



Power of humanity

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Enabling local leadership, capacity and delivery in principled humanitarian action and strengthening resilience

DRAFT RESOLUTION

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DRAFT RESOLUTION

Enabling local leadership, capacity and delivery in principled humanitarian action and strengthening resilience

The 34th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent,

acknowledging that the goal of humanitarian action, including locally led action, is to deliver a response that meets the needs of people affected by conflict, disaster and other emergencies in a principled, effective and comprehensive way that helps people to reduce their vulnerability and strengthen their resilience, both individually and through the social safety nets inherent in strong communities,

noting that locally led action entails the determination of humanitarian needs and strategies, participation in decision-making and the delivery of humanitarian aid by diverse and representative local actors and the support of international actors to achieve this, in line with humanitarian principles,

noting also that the term “local actor”, which is used throughout this resolution, refers to local and national State and non-State actors that undertake principled humanitarian action,

noting further that local actors have diverse expertise, skills and experiences that are critical to supporting global knowledge, best practice and leadership on principled humanitarian action and strengthening resilience,

recalling the primary responsibility of States and their essential role in enabling, guiding and coordinating humanitarian assistance and that international cooperation to address emergency situations and strengthen the response capacity of affected countries should be provided in accordance with international law and national laws (United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/46/182),

emphasizing that the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (Movement), which has a unique structure and identity based on the Geneva Conventions and the Statutes of the Movement, consists of national and international components working together in a complementary manner with respect for the Fundamental Principles, with and for people and communities affected by conflict, disaster and other emergencies,

emphasizing also that National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (National Societies) are the backbone of the Movement, with a network of local staff and volunteers who are often affected themselves and are the first responders in crisis situations, and that harnessing the potential of volunteers in all their diversity can enable National Societies to have a better understanding of needs, including those related to sex, age, disability and other diversity factors, to support more effective and accountable local humanitarian action,

noting the 2019 Council of Delegates resolution “Movement-wide Commitments for Community Engagement and Accountability”, which recognizes that communities affected by conflict, disaster and other emergencies have skills, capacities, community systems and structures, direct knowledge, understanding and experience of their situation and a strong interest in participating and leading in designing, implementing and making decisions about the humanitarian policies, practices and programmes that concern them,

recalling that the central role of local actors and the importance of locally led action are recognized in multiple international documents and agreements, in particular, the Grand Bargain launched at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, the Sendai Framework, the International Health Regulations and multiple resolutions of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (Humanitarian Affairs Segment) on strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations,

noting Resolution 3 of the 2015 Council of Delegates “International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement message to the World Humanitarian Summit”, which recognizes that “[l]ocal responders are often in the strongest position to deliver rapid, culturally appropriate and sustainable humanitarian assistance to their communities” and contains a call to prioritize and improve the capacity of local actors through “[m]ore sustained investment in national response systems and basic services [which] will deliver stronger partnerships between local and international actors”, including ensuring that local actors, such as Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers, who operate in dangerous conditions and have diverse needs are protected and insured,

noting also that the new Movement Coordination for Collective Impact Agreement (Seville Agreement 2.0) gives greater recognition to the central role of National Societies whenever a collective Movement response is needed,

recalling the specific and distinctive role of National Societies as auxiliaries to the public authorities in the humanitarian field and Resolution 2 (paragraphs 4a and 4b) adopted at the 30th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (International Conference) in 2007, which emphasizes that National Societies have a duty to seriously consider any request by their public authorities to carry out humanitarian activities within their mandate, that States must refrain from requesting National Societies to perform activities which are in conflict with the Fundamental Principles or the Statutes of the Movement or its mission and that National Societies have the duty to decline any such request and underlines the need for the public authorities to respect any such decisions taken by National Societies,

recalling also the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief, developed in 1994 and “welcomed” in an International Conference resolution the following year, under which signatories undertake to “build disaster response on local capacities”,

recalling further the Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Humanitarian Assistance adopted at the 21st International Conference (Istanbul, 1969) and revised at the 22nd (Tehran, 1973), 23rd (Bucharest, 1977), 24th (Manila, 1981), 25th (Geneva, 1986) and 26th (Geneva, 1995) International Conferences, which emphasize the principles of accountability in the decision-making of National Societies,

noting the Red Cross and Red Crescent model law that guides the development and review of Red Cross and Red Crescent laws, with an emphasis on recognizing and formalizing the special role of National Societies as principled and effective local actors,

noting also that in October 2023, the IFRC Governing Board adopted a position on locally led action that is about supporting National Societies that provide sustainable, locally led services in the areas of health, welfare, humanitarian response and community resilience building and emphasizes the need for collective investment in basic local structures that allow National Societies to become sustainable in the context they operate in,

noting further that the ICRC, including through its Institutional Strategy 2024–2027, is committed to: strengthening the Movement as a credible and impactful global humanitarian network, including by strengthening National Societies’ capabilities and coordinating Movement responses; strengthening local partnerships and engaging with diverse local actors,

including by integrating their perspectives and good practices into its own operations; and disseminating the Fundamental Principles,

noting further that investment in strengthening the capacities of local actors, including National Societies, is the foundation for achieving effective locally led action and greater collective Movement impact for people in crises and *acknowledging* that while progress has been made, there is much more that can and should be done,

emphasizing that the IFRC National Society development (NSD) framework, policy and compact are aimed at ensuring National Societies' continued relevance, effectiveness and sustainability, with full respect for the Fundamental Principles, as key local actors delivering accessible, quality services to communities at all times, and that NSD support is aligned with the priorities defined by each National Society,

noting that funding mechanisms established by the Movement to support local action by National Societies include the pooled NSD funds, specifically the IFRC Capacity Building Fund (CBF) and the IFRC and ICRC National Society Investment Alliance (NSIA), and for emergency response activities, the Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF),

noting also that the IFRC PGI Policy emphasizes the continued focus on locally led action as a transformative and inclusive means through which to build resilience and prevent violence, discrimination and exclusion by better recognizing and using people's different capacities, strengths and needs, engaging diverse local actors in local solutions and ensuring greater gender diversity in National Society leadership,

noting further that while progress has been made in delivering on the commitments on the localization of aid, in particular the Grand Bargain commitments, increased support and funding for local and national actors and the creation of an enabling environment for locally led action, States and international actors, including Movement components, need to take further and more significant steps and provide more support in order to achieve transformative system-wide change,

1. *urges* States and Movement components and *invites* international humanitarian and development organizations to adopt models for delivering humanitarian aid that promote effective and fair partnerships with, and create enabling conditions for, National Societies' local branches and committees and other local actors to drive, define and deliver humanitarian action in keeping with the Fundamental Principles;
2. *calls on* States and Movement components and *requests* international humanitarian and development organizations to invest in longer-term strategic relationships with National Societies and local actors that are grounded in genuine equitable partnerships, mutual respect, transparency, trust, shared responsibility and accountability;
3. *encourages* States and Movement components and *invites* international humanitarian and development organizations to ensure that local actors are represented and/or exercise leadership in key decision-making and coordination mechanisms by addressing practical barriers, such as those related to language and logistics, and providing capacity support;
4. *requests* States, Movement components and international humanitarian and development organizations to collaborate on integrating a risk-sharing approach into their operations by fostering a more equitable dialogue and distribution of risks, with the ultimate aim of providing better support to affected people;

5. *calls on* States and Movement components to take all reasonable measures to ensure the safety, security and well-being of local volunteers, including Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers, by increasing investment in security, including health security, and providing for their protection, safety and safeguarding;
6. *urges* States and Movement components and *invites* international humanitarian and development organizations to promote inclusive humanitarian action that considers the needs of affected people in all their diversity by promoting inclusive recruitment and management within humanitarian organizations, engagement with affected communities that takes into account their diversity and partnerships with groups representing marginalized people to better understand and respond more effectively to their needs;
7. *calls on* States and Movement components to meet their respective commitments on community engagement, such as by providing the right incentives, making changes to structures and ensuring long-term investment in local actors, including National Societies, across the humanitarian–development nexus to support inclusive community engagement systems;
8. *calls on* States to resolve and *requests* Movement components and international humanitarian and development organizations to help address legislative and administrative constraints on as direct as possible funding to local actors and to review and streamline due diligence and compliance requirements for local actors, including National Societies, while supporting integrity and accountability through measures such as simplified and common reporting requirements and investment in capacities to implement critical accountability policies that are consistent with national laws;
9. *requests* States and Movement components and *invites* international humanitarian and development organizations to increase investment in demand-driven and context-specific capacity strengthening for local actors, especially in fragile, conflict and vulnerable contexts, including in the form of dedicated, flexible, multi-year and unearmarked funding that can be used to cover overhead costs, with a view to supporting local actors' financial sustainability and accountability;
10. *calls on* States and National Societies, as appropriate, to increase investment in the Movement's pooled NSD funds, specifically the CBF and the NSIA, in order to deliver relevant, accessible and inclusive quality services with full respect for the Movement's Fundamental Principles;
11. *calls on* States and Movement components and *requests* international humanitarian and development organizations to increase the quantity and quality of funding to local actors for programme delivery, including investment in volunteering, ensuring that such funding is direct or as direct as possible and includes a proportionate and sustainable share for overhead costs and that funding channels are more accessible to local actors;
12. *requests* States and National Societies to promote, enhance and enable strong auxiliary relations at the national and local level between branches and local authorities, in accordance with the Fundamental Principles, ensuring, in particular, that local authorities understand the special status of National Societies and respect their impartiality, neutrality and independence;
13. *calls on* States to initiate, increase and/or strengthen a dialogue with National Societies on strengthening their legal base and to enact detailed and comprehensive Red Cross and Red Crescent laws that provide National Societies with the legal foundation required to serve as principled and effective local actors in their role as auxiliaries to the public authorities in the humanitarian field;

14. *encourages* States to take advantage of opportunities for dialogue, joint advocacy and learning exchanges between local authorities and local actors, specifically local National Society branches, on advancing the localization agenda, going beyond humanitarian response to include the strengthening of local disaster risk management, climate action and other priority sectors or areas of work, such as health and social well-being;
15. *reaffirms* that the Movement's humanitarian impact is based on the complementarity of its components, and that delivering its unique value-add and fulfilling its mandate will continue to require direct implementation by its relevant components;
16. *acknowledges* the commitment of the IFRC to conduct a review or evaluation, with support from other components of the Movement, to measure progress towards building sustainable locally led action, with a view to contributing to the body of evidence on achievements and results in moving the localization agenda forward.