



A Movement Fit for Purpose

December 2021

THE WORLD TODAY

In the bustling halls of the Geneva International Conference Centre back in December 2019, no one could have anticipated what a different world we would be living in less than three months later. Over 2,000 people were gathered together, side by side, to take decisions about the future of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement). Fast-forward to January 2021, and we are operating in a world impacted by a pandemic the likes of which most of us have never experienced before.

In a challenging environment compounded by global uncertainty and ongoing humanitarian realities, where does the Movement find itself at this critical time? Where is our place in this unimaginably changed world? How best can we continue to influence the international humanitarian agenda? And – perhaps most importantly – how can we ensure our adaptability, our accountability and a positive impact for the people who need our services the most? Now, more than ever, is the time to demonstrate that we are still a Movement fit for purpose.

There is no doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic has had far-reaching impacts across the globe – including on the Movement and the visibility with which we can prepare for the next Council of Delegates (CoD). While there are still uncertainties regarding the format and exact timing of the CoD, it is imperative that we prepare as well as we can in order to make the most of this unique gathering and focus on how we can work together more effectively during such difficult times.

OUR MOVEMENT, OUR OBJECTIVES

The questions above are not entirely new, and with each major crisis we are forced to evaluate our actions and our impact. With the birth of the Red Cross idea in 1859, the focus was – and continues to be – on alleviating human suffering in a humane, neutral and impartial manner. What was to become the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was created with the aim of ensuring protection and assistance for victims of armed conflict and internal strife. The initial objective of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) was to improve the health of people in countries that had suffered greatly during war and to strengthen and unite National Societies for the delivery of health activities. As a vital force of the Movement and by definition, National Societies play an indispensable role in preventing disease, promoting health and mitigating human suffering. These original objectives continue to resonate, even more so in the current global environment and with the overwhelming challenges being faced today.

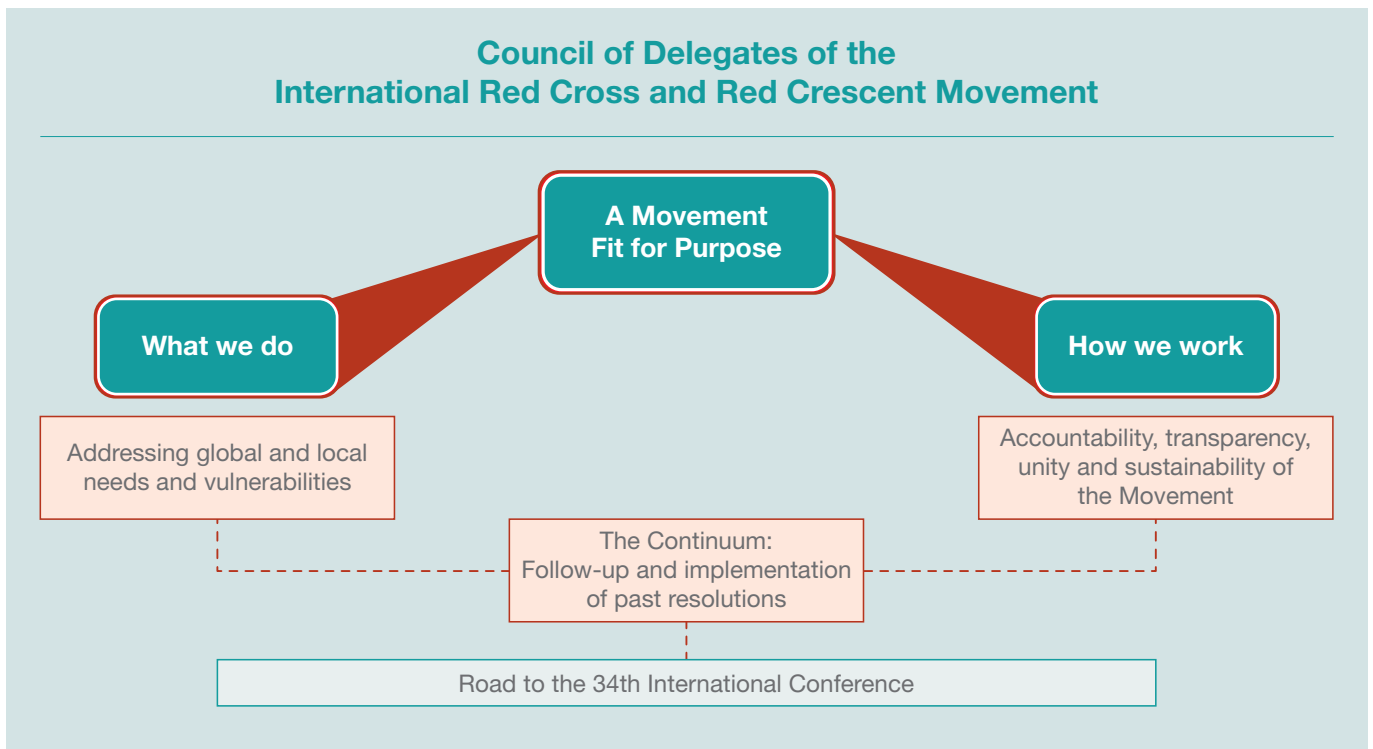
In asking ourselves the question ‘are we fit for purpose?’, we must recall these original objectives and ask if we are still a key force in changing the lives of the most vulnerable. People remain at the centre of the Movement’s work, but what makes us a trusted partner for people around the world? How can we ensure that we achieve our maximum collective impact? A key ambition for this and future CoDs is to tackle these questions and ensure a positive, collective and sustainable impact for the people and communities most in need. The CoD provides a platform for achieving this ambition, by fostering the development and coherence of Movement positions, policies, strategies and practices on humanitarian issues and thereby strengthening cooperation, coordination and mutual trust among Movement components – and ultimately with the people we serve.

Looking at different issues through the lens of how we conduct ourselves, how we can strengthen the unity and sustainability of our Movement and how to continue addressing the needs of the most vulnerable will be crucial to discussions in 2021. These elements also underscore the bigger question: are we a Movement fit for purpose in today's world? The 2021 CoD is the moment to come together to show that the Movement is aware, adaptable and capable of addressing the most pressing issues at hand.

2021 CoD: FRAMEWORK AND AMBITIONS

The 2021 Council of Delegates will arrive at a critical time, as the world will (hopefully) be emerging from the global COVID-19 pandemic. During this event, it will be important to demonstrate the relevance of the issues being discussed and the decisions taken – always coming back to **the ambition of being fit for purpose**. Ideas and ambitions for expected outcomes are already starting to take shape – including for proposed decisions, or journeys of exploration on different topics. Some of these are also being developed with a view to the 34th International Conference in 2023 and with consideration of the discussions that will take place in the preceding days at the IFRC General Assembly.

The visual below represents a proposed framework for the 2021 CoD, with two key areas of focus: **WHAT WE DO: Addressing global and local needs and vulnerabilities** and **HOW WE WORK: Accountability, transparency, unity and sustainability of the Movement**. Emerging substance and ideas are outlined further below for these two areas; each will include topics for exploration and topics requiring new decisions to set the course of action for the coming years. A number of these topics are closely connected to discussions and decisions taken at previous CoDs and International Conferences, demonstrating a **“continuum”** between the meeting cycles. This also highlights the ongoing importance and prioritization of the Movement's action in these areas. The CoD will be a key milestone on the road to the 34th International Conference and a time to explore, generate and test ideas to be put forward in 2023.



WHAT WE DO:

Addressing global and local needs and vulnerabilities

This past year has been dominated by the global effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and there is clearly no better time to bolster the **Movement's approach to tackling epidemics and pandemics and the role of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in large-scale health emergencies, and in ensuring safe access to and delivery of health care in armed conflicts, disasters and other emergencies**. While the repercussions of COVID-19 extend far beyond the health sector and include much broader social and economic impacts, there is no doubt about the toll it has taken on health workers worldwide in a variety of emergency and non-emergency settings. The CoD is THE moment to discuss, assess and appreciate the enormity of the Movement's work in this area, including the role of staff and volunteers. It is also an opportune time to identify how we can build on good practice and challenges that have been faced, how best to position ourselves, what we need to enable our work and – depending on the global situation in December 2021 – what more needs to be done.

While the pandemic has monopolized much of our work, other issues have shown no signs of abating. **The climate crisis** continues to exacerbate global and local needs and vulnerabilities, and as part of its efforts to address this challenge, the Movement is working towards the adoption of a **Climate and Environment Charter** at the CoD. This charter will serve not only to increase action within the Movement, but also to provide inspiration for progress in the broader humanitarian community. It is being developed in response to the unprecedented level of needs resulting from the climate crisis today and the necessity to collectively improve our practice and ensure the humanitarian system is better equipped and prepared to face the climate crisis.

The Movement continues to face significant challenges posed by **counter-terrorism measures and sanctions and their impact on humanitarian action**. Dialogue on this issue must continue in order to identify how we can collectively address it. In addition, efforts are also underway to develop a **Comprehensive Movement Approach to War in Cities** which will seek to improve our common understanding of the problem of urban warfare, mobilize the Movement, States and other actors towards a profound shift in how warfare is conducted in cities and strengthen our operational response. A new action plan to continue working **towards the elimination of nuclear weapons** will also be proposed for adoption at the CoD.

A new approach to **Protection within the Movement** is also being explored, with the ambition to think together in 2021 on how to enable and promote complementarity in our protection work and provide legitimacy to the Movement Protection Framework. The CoD will be an opportunity to undertake a meaningful dialogue on fundamental areas for a common understanding of protection and what the Movement wants to collectively achieve in this field. Discussions could also consider how to develop an approach that would be flexible enough to cover the scope of the Movement's protection work – with the potential to adopt a new approach in 2023.

As a follow-up to the Movement Statement on Migrants and Our Common Humanity adopted in 2019, there is an ambition to formalize and set in motion the development of a **Movement Strategy on Migration**. The Movement Leadership Group on Migration is at the helm of this process, which aims to build consensus to develop a new strategy and bring it to the 2023 CoD for adoption.

Finally, it is proposed to seize the opportunity to utilize the CoD as a key consultative step on the path towards a **Movement Approach to Education**, in an effort to consolidate the emerging Movement position and build on commitments from previous Statutory Meetings. The idea is to look at this issue from both an operational and policy perspective and collectively explore next steps towards further addressing education-related humanitarian needs at the forthcoming International Conference in 2023.

HOW WE WORK:

Accountability, transparency, unity and sustainability of the Movement

Ensuring effective impact and meeting the needs of the most vulnerable starts with us. It starts with how we work individually and collectively to achieve the best possible humanitarian outcomes. Central to this approach is ensuring that National Societies have the necessary resources and capacity to deliver, to position themselves as key actors in the humanitarian sphere and to provide an agile response to multiple emergencies. **Investing in National Societies** continues to be a critical area for the Movement in order for it to be fit for purpose and do the job we need to do. The 2021 CoD will be a crucial opportunity to identify how we can continue strengthening investment in National Societies, thereby ensuring the sustainability and impact of the Movement.

At the 2021 CoD, we will also discuss progress on implementing the Movement Statement on **Integrity**, adopted in 2019, and the measures put in place since that time to enable strong foundations and mechanisms to uphold the highest standards of integrity, transparency and accountability in our work.

It will be time to assess where we stand with the joint **Collective Impact Process** and review of the **Seville Agreement and Supplementary Measures**. The current process, led jointly by the ICRC Director-General and IFRC Secretary General with support from a joint Secretariat, is seeking to identify ways to enhance the collective impact of the Movement for affected people. The response to COVID-19 has seen a boost in Movement coordination and cooperation, including the launch of ICRC and IFRC coordinated appeals. At the Movement coordination level and through the **Strengthening Movement Coordination and Cooperation** initiative, we have already seen a wealth of tools, guidelines and lessons learnt material made available. Together with a Movement Advisory Group of National Societies, consultations will continue throughout 2021 to identify how the Movement can work together to reach its full potential, learning from recent emergencies such as COVID-19.

In relation to the notion of “how we work”, it is important to remember that **communication** is essential for any organization to function, including in the humanitarian sector. Organizations cannot exist without properly resourced communications, whether internal, external, traditional or digital, and a strategy that supports their operations. In the context of COVID-19, we have seen an increase in **Movement communication, public awareness and resource mobilization**, demonstrating the added value of the Movement identity in times of crisis. In addition, the global-to-local scope of this crisis represents a unique opportunity for the Movement to demonstrate its added value as a global network with a capacity for local action.

Exploratory discussions at the 2021 CoD could focus on **“Investing in communications: No risk, big returns”** and serve to identify how the Movement can work together to protect, strengthen and promote our brand. This could also be the moment to identify how best to harness the power of our network, improve our capacity to anticipate, mitigate and react to reputational risks and support our fundraising efforts to deliver better services to those most in need. Furthermore, there is a need to **create a trusted and protected humanitarian space in the world of digitalization and data**.

Building on the adoption of the **Movement-wide principles for resource mobilization** in 2017 and with the aim of maximizing the Movement’s fundraising potential, the development of a monitoring framework for these principles will also be explored, together with a set of Standard Operating Procedures to guide the use of the **Virtual Fundraising Hub**.

The Movement will also continue to strengthen its approach to **diversity and inclusion** and to explore how best to enable an **inclusive workplace and inclusive programming and tackle the issues of racism and discrimination**. The 2021 CoD will be an opportunity to foster alignment in our approaches to these issues, to see how the Movement can work in synergy and to harness our potential to lead and set an example in this critical area.

Finally, the Movement’s awards are always an opportunity to honour Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers and staff for their outstanding achievements. The CoD is expected to **establish a new Movement Restoring Family Links medal**, in line with its decision of 2019. A **reform of the regulations of the Henry Dunant medal and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Prize for Peace and Humanity** is also in preparation.

THE CONTINUUM

Maintaining a continuum between Statutory Meeting cycles is a large part of their success, and while many of the “new” topics outlined above are connected to outcomes from 2019 and before, several areas of follow-up will also be addressed through progress reports. These progress reports serve to highlight achievements, challenges and next steps for important issues brought forward at previous CoDs. In 2021, we can expect reports on topics including, among others, **Movement-wide Commitments for Community Engagement and Accountability; the Movement Approach to Strengthening National Society Statutory and Constitutional Base and Complementary Frameworks; Strengthening Implementation of the Movement Policy on Internal Displacement; and the Movement Policy on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS).**

The Road to the 34th International Conference *Shaping the agenda*

The 2021 CoD represents a key milestone on the road to the 34th International Conference in 2023. It is a moment when the Movement can get together to imagine, identify and shape ideas on the most pressing issues to be brought to the next International Conference. It is an opportunity to reconnect on our previous commitments and highlight our progress on implementation so far, whether in relation to resolutions, pledges or discussions. It is the chance to reinvigorate our collective and individual will to realize our commitments and to give them life over the next two years until the International Conference – and beyond! This milestone also represents a moment to consider how we connect with partners and processes beyond the Movement – our “external reality” – and how to harness the power and potential of our external relationships to bring our commitments to life. The Standing Commission, together with the ICRC and the IFRC as co-organizers, are considering how best to foster discussions and exploration with a view to the 34th International Conference on the margins of – or during – the CoD. Stay tuned for more thinking on this and feel free to contact us to share ideas or suggestions on format and focus!

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME

The agenda and substance for the CoD will be developed through an iterative drafting and consultation process. In addition to dedicated engagement opportunities, consultations with National Societies will be integrated into relevant upcoming global, regional and thematic meetings. Further details on these opportunities will be shared in due course. Meanwhile, please take note of the key milestones shown in the table below.

DATES	MILESTONES
28 February 2021	Deadline for feedback on concept note
End March 2021	Draft elements of resolutions shared
End April 2021	Deadline for feedback on draft elements of resolutions
June 2021	Convocation and provisional agenda shared
June 2021	Draft zero resolutions (with background reports) shared for consultation
August 2021	Deadline for feedback on draft zero resolutions and provisional agenda
October 2021	Mailing of official documents (including official draft resolutions and progress reports)
December 2021 (exact dates TBC)	2021 CoD takes place!

WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK!

Now is the time to reflect on the topics contained in this concept note, share your feedback and highlight any priorities that may have been missed as we start shaping the agenda for the CoD over the coming months. Remember, this is THE moment for the Movement to come together and take collaborative action and to set the scene for the years to come. We therefore want to hear from all components of the Movement, and especially National Societies, on how to shape this important agenda!

We are counting on the active involvement of all National Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC to ensure that the CoD agenda is informed by humanitarian realities on the ground.

To build on the ideas shared in this concept note and to ensure that a focused and coherent agenda is developed, please **send us the top two or three priority issues that the 2021 CoD should address**. Your feedback will be considered when preparing the provisional agenda for the CoD, which will be shared together with the official convocation in June 2021.

CONTACT US

Submit your feedback to the co-organizers at conferences@rcrcconference.org no later than **28 February 2021**. For information on past CoDs and the Statutory Meetings in general, go to www.rcrcconference.org.