

Power of humanity

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**33rd INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
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Time to act: Tackling epidemics and pandemics together

DRAFT RESOLUTION

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Time to act: Tackling epidemics and pandemics together

The 33rd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent,

expressing deep concern over the threat that epidemics and pandemics pose to global health, the economy and stability, particularly in the world's most vulnerable areas and in complex settings where epidemics have unanticipated global health implications,

acknowledging the increasing recognition and importance of effective preparedness, which can save time, money and lives,

recalling Sustainable Development Goal 3 and its aim to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages,

also recalling that the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (Movement) recognize that National Societies cooperate with the public authorities in the prevention of disease, the promotion of health and the mitigation of human suffering for the benefit of the community,

further recalling that Resolution 2 of the 30th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (International Conference) recognized that public authorities and National Societies, as auxiliaries in the humanitarian field, enjoy a specific and distinctive partnership, entailing mutual responsibilities and benefits and based on international and national laws, in which the national public authorities and the National Society agree on the areas in which the latter supplements or substitutes for public humanitarian services within its mandate and guided by the Fundamental Principles,

further recalling that Resolution 4 of the 31st International Conference encouraged relevant government departments and other donors to provide a predictable and regular flow of resources adapted to the operational needs of their National Societies,

recalling that Resolution 1 of the 30th International Conference stressed the need to strengthen health systems and develop national health plans with the involvement of National Societies and to include the empowerment of volunteers and affected groups,

acknowledging the importance of the complementarity and coordination of the actions of the different components of the Movement to prevent, mitigate and respond to epidemics and pandemics with the action of other relevant actors in the field,

acknowledging that epidemics and pandemics may have a different impact on girls, boys, women and men and on young and older persons as well as on people with pre-existing health issues and people whose circumstances may make them more vulnerable at the time of an epidemic or pandemic,

recognizing with gratitude the humanitarian work undertaken by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and National Societies, working closely with key partners such as the World Health Organization, in response to recent epidemics and pandemics, including cholera, measles and polio, Ebola virus disease outbreaks in Africa and the Zika virus disease epidemic in the Americas,

acknowledging the wide range of health-care and disease prevention activities that Movement components regularly undertake to prepare for and respond to the needs of vulnerable communities before, during and after epidemics and pandemics,

acknowledging the commitment of States Parties to the International Health Regulations (2005) (IHR) to ensure the effective core capacities to detect, assess, report and respond to epidemics and pandemics,

emphasizing the importance of National Societies working in close coordination with national authorities and other local and international organizations responding to epidemics and pandemics in order to assist States Parties in meeting their obligations to comply with the IHR,

emphasizing the role that National Societies, the ICRC and the IFRC could play, in collaboration with other partners such as the World Health Organization, in further strengthening countries' epidemic and pandemic core capacities including, but not limited to, planning, preparedness, coordination with other local and international organizations, prevention and control, immunization, community engagement and accountability, communication with the public, and emergency response,

acknowledging that neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian action extending beyond the provision of clinical care is a critical tool in epidemic and pandemic response, particularly in areas of insecurity,

recalling the obligation to respect and protect medical personnel, including Red Cross and Red Crescent workers, and their means of transport as well as medical establishments and other medical facilities at all times, in accordance with international humanitarian law and other applicable legal frameworks, and *recognizing* the importance of medical personnel having access to any place where their medical services are required,

taking into account the particular challenges in meeting health needs when epidemics occur in areas where health care is under-resourced and where access to care is difficult,

1. *requests* States to enable and facilitate Movement components, as appropriate to their mandates and capacities and consistent with international law, to contribute to a predictable and coordinated approach to epidemic preparedness, prevention, surveillance, response and recovery within countries and across borders and to effectively engage with and support affected communities;
2. *also encourages* States to include National Societies, according to their capacities, in national disease control and multisectoral preparedness and response frameworks and, where possible, to provide funding in support of their role in this regard;
3. *further encourages* National Societies to offer support to their public authorities, as appropriate, in their efforts to strengthen core capacities as part of obligations to comply with the IHR, ensuring that special provisions are effectively in place for the efficient and expedited delivery of a public health response for affected populations during crisis situations, coordinating with other local and international organizations and focusing, in particular, on building early warning and rapid response capacity in hard-to-reach, vulnerable, underserved and high-risk communities with due attention to the varied needs of girls, boys, men and women;
4. *emphasizes* the need for promotion of active community engagement in epidemic and pandemic prevention, preparedness and response, based on an all-hazard and whole-of-society approach, and *encourages* States and National Societies to build on

evidence-based approaches to community-centric epidemic prevention and control, promoting the further development of innovative tools, guidance and strategies to support implementation by National Societies and strengthening their capabilities to respond and to utilize data and technology to improve the quality of response to epidemics and pandemics;

5. *reiterates* the importance of prioritizing and investing in prevention and preparedness as well as providing catalytic funding to support early action;
6. *calls upon* Movement components, public authorities and all other actors to take appropriate steps, in accordance with their national and regional contexts, to ensure, as far as possible, that the health and safety of their volunteers and staff responding to epidemics/pandemics, including mental health and psychosocial well-being, are adequately maintained;
7. *requests* the IFRC to prepare a progress report on the implementation of this resolution to the 34th International Conference in 2023.