impact assessments;
14. *further encourages* States to consider all necessary steps to encourage the provision of first aid by laypersons with appropriate training, including, where appropriate, establishing protection from liability for their good faith efforts and ensuring that they are aware of this protection;
15. *invites* States to exchange good practices in this area, including the use of digital communication, and *requests* National Societies and the International Federation to support interested States in assessing and, as needed and requested, strengthening their existing legal frameworks related to first aid;

Extending support and partnerships

16. *encourages* National Societies, as auxiliaries to their public authorities in the humanitarian field, to continue to provide advice and support to their governments in the development and implementation of effective legal and policy frameworks relevant to disaster and emergency management at all levels, in particular with respect to the areas of concern mentioned in this resolution;
17. *requests* the International Federation to continue to support National Societies and States in the field of disaster law, including with respect to the areas of concern mentioned in this resolution, through technical assistance, capacity building, the development of tools, models and guidelines, advocacy and ongoing research and promoting the sharing of experiences and best practices between countries;

18. *welcomes* the increasing cooperation of the International Federation and National Societies with other partners, in accordance with their respective mandates, in providing support to interested States in this area, in particular with the United Nations, regional organizations, civil society, including national NGOs, the private sector, and academia and *encourages* them to continue to develop new partnerships;

Ensuring dissemination and review

19. *reaffirms* the role of the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent as one of the key international fora for continued dialogue about disaster laws and on recovery action in synergy with actions conducted by States and international organisations;
20. *invites* States, the International Federation, and National Societies to disseminate this resolution to appropriate stakeholders, including by bringing it to the attention of relevant international and regional organizations;
21. *requests* the International Federation, in consultation with National Societies, to submit a progress report on the implementation of this resolution to the 33rd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.