

Power of humanity

33rd International Conference
of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

9-12 December 2019, Geneva



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33IC/19/R3
Original: English
Adopted

**33rd INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
OF THE RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT**

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Time to act: Tackling epidemics and pandemics together

Resolution

RESOLUTION

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 may be particularly difficult to address,

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, 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 in conformity with 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 living with disabilities and people with chronic health conditions and others 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 outbreaks of measles, polio, dengue and cholera, Ebola virus disease outbreaks and the Zika virus disease epidemic,

acknowledging the wide range of 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 prevent, 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,

recalling the WHO Health Emergency and Disaster Risk Management Framework,

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 obligations to respect and protect the wounded and sick, health-care personnel and facilities, as well as medical transports, and to take all reasonable measures to ensure safe and prompt access to health care for the wounded and sick, in times of armed conflict or other emergencies, in accordance with the applicable legal frameworks,

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. *invites* States to enable and facilitate Movement components, in accordance with their mandates and capacities and with international law, to contribute to a predictable and coordinated approach to epidemics and pandemics, including effective international cooperation and coordination, and engagement with and support to affected communities;
2. *encourages* States to include National Societies, according to their mandate, capacities and as humanitarian auxiliaries to their public authorities, in national disease prevention and 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 State's 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 outbreak prevention, preparedness and response, based on a multi-sectoral, multi-hazard and whole-of-society approach, and *encourages* States and National Societies to build on evidence-based approaches to community-centric outbreak prevention, detection and response;
5. *also encourages* States and National Societies to further develop innovative tools, guidance and strategies to support implementation of the above measures and to strengthen their capabilities to respond and to utilize data and technology to improve the quality of response to epidemics and pandemics;
6. *reiterates* the importance of prioritizing and investing in prevention and preparedness as well as providing catalytic funding to support early action, including by National Societies;
7. *reiterates* also the importance of mobilizing resources and building capacities to enable developing countries and their National Societies to respond to the epidemic and pandemic threats;
8. *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;
9. *requests* the IFRC to prepare a progress report on the implementation of this resolution to the 34th International Conference in 2023.