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Council of Delegates of the International  
Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

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

Geneva, Switzerland  
8 December 2019

**Reinforcing Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities  
in the Leadership and Work of the International  
Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement**

**PROGRESS REPORT**

Document prepared by  
the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies  
in consultation/cooperation with the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red  
Crescent and the International Committee of the Red Cross

Geneva, October 2019

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Societal gender analysis reveals gaps and disparities in wellbeing, roles, power and access to resources. A call for greater diversity in representation and greater inclusion of women is driving change across civil society, institutions and government policy and structure, particularly in the areas of protection, leadership and decision-making.

In line with this, the 2017 Council of Delegates adopted Resolution 12 [Reinforcing gender equality and equal opportunities in the leadership and work of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement](#). It called upon the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), National Societies and the Standing Commission “to take concrete measures to address the question of gender equality and equal opportunities at all levels of their own leadership, and to report back on progress at the next Council of Delegates in 2019”. This report highlights the work done by the IFRC, National Societies, the ICRC and the Standing Commission on addressing the requirements set out in the resolution.

Following the adoption of Resolution 12 by the 2017 Council of Delegates, the IFRC Governing Board set as one of its priorities to ensure that gender and diversity balance measures are applied at all levels of the IFRC, both in terms of governance and management. This was highlighted, in particular, by the President in his opening remarks at the June 2018 Governing Board meeting when he expressed his commitment “to ensure gender balance in the Board and on the statutory commissions in future” and stressed the “need to create a culture in the IFRC and National Societies that fosters the same opportunities for women as for men”. As a result of the adoption of Resolution 12, National Societies were asked, through the Federation-wide Databank and Reporting System (FDRS), to submit information about balance in representation and the diversity of their workforce. One of the questions asked was specifically about the percentage of women in governance and staff in National Societies and the IFRC Secretariat. The results published by the FDRS make for interesting reading.

The consultations on the IFRC’s Strategy 2030 – proposed for adoption at the IFRC General Assembly in 2019 – have demonstrated the vision and commitment of the Red Cross and Red Crescent network to promoting inclusion and diversity in opportunities, representation and decision-making within their own organizations and the network as well as in society at large. Moreover, National Societies have expressed a willingness to expand efforts in the area of diversity and inclusion, with a more intersectional approach, particularly as regards our work with and support of women, girls and people with different gender identities.

In line with the aspirations of Strategy 2030, the Federation-wide Gender Policy (1999) is being reviewed and revised. The revised policy, focusing now on gender and diversity, will present the collective commitments of the IFRC Secretariat and the National Societies on gender and diversity in our institutional capacity, programming and operations and in advocacy.

The ICRC has adopted strategic objectives on gender equality and on diversity and inclusion as part of its 2019–2022 institutional strategy, including a specific objective to strive for gender parity among managers by 2022. In mid-2019, the ICRC concluded an external review on gender equality across the organization. The review includes a comprehensive analysis of human resources data, equal pay and staff perceptions and a detailed assessment of existing policies and practices. It revealed a number of areas requiring action in order to make progress on meeting gender parity commitments. The results from this review are being integrated into a global work plan on inclusion.

The Standing Commission has been very responsive to the 2017 call from the Movement and willing – within the scope of its functions – to engage in determined efforts to achieve its objectives and promote a better gender balance in the Movement's leadership, including in its own membership.

Most National Societies are concerned about gender. This engagement can be appreciated in their annual reports and strategic plans as well as in their operations.

## 1) INTRODUCTION

Building on the 2017 IFRC General Assembly decision, the 2017 Council of Delegates adopted Resolution 12 *Reinforcing gender equality and equal opportunities in the leadership and work of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement*. It called upon the ICRC, the IFRC, National Societies and the Standing Commission “to take concrete measures to address the question of gender equality and equal opportunities at all levels of their own leadership, and to report back on progress at the next Council of Delegates in 2019”.

This report highlights the work done by the IFRC, National Societies, the ICRC and the Standing Commission on addressing the requirements set out in the resolution.

## 2) BACKGROUND

The 2017 Council of Delegates Resolution 12 and, through it, the decision of the IFRC General Assembly recall previous resolutions of the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (International Conference)<sup>1</sup> and decisions of the IFRC General Assembly<sup>2</sup> and refer to the work carried out under the IFRC Strategic Framework on Gender and Diversity Issues adopted by the Governing Board in 2011<sup>3</sup> and applicable to the IFRC Secretariat and National Societies.

The 2017 Council of Delegates resolution welcomes the decision<sup>4</sup> of the 21st IFRC General Assembly *Taking stock of reinforced action on the role of women in Red Cross Red Crescent Movement development (GA/17/25)* and

1. *commits* to supporting the achievement of the objectives and actions required under the decision;

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<sup>1</sup> Resolution No. XV of the 23rd International Conference in 1977 in which governments and National Societies are urged to “raise the status of women socially and economically by providing opportunities for learning and leadership”.

<sup>2</sup> Decision of the 6th General Assembly in 1987 which requested the League “to draw up a plan of action to safeguard that the resources and potential of women can be fully utilized to the benefit of development work in the Red Cross/Red Crescent; decision of the 7th General Assembly in 1989 which acknowledged the need for concrete policies and sustained commitments to strengthen the role of women in Red Cross/Red Crescent development.

<sup>3</sup> It sets a strategic direction for the IFRC to ensure that its actions are non-discriminatory towards people of all ages and to promote gender equality and respect for diversity throughout its work.

<sup>4</sup> The wording of Decision GA/17/25 is as follows: “while acknowledging the progress made in many National Societies and the IFRC Secretariat, much remains to be achieved in order to reach a satisfactory level with regard to gender balance and equal opportunities in development of the Federation, including its members, recognizing the need to support National Societies in their efforts to achieve equal opportunities irrespective of gender in Governance, programmes and other activities, sincerely committed to ensure that the actions of the Federation are non-discriminatory towards people and to promote gender equality and respect for diversity throughout all of its work, and to ensure equal opportunities irrespective of gender in Red Cross and Red Crescent work, including governance: 1. *requests* the Governing Board to take concrete measures to address this issue and report back to the 22nd Session of the General Assembly, 2. *calls* on National Societies, to significantly increase their efforts to identify, support and promote women into senior leadership positions, 3. *calls* on National Societies to identify and propose women into Federation governance roles immediately”.

2. *calls upon* the ICRC, the IFRC, National Societies and the Standing Commission to take concrete measures to address the question of gender equality and equal opportunities at all levels of their own leadership, and to report back on progress at the next Council of Delegates in 2019.

### 3) **ANALYSIS / PROGRESS**

#### **IFRC and member National Societies**

Following the adoption of the 2017 IFRC General Assembly decision and the subsequent adoption of Resolution 12 of the 2017 Council of Delegates, the IFRC Governing Board set as one of its priorities<sup>5</sup> to ensure that gender and diversity balance measures are applied at all levels of the IFRC, both in terms of governance and management. This was highlighted, in particular, by the President in his opening remarks<sup>6</sup> at the June 2018 Governing Board meeting when he expressed his commitment “to ensure gender balance in the Board and on the statutory commissions in future” and stressed the “need to create a culture in the IFRC and National Societies that fosters the same opportunities for women as for men”. This commitment led to significant progress in several areas, as outlined below.

At its meeting in June 2018, the IFRC Governing Board established a dedicated Working Group on Governance Excellence, Gender and Diversity,<sup>7</sup> together with four other Governing Board working groups – each chaired by a female, the gender least represented on the Board. As one of its first actions, the Governing Board Working Group on Governance Excellence, Gender and Diversity requested a benchmarking exercise to be carried out to show how gender balance in governance is achieved in other international organizations.

The Working Group also requested a review of the 1999 IFRC Gender Policy, which was mandated by the Governing Board.<sup>8</sup> The revised policy, as proposed by the Secretariat, following thorough consultations with the membership, will present the collective commitments of the IFRC Secretariat and the National Societies on gender and diversity in our institutional capacity, programming and operations and in advocacy. These commitments include more balanced gender representation in governance and leadership as well as other aspects of creating an enabling environment for gender and diversity inclusion. The policy is proposed for adoption at the IFRC General Assembly in December 2019.

In order to address the concerns expressed by the General Assembly and to provide concrete measures to help improve the gender balance within the IFRC’s governance framework, the Governing Board Working Group on Governance Excellence, Gender and Diversity reviewed a broad range of options from formal quota mechanisms to non-binding gender policies. Their recommendations to the Governing Board resulted in a set of gender balance proposals being included as part of the Governing Board’s proposed amendments to the IFRC’s statutory texts. These proposals will be considered for adoption by the General Assembly in December 2019 and include the following elements:

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<sup>5</sup> See Decisions: Extraordinary Session of the Governing Board (<https://fednet.ifrc.org/FedNet/Our%20IFRC/Statutory%20Meetings/Governing%20Board/2016/33rd%20GB/E%20decision%20sheet%20January%202018.pdf>)

<sup>6</sup> See Activity Report: <https://fednet.ifrc.org/FedNet/Our%20IFRC/Statutory%20Meetings/Governing%20Board/2016/33rd%20GB/E%20decision%20sheet%20June%202018.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Suggestions include the establishment of key performance indicators (KPIs) on gender, a ranking of National Societies, gender-disaggregated data and connecting other gender and diversity initiatives within the Movement to contribute to the work of the Board on this initiative.

<sup>8</sup> A revised IFRC Gender and Diversity Policy was developed and shared for consultations with National Societies with a view to endorsement at the General Assembly.

- More equitable gender balance in the Governing Board through the introduction of a gender dimension in the election of National Society Governing Board members, whereby a minimum of two male and two female National Society Governing Board representatives are elected from each statutory region. In order to implement this proposal, a pre-election declaration will need to be made by National Societies stating the name and gender of their proposed representative, and the National Society Governing Board nominees will be split into two lists according to gender on the ballot paper.
- Adoption of policies to protect against vacancies in the Governing Board. For example, if there is a vacancy due to a lack of votes for nominees of one gender, this would result in a vacancy in the Governing Board until the next election of members at the General Assembly.
- Overall promotion of diversity to ensure that the principles of equitable gender balance and fair geographical distribution are taken into account in the nomination and appointment or election of all IFRC governance positions. This endeavour elevates these important existing principles by incorporating them into the Constitution and ensures that both principles are given equal weight.
- Gender-neutral terminology is also ensured throughout the statutory texts.

The IFRC's Election Committee takes into account the principle of equitable gender balance, seeking gender parity, to the extent possible, among the members of the IFRC's constitutional commissions and committees. This is consistent with Rule 25 of the IFRC's Rules of Procedure (Gender considerations) and the Governing Board's decision of October 2018 (Decision 18/02/05), which requested that the Election Committee ensure gender balance as far as possible and where feasible when proposing candidates for appointment to the IFRC's constitutional committees and commissions. Most recently, such gender balance considerations were taken into account by the Election Committee in the preparation of its recommendations to the Governing Board and General Assembly on the list of proposed candidates for appointments to the Finance Commission, the Audit and Risk Commission and the Compliance and Mediation Committee in December 2019.

There has been a focus on preventing harassment and sexual misconduct and protecting the people we work for and the people we work with by ensuring compliance with a code of conduct and other necessary policies.<sup>9</sup> A policy on the Prevention and Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) was adopted by the IFRC in July 2018, and a commitment has been made to work with at least 45 National Societies by 2020 to help them develop and adopt their own PSEA policies. To date, the IFRC has worked with at least 25 National Societies through bilateral meetings and two dedicated writeshops.

As a result of the resolution a group of women senior leaders in National Societies, initiated a network called GLOW Red (global network of women leaders within the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement) aiming to support the implementation of the resolution. The network grew quickly and now involves members from all over the world from over 80 National Societies. GLOW Red has created awareness of the resolution through its newsletter and numerous regional discussions and side-events coordinated by its focal-points in each region. The resolution has been discussed at in regional meetings of National Societies, such as the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Conference in Iraq in April 2018 and the Small European National Societies meeting in Malta in April 2018, the European Conference in Almaty May 2018, the Mediterranean Conference in Sarajevo in May 2019 and the South

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<sup>9</sup> See decision of the IFRC Governing Board:  
<https://fednet.ifrc.org/FedNet/Our%20IFRC/Statutory%20Meetings/Governing%20Board/2016/33rd%20GB/E%20decision%20sheet%20June%202018.pdf>

Asia meeting in June 2019. At the Asia Pacific Regional Conference in November 2018,<sup>10</sup> Red Cross and Red Crescent leaders from across Asia, the Pacific and the Middle East committed, in the Manila Declaration, to ensuring women make up at least 50% of elected and appointed leadership positions in the next four years. In addition to gender parity, the conference also set ambitious targets for increasing the number and diversity of volunteers. The leadership of National Societies in the Americas expressed their commitment in the Buenos Aires Commitment adopted at the 2019 Inter-American Regional Conference to “advocate for the leadership role of women by promoting equity at all levels, within and outside the Movement, taking into account the gender perspective and inclusion in programmes and operations, and celebrating diversity and respect for all people”.

National Society leaders have taken or strengthened global and regional initiatives to support the endeavour of reaching gender parity at every level within the IFRC. Efforts have been made to establish or strengthen informal networks and peer-to-peer support for this purpose of which already mentioned GLOW Red is an open network for all women leaders within the RCRC movement working to promote the resolution. GLOW Red also aims to make sure that there are enough women candidates that stand for nominations and elections and to strengthen the future pipeline.. The RED VIWO informal network continued its work on peer-to-peer support and mentoring for middle management staff in European National Societies and the IFRC, aligned with the vision to reach equal representation of men and women at all levels of our organizations.

In addition to this, there are a number of initiatives undertaken by the IFRC Secretariat senior management promoting specific engagement on the implementation of this resolution:

- ensuring gender-balanced job interview panels
- ensuring gender parity and promotion of the least represented gender to key positions with “talent pool” recruitment for heads of country, heads of country clusters and deputy regional directors
- setting a target of gender parity at all grade levels, including leadership positions within the global IFRC Secretariat, by 2028
- commitment of the IFRC Asia Pacific Regional Office to undertake a gender organizational assessment using the Gender and Diversity Organizational Assessment Tool developed by the IFRC to support National Societies in fulfilling commitments to gender and diversity and provide practical guidance to conduct and follow up on the gender and diversity organizational assessment.

In response to the 2017 resolution, National Societies were asked, through the Federation-wide Databank and Reporting System (FDRS<sup>11</sup>), to submit information about balance in representation and the diversity of their workforce.<sup>12</sup> One of the questions asked was specifically about the percentage of women in governance and staff in National Societies and the IFRC Secretariat. The results published by the FDRS make for interesting reading.<sup>13</sup>

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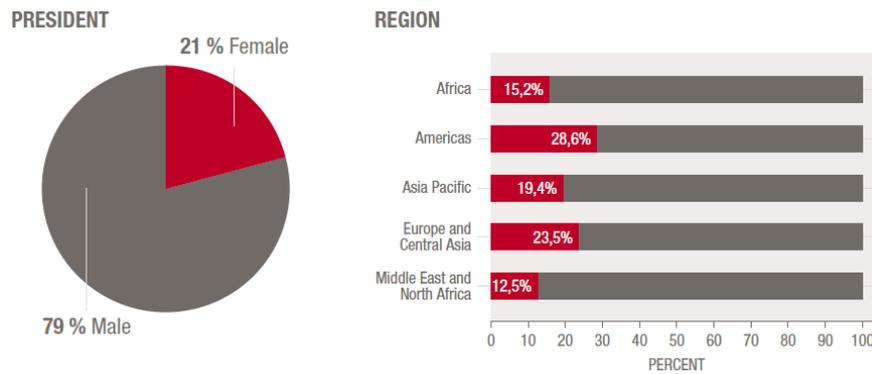
<sup>10</sup> For more information, please see <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/press-release/red-cross-red-crescent-commits-womens-leadership-asia-pacific-middle-east-humanitarian-summit/>.

<sup>11</sup> The FDRS is a platform for National Society performance reporting and responds to an IFRC constitutional requirement for increased transparency and accountability. All FDRS data is self-reported by National Societies and published on [data.ifrc.org/fdrs](http://data.ifrc.org/fdrs). All National Societies report to the FDRS.

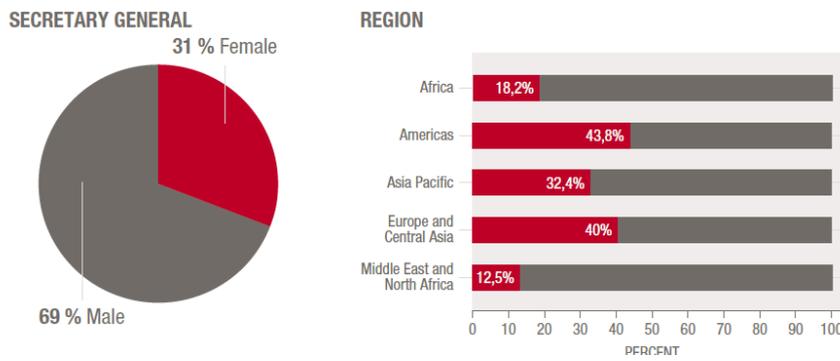
<sup>12</sup> In June 2018, the FDRS team started collecting data on the composition of National Society governing boards in response to a General Assembly decision taken in 2017. The aim was to analyse gender imbalances in the top positions in all National Societies and across different regions. Now, thanks to the efforts of National Societies around the world to disaggregate their data, we can start to deliver on the promise of using FDRS data to highlight this balance, or imbalance, within the organization and its work. This serves as a baseline study. A total of 184 National Societies reported to the FDRS on these issues.

<sup>13</sup> The data shown is from the *Everyone Counts* report for 2019 which was released on 18 July 2019.

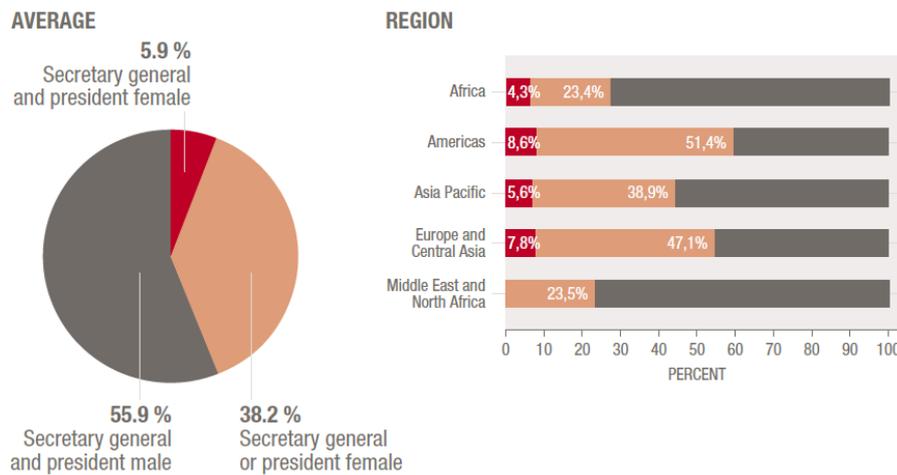
The results below show the breakdown of National Societies with female presidents.



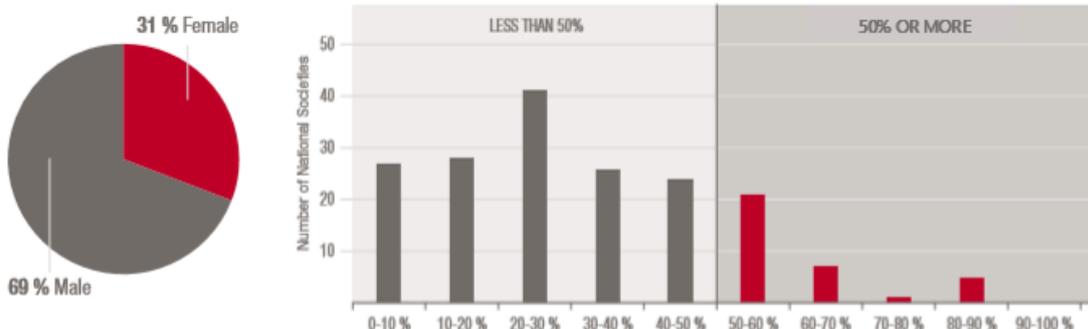
The results below show the percentage of National Societies with a woman as secretary general.



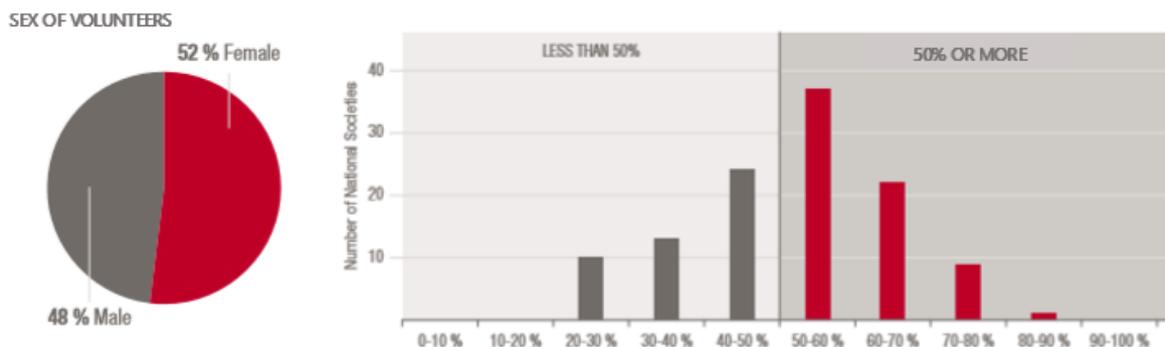
The results below show the percentage of National Societies in which both the president and secretary general are women, one of them is a woman and neither of them is a woman.



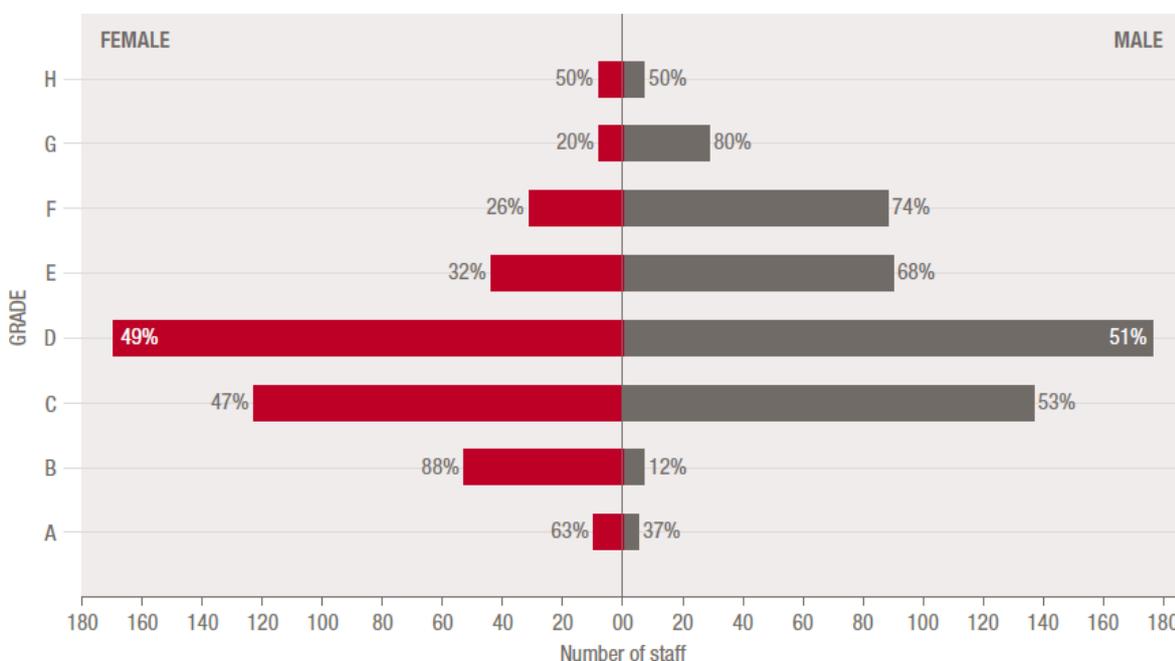
The results below show the percentage of women on National Society governing boards in 2017.



The results below show the percentage of women among National Society volunteers.



The results below show numbers and percentages of women in different employment grades at the IFRC Secretariat (global and regional offices) and on IFRC contracts in 2017. H is the highest grade and A the lowest.



The results below show the average percentage of women in different roles in National Societies and the Secretariat

	Average% across National Societies	IFRC
President	21%	0
Secretary general	31%	0
Percentage of women on governing board	31%	17%
Percentage of women paid staff	50%	45%
Percentage of women volunteers	52%	–

In all countries, National Societies with a woman as either president or secretary general tend to have more women on their governing board. There is a strong positive relationship between the percentage of women among paid staff and among volunteers, and vice versa, even when allowing for the level of gender equality in each country.

## ICRC

In September 2018, the ICRC Assembly adopted strategic objectives<sup>14</sup> with regard to gender equality, diversity and inclusion. The key objectives are as follows:

- “The ICRC implements policies and practices that are inclusive and that enable it to value and leverage the diversity of its global workforce and that of the Movement including ensuring the ICRC strives to reach its goal of gender parity (50:50) among its managers by 2022, through the necessary means and actions.
- The ICRC ensures that its management teams include both resident and mobile staff, are diverse in expertise and gender, and are clear in authority, thereby ensuring a more efficient and decentralized decision-making culture that is supported by the relevant horizontal and vertical processes.”

From January to June 2019, the ICRC carried out an external review on gender equality, including a comprehensive analysis of staff data, salaries and staff perceptions as well as an assessment of existing policies and practices.

The review was carried out in partnership with EDGE (Economic Dividends for Gender Equality) , through its leading global assessment methodology and business certification standard for gender equality. In this process, the ICRC was benchmarked against over 200 international organizations.

The methodology analyses three elements: organizational data, including equal pay for equivalent work, staff perceptions and the effectiveness of relevant policies and practices in place. The certification is issued following an independent audit.

The findings revealed significant room for improvement in areas such as recruitment, promotion, assignment planning and supportive policies, including flexible work arrangements and parental support.

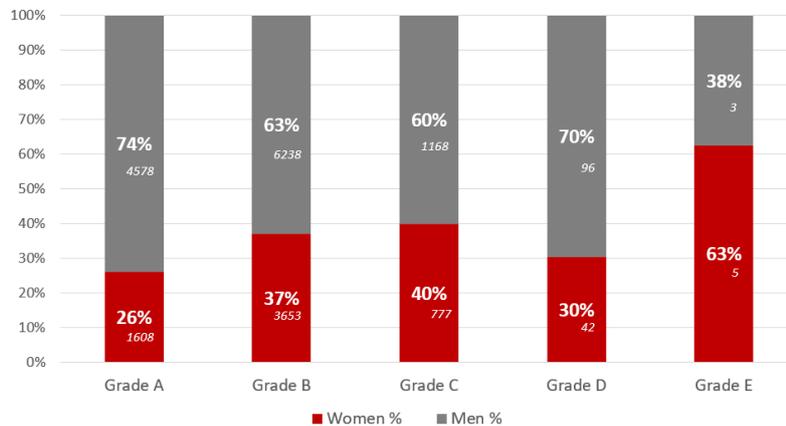
Based on the findings of this assessment, the actions below are being integrated into ICRC planning for the coming years.

Our intention	What actions we can take
Build accountability to foster sustainable gender balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Define relevant sub-targets for hires and promotions; and define actions to reach sub-target</li> <li>✓ Regular monitoring of progress against sub-targets on gender balance for key positions</li> </ul>
Ensure equal pay for equivalent work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Conduct yearly gender pay gap assessments and proactively communicate on the organization's commitment to ensure gender pay equity</li> </ul>
Find ways to reduce the number of women leaving the ICRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Systematically explore &amp; document reasons why women leave the ICRC in early and mid-career and define measures to counter this</li> </ul>
Increase visibility on criteria for promotion & use diversity to reduce bias	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Describe requirements for specific positions and what steps to take to reach these positions</li> <li>✓ Consistently adopt gender diverse shortlists and interview panels</li> </ul>
Support care-givers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Introduce a global standard on paternity leave</li> <li>✓ Offer childcare support (e.g. subsidies, access to facilities in proximity)</li> </ul>
Create targeted flexible working arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Design a menu of flexible work options based on the specific needs of staff</li> <li>✓ Encourage the use of flexible work arrangements by staff</li> </ul>
Reduce bias and assumptions on team level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Use interactive sessions to increase dialogue across teams on assumptions standing in the way of a respectful workplace</li> </ul>

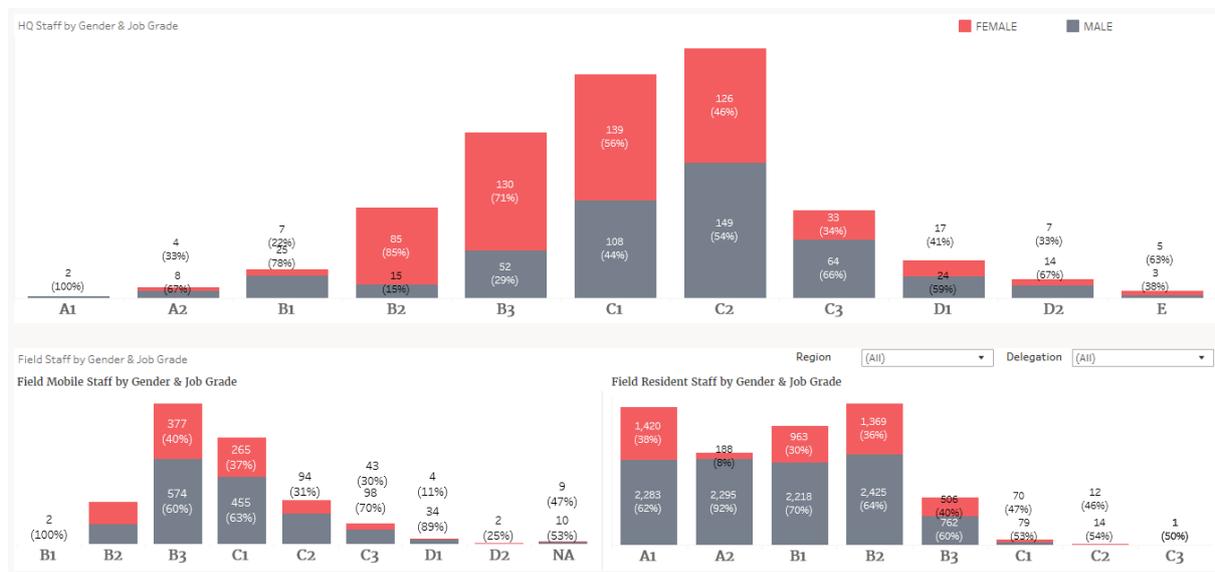
<sup>14</sup> ICRC Institutional Strategy: <https://www.icrc.org/en/publication/4354-icrc-strategy-2019-2022>.

In terms of representation, the ICRC Assembly is currently composed of 37% women and 63% men. At the most senior level in the organization, women represent 63% and men 37%, following the appointment of four female directors in 2018. The chart below shows gender distribution at all levels in 2018 (grade E being the most senior level).

### Gender balance | all staff



In 2018, the ICRC created dashboards for regions and delegations providing a breakdown by gender and job grade for all staff, enabling delegations to take action and track progress over time (see below).



In 2018, the ICRC substantially upscaled its Global Compliance Office (GCO) to provide support to staff and managers in upholding the highest ethical standards of behaviour. The GCO focuses mainly on risk management practices, internal control systems and the prevention and detection of and response to breaches of the Code of Conduct and related policies and procedures. In this context, an “IntegrityLine” was launched, which is a new reporting channel available to ICRC employees and externals. The Code of Conduct Operational Guidelines were implemented, and important progress was made with the development of the new Prevention of Sexual Misconduct Policy.

The ICRC has recently created a Career Centre, which provides career coaching, on a voluntary basis, to all staff. With this approach, the ICRC is working to foster gender balance by offering all staff the same tools and equal opportunities for growth and development. During 2018, 231 one-on-one coaching sessions took place, with women representing 60% of all staff members coached and men 40%.

In January 2018, the Directorate introduced a global maternity leave policy aimed at making it easier for staff to care for their newborn children and for mothers to have the right balance between private and professional life in the early stage of parenthood. The policy states the following:

- Staff members returning from maternity leave to a full-time position are entitled to work 80% of full-time working hours at full pay until the child is one year old.
- All staff members are entitled to a minimum of 16 weeks' paid maternity leave. Field mobile staff with five years of service are entitled to 24 weeks' paid maternity leave.

The ICRC is currently working on introducing a global standard on paternity leave, with ten working days' leave for all staff regardless of contract type. This proposal is up for adoption at the end of 2019.

On 8 February 2019, the event Gender Balance for Humanity gathered more than 250 colleagues from the ICRC and the IFRC (physically and online) to take a critical look at where we are and review what will realistically be done and achieved in 2019. The panellists<sup>15</sup> discussed the challenges we all face in achieving gender balance, and the moderator urged them to share their own experiences on the role of gender – biases, the importance of equality and the positive impacts of gender parity.

## **Standing Commission**

The Standing Commission has been very responsive to the 2017 call from the Movement and willing – within the scope of its functions – to engage in efforts to achieve its objectives through determined and significant actions. The following measures have been taken to this end:

- The chair and other members of the Standing Commission took advantage of every opportunity given to them at the various Movement fora they attended to promote this Movement commitment. On a more informal level, they regularly took part in bilateral or group consultations with networks and stakeholders active in promoting a better gender balance in the Movement's leadership and various follow-up initiatives for Resolution 12, particularly in the context of the preparation of the 2019 statutory meetings.
- Resolution 12 of 2017 reinforced the work already undertaken by the Standing Commission since 2016 to enhance transparency, gender balance and rotation in the election and composition of the Standing Commission. This work led to the implementation of administrative measures and submission to the 2019 Council of Delegates of a draft policy resolution aimed, in particular, at promoting action to achieve this goal.
- In addition, the Standing Commission noted during its deliberations that the Statutes and Rules of Procedure of the Movement, essentially drafted in 1986, could include provisions unduly marked by the masculine gender. In accordance with Article 18(2)(a) of

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<sup>15</sup> The panel consisted of Aishath Noora Mohamed, Secretary General of the Maldivian Red Crescent; Elhadj As Sy, IFRC Secretary General; Yves Daccord, ICRC Director-General; and Cécile Aptel, IFRC Director of Policy, Strategy and Knowledge. It was moderated by Nadia Younes, Chief Innovation Officer at EDGE.

the Statutes, the Standing Commission therefore formalized the interpretation that “the Statutes and Rules of Procedure should be considered as gender-neutral and that, unless the contrary intention appears, words and expressions indicating the masculine or feminine are not limited to the indicated gender and include the feminine and the masculine gender respectively”.

- Finally, the Standing Commission formally confirmed its commitment to take fair geographical distribution as well as equitable gender balance into account when proposing people to fill the posts of officers in the Council of Delegates and the International Conference.

The Standing Commission may also consider other relevant initiatives at its next session (2019–2023).

#### **4) CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

All Movement components are concerned about achieving gender balance at all levels. This engagement can be appreciated in the annual reports, strategic plans and operations of National Societies and the international components. The FDRS statistics shown above provide a baseline and general data to feed the broader conversation and improvements in gender and diversity inclusion. This data was previously lacking, which meant that we were working on assumptions.

The following are recommendations for strengthening the work in this direction, with a view to reporting on progress, achievements and challenges at the 2021 Council of Delegates:

- It is recommended that every National Society undertake a gender and diversity organizational assessment using the toolkit developed by the IFRC and follow up on its results. The toolkit helps National Societies to assess their performance on gender and diversity in the following areas:
  - political will and commitment
  - organizational culture
  - resources and capacity
  - programme delivery and implementation
  - accountability.
- It is recommended that the IFRC Secretariat as a whole should also undergo gender and diversity organizational assessments.
- In line with the revised Gender and Diversity Policy proposed for adoption at the IFRC General Assembly, National Societies and the IFRC should ensure that focus is placed on adhering to the policy in its entirety both from an institutional mainstreaming perspective and at the programmatic and operational level.
- It is highly recommended that every effort be made to promote equality, embrace diversity, understand intersectionality and strengthen participation and access to equal opportunities for those discriminated against, neglected or marginalized.
- Having created a solid baseline for internal gender equality at the ICRC, the organization will now need to invest and take action in a number of areas, such as recruitment, promotions, assignment planning and flexible work arrangements. This work is part of a larger effort to create an inclusive work environment, with a view to taking the best possible care of ICRC staff, ensuring the highest quality of humanitarian action and retaining and attracting people with the profiles required to meet future humanitarian challenges.