



# Power of humanity

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## Statement on Integrity of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

PROGRESS REPORT

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## PROGRESS REPORT

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# Statement on Integrity of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the adoption of the Statement on Integrity of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (Movement) at the Council of Delegates (CoD) in 2019, various initiatives across the Movement have been undertaken individually and collectively by the Movement components to strengthen integrity. Several online and in-person events have also taken place across the Movement on a variety of topics relating to organizational and individual integrity, contributing to open discussions and reflections on how integrity challenges can be addressed. Notably, the Working Group – established to provide follow-up on the Statement on Integrity – oversaw the development of a Movement-wide community of practice (CoP) on strengthening integrity, with an online platform and resource library set to be launched shortly before the 2024 CoD. This represents a significant milestone in bringing together practitioners and others interested in integrity and providing a centralized platform where key information and knowledge resources on integrity-related topics can be found and shared.

This report shows steady progress made in the nine key areas emphasized by the Movement Statement on Integrity. It concludes with the recommendation for all Movement components to continue strengthening integrity and sharing knowledge and to learn from each other through active engagement and contributions to the Strengthening Integrity CoP.

### 1) INTRODUCTION

The Movement's 2019 Statutory Meetings addressed the issue of trust as a major theme. Across all the meetings (IFRC General Assembly, the CoD and the 33rd International Conference), there was an emphasis on the extraordinary strains on public trust in many traditional institutions resulting from social, political and technological changes around the world. It was also acknowledged that, in this environment, a key factor in ensuring that the Movement continues to enjoy the trust of communities, the public, governments, partners and donors and that of affected people and beneficiaries is its ability to demonstrate the highest commitment to principled and ethical humanitarian action and to the practice of integrity.

At the CoD, the Movement adopted the Statement on Integrity, which reflects the seriousness with which the Movement regards integrity, and reiterates the fundamental importance of the integrity and ethical behaviour of each component of the Movement at both an individual and institutional level. It describes the Movement's commitments to integrity and outlines different ways in which the Movement and its components address them in their practices and internal rules and procedures. Since the adoption of the Statement by the 2019 CoD, the context in which the Movement operates has continued to be challenging, but important steps have been taken by the Movement components individually and collectively to fulfil the commitments set out in the Statement.

### 2) BACKGROUND

The first progress report was submitted to the 2022 CoD and describes the progress made in addressing the different areas of the Movement Statement between 2020 and 2022. This second report therefore focuses mainly on the progress made between 2022 and 2024. It follows the structure of the Statement, reporting on its key themes and commitments and

describing some concrete initiatives undertaken by National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (National Societies), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) individually and collectively. The Working Group for the Follow-up of the Statement on Integrity, composed of senior representatives of National Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC, with representatives of the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent and the IFRC's Compliance and Mediation Committee (CMC) serving in an advisory capacity, has been supporting the development of the report and advising, in general, on the activities undertaken as part of the follow-up work.

### 3) ANALYSIS/PROGRESS

The following sections of the report describe the progress made in each area of the main commitments set out in the Statement by different Movement components. The report does not aim to give an exhaustive account of all the work carried by each Movement component but rather summarizes global progress in relation to the Statement's commitments and provides some concrete illustrations of how components of the Movement have been strengthening integrity during the reporting period (June 2022 to June 2024).

#### A) MAINTAINING AND PROMOTING THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

Promoting and adhering to the Fundamental Principles is essential to the Movement's humanitarian work being effective and to gaining and maintaining the acceptance and trust of people and communities. The 32nd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (International Conference) held in 2015 celebrated 50 years of the Fundamental Principles and recognized the importance of working on various aspects related to the Fundamental Principles, such as ensuring that National Societies have a sound legal and statutory base, reinforcing their auxiliary role and establishing and encouraging the sharing of good practice and peer-to-peer exchange among the components of the Movement.

On the subject of the auxiliary role of National Societies, a **Guide to Strengthening the Auxiliary Role through Law and Policy** is available and is accompanied by online training on the auxiliary role and the Fundamental Principles. They provide practical guidance to National Societies about how to strengthen their auxiliary role through domestic law, policies, plans and agreements. A **Legislative Advocacy Toolkit** has also been made available by the IFRC to be used to strengthen legislative advocacy knowledge and skills. The Toolkit is a useful resource designed to support a range of advocacy initiatives by National Societies, including those related to strengthening National Societies' legal base.

Over 1,120 people have already taken or are taking the online training course on the auxiliary role, and the IFRC has provided numerous in-person training sessions to National Societies and held a series of webinars on the auxiliary role, with a view to enhancing National Societies' understanding of their auxiliary role and legal base and sharing examples of National Societies that have successfully engaged in advocacy in this regard.

To promote peer-to-peer exchange and the sharing of good practice, in 2024, a **Global Think Tank on the Fundamental Principles in today's fast-changing world** was established by the IFRC. The Think Tank outlines the problems and challenges associated with the Fundamental Principles through a series of peer-to-peer leadership discussions on how to achieve their consistent and practical application in today's fast-changing world and on anticipating future challenges. The Think Tank, comprising 20 experienced people, mainly from the Movement, aims to define solutions, develop a thought package for leadership, staff, volunteers and members and promote strong engagement from National Society leaders to foster a widespread understanding of the Fundamental Principles. There are plans to publish a comprehensive global report setting out recommendations and to establish an open platform for regular surveys and a system to monitor knowledge and understanding of the Fundamental

Principles and their application by October 2025, the 60th anniversary of the Fundamental Principles.

National Societies also continued to receive support from the ICRC to improve their operational integrity and acceptance and their ability to abide by the requirements of principled humanitarian action, notably through the **Safer Access Framework (SAF)** and other forms of National Society development (NSD) support. Several SAF workshops were organized to this end, and National Societies were also able to exchange experiences and lessons learned through established regional SAF networks. The ICRC continued to promote and disseminate the Fundamental Principles, including through its international humanitarian law dissemination activities and a range of programmes and training on the practical application of the Fundamental Principles, particularly in situations of armed conflict and internal strife, intended for the leadership, staff and volunteers of National Societies.

Respect and support for the Fundamental Principles and principled humanitarian action will be strongly featured at the CoD and the International Conference in 2024. The Fundamental Principles will be considered in the light of some of the challenges posed by the current environment and changes in the global humanitarian landscape. At the CoD, the proposed resolution “**Call for respect and support for principled humanitarian action**” calls on States to support and facilitate adherence to the Fundamental Principles, particularly humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. The resolution also recommitments the Movement components to working on adherence to the Fundamental Principles and indicates the way forward for the ICRC, the IFRC and National Societies to take further action, in line with their respective mandates, to increase understanding of and adherence to the Fundamental Principles. At the International Conference, a call for respect for principled humanitarian action will be delivered to States, and a spotlight session will be held to engage in dialogue with the Conference participants on respect for impartial, neutral and independent humanitarian action.

## **B) ENSURING THAT OUR WORKPLACES ARE SAFE FOR ALL AND THAT THERE IS RESPECT FOR AND INCLUSION OF DIVERSITY AND GENDER BALANCE WITHIN OUR WORKFORCE**

The Movement Statement on Integrity emphasizes the importance of ensuring safe workplaces and preventing and protecting against any form of misconduct, discrimination, harassment, abuse or exploitation. This has been addressed in different ways, from the highest policy level to practical implementation.

Efforts have been undertaken to support National Societies in providing safe and inclusive workplaces. For example, since the adoption of the IFRC Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI) Policy in 2022 and the development of the Operational Framework for PGI, further work with partner National Societies has led to the development of the operational manual on prevention and response to sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA). An **organizational assessment toolkit for PGI has also been finalized and the Safeguarding Self-assessment Tool for National Societies**, designed to guide a more focused and specialized review of organizations’ safeguarding policies, mechanisms and procedures, has been developed and put into use. This self-assessment tool, including 16 standards for safeguarding, is being rolled out across a number of National Societies to enhance engagement, understanding and capacity.

In operational developments, a single standard has been established setting out safeguarding screening, vetting, training and retention requirements to ensure emergency surge actors across the IFRC membership deployed under the auspices of the IFRC carry out their work safely, understanding their duty to do no harm and the consequences of breaching requirements. Furthermore, a **comprehensive learning pathway for PGI** has been established to provide the necessary training, catering to the requirements of all operational personnel under the IFRC coordination umbrella during a crisis or emergency. An internal

learning and **information platform on safeguarding for IFRC personnel** and an **external Safeguarding Hub for National Societies** have been established.

On the subject of gender balance and inclusion, data from the **Federation-wide Databank and Reporting System** shows that while the overall proportion of women in National Societies has remained relatively steady – 55% in 2017 and 52% in 2022), a breakdown reveals that the share is not as equal across different levels. In 2022, the proportion of women volunteers and staff was 51% and 61% respectively, while the share of women on National Society governing boards was 31% and, in the top leadership roles, 25% of presidents and 32% of secretaries general were women. For the IFRC Secretariat, there has been an improvement in inclusion and gender balance, with the proportion of women increasing to 47% in top management, 38% in upper management and 43% in middle management (according to EDGE categories).

At the IFRC Secretariat, after the adoption of the **Policy on Child Safeguarding** and the more comprehensive **Policy on the Prevention and Response to Workplace Harassment and Discrimination**, a new revised PSEA policy has been developed and is under review. An essential care package of support has been developed for victims/survivors which also includes protection for witnesses, whistleblowers and subjects of concern. A dedicated victim/survivor liaison, provided by the Head of Safeguarding, is separate from but liaises closely with the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations (OIAI) and Legal to provide support and accompaniment to victims/survivors throughout an investigation or any other sexual exploitation and abuse documentation process.

Furthermore, there has been enhanced delivery and uptake of mandatory **training and refreshers** on the prevention and response to **sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH)** for all personnel and senior management team and Board members, and job descriptions for senior managers specifically refer to their responsibility to establish an environment free of sexual exploitation and abuse, promote a speak-up culture and embody and actively demonstrate IFRC values and a commitment to safeguarding. Finally, safeguarding risks have been included in the risk logs of every IFRC delegation, and a child safeguarding risk analysis is a mandatory requirement for all new IFRC programmes and emergency responses.

In early 2024, the ICRC adopted its policy on **gender, diversity and inclusion**. Pursuant to its institutional commitment to diversity and inclusion, the ICRC adopted the Values Compass with four core values – impact, collaboration, compassion and respect – to drive inclusive ways of working and promote the behaviours the ICRC as an organization wants to see more of to positively shape decisions and relationships and to ensure a safe working environment for all.

The ICRC continued to strive for gender parity among managers across all ICRC structures. Delegations saw the biggest improvement, with the proportion of female managers rising to 41%. At headquarters (HQ), the ICRC reached gender parity a few years ago. Today, 52% of its managers are women, and 48% are men. Another priority has been to ensure that staff on resident contracts at delegations have increased career opportunities as managers at delegations and as part of the pool of mobile staff for international assignments. There has been progress on these two indicators, particularly on increasing the proportion of managers on resident contracts. Today, 21% of managers at ICRC delegations are on resident contracts, and the remaining 79% are on mobile contracts. At HQ, staff composition is growing more diverse in terms of race and ethnicity, a trend that is expected to continue.

Ensuring safe and secure workplaces is also a matter that the ICRC addresses through training aimed at improving safety and security management across the organization and with other Movement partners. The priority audiences are managers, especially those in high-risk environments. During the reporting period, the ICRC trained over 150 managers and conducted over a dozen simulation exercises in 14 priority contexts. The Security and Crisis Management Support Unit frequently includes Movement partner staff in its training activities

and conducts simulation exercises with Movement partners to help foster improved collaboration and preparedness.

### **C) ENSURING COMPLIANCE WITH INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOURAL STANDARDS AND WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION**

Efforts to implement this commitment have focused on ensuring compliance with individual behavioural standards, including establishing institutional rules, mechanisms and procedures to prevent and address breaches of integrity and unethical behaviour.

To understand the gaps and capacity support needs of National Societies, a survey was conducted among National Societies prior to the 2022 CoD. An updated survey is planned to take place at the end of 2024 to refresh the mapping of capacities and support needs. In the meantime, to address gaps identified in the previous survey, National Societies have been provided with support in integrity risk management, investigation and compliance, policy development and implementation and the setting up of effective monitoring and reporting systems. For example, with the support of the IFRC, over 59 National Societies have adopted or are in the process of developing their own **PSEA policy**, and 51 National Societies across regions have adopted or are in the process of drafting a **child safeguarding policy**. This shows strong progress, with the number of National Societies having PSEA policies growing from 29 at the time of the last report (2022) to 59 in 2024.

Since 2021, the IFRC Secretariat has implemented a new **whistleblower hotline** called the **Integrity Line** and is currently working with 61 National Societies who are at different stages of putting in place their own. This also shows good progress, as it is a significant increase from the 26 National Societies mentioned in the last report (2022). As part of this process, the National Societies also received support on their whistleblower protection policies and codes of conduct. To strengthen implementation of the IFRC Secretariat Code of Conduct, a **redesigned training programme** on this subject – *Live the Code* – was launched in October 2023.

The IFRC is building a **network/roster of National Society investigators and auditors** to be deployed to provide short-term support (one to three months) to the IFRC and then to National Societies when needed. Specialized training has also been made available for fraud investigations, sexual exploitation and abuse investigations and audits.

Since the last CoD, the ICRC has developed policies on **SEAH prevention and response**, on the **prevention of and response to fraud**, on **child safeguarding** and on the **prevention and management of conflicts of interest**. A draft policy on **harassment and discriminatory conduct** is expected to be shared for internal stakeholder consultation in 2024. Strategies were also developed to ensure the effective operationalization of the fraud and SEAH policies with regular progress monitoring. ICRC employees continued to take mandatory training courses on integrity (latest version launched in 2022), with over 90% having completed the key courses by the end of 2023.

The ICRC, the IFRC and three National Societies continue to actively participate in the inter-agency **Misconduct Disclosure Scheme (MDS)** launched in 2019. The Scheme complements other vetting processes, such as police checks, and aims to fulfil two main commitments: (1) to systematically check with previous employers for any SEAH issues relating to potential new hires and (2) to respond systematically to other agencies making such checks. As a result of the use of the scheme and the information provided, job offers have been withdrawn in a number of cases following MDS checks.

### **D) ACCOUNTABILITY TO THE COMMUNITIES WE WORK WITH**

The Movement components are committed to ensuring strong accountability to the communities we work with, in line with the Movement-wide Commitments for Community

Engagement and Accountability (CEA), adopted at the 2019 CoD. The IFRC, the ICRC and key partner National Societies have collaborated to operationalize the commitments, resulting in the **Movement CEA Plan of Action** being updated in 2023, with a renewed focus on capacity strengthening, mainstreaming into programmes and sectors, improved use of data for evidence-based programming, leveraging digital technology and impact measurement. A global Movement CEA meeting took place at the end of 2023 to further discuss Movement collaboration and formalize the monitoring plan.

[The IFRC Community Engagement and Accountability Strategy 2023–2025](#) sets out the key actions and priorities for the next three years, including ensuring the IFRC and the network meet the Movement-wide Commitments adopted at the 2019 CoD. It is based on evidence from across regions, regional and global consultations and a decade of good practices and also addresses barriers and gaps that hinder progress. The strategy includes a theory of change and an action plan with key indicators and will be used to guide the development of regional and country CEA plans as part of annual planning processes. The IFRC has accelerated support to National Societies to help them systematically collect, analyse and use community data and evidence to inform decision-making and demonstrate the impact of community engagement. The IFRC's [Community Feedback Kit](#) has been leveraged to support the IFRC and National Societies in setting up systematic feedback systems ([92 feedback mechanisms](#) were active as at December 2023).

The IFRC has also launched a [Community Trust Index](#) to provide National Societies with an evidence-based tool to measure and explore community trust and develop recommendations, actions and plans to increase trust. The pilot phase of the initiative was successfully concluded in three National Societies, and an additional three National Societies are preparing to deploy the tool. Overall, data collected so far reveals significant levels of community trust in the three National Societies, particularly in the areas of delivering timely support, understanding needs and providing unbiased assistance, although all three scored lower on transparency, demonstrating the need for proactive action plans to address community perceptions about this issue.

The ICRC also engaged with National Societies for the formal inclusion of CEA in a number of partnership agreements. At the same time, operational collaboration with National Societies continued at delegations with joint projects carried out or initiated in a variety of contexts. Internally, the Accountability to Affected People (AAP) unit at the ICRC worked on six strategic areas, with notable achievements in (1) **setting and promoting standards** – e.g. contributing to the development of the ICRC Sex, Age and Disability Data Disaggregation Framework; (2) **monitoring progress and evidence** to further efforts to strengthen inclusive and accountable programming, with Community Contact Centres increasing to 28; (3) **strengthening staff capacity**, with over 500 colleagues having participated in AAP training; (4) **mainstreaming** a roadmap to reinforce AAP practice in Protection and Essential Services and address gaps; (5) **strengthening enabling systems**, working with the Institutional Performance Management team to provide guidance on AAP inclusion in planning for results; and (6) **communicating and peer learning**, collaborating with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to host a three-day learning event on “People-centric humanitarian response in conflict: Strategies, insights and dilemmas”, bringing together 30 speakers and over 1,000 participants from the sector.

While remaining committed to transparency, the ICRC also seeks to safeguard the safety and security of the communities it aims to serve and its staff, in line with the ICRC's Rules on Personal Data Protection and the organization's commitment to “do no harm” in its handling and use of humanitarian data. In March 2023, the ICRC, with OCHA and Switzerland, released the Principled Framework for Responsible Data Sharing Between Humanitarian Organizations and Donors. The framework seeks to reinforce humanitarian organizations' commitment to “do no harm”, while minimizing the risks and maximizing the benefits of data sharing in humanitarian action

## **E) ACCOUNTABILITY TO DONORS AND ACCESS TO INSTITUTIONAL AND FINANCIAL RECORDS WHILE ENSURING PRIVACY AND DATA PROTECTION**

The Movement is committed to ensuring the most appropriate levels of accountability to governments, donors and partners and aspires to be transparent and open, allow appropriate access to institutional and financial records and ensure robust financial management and data protection.

Progress was made in these areas, for example, a number of National Societies received support from the IFRC, peer National Societies and the ICRC to enhance their financial capacities under **finance development** initiatives. Such support encompassed financial accounting policies, processes and procedures, which should help programme and finance staff to fulfil their financial management responsibilities.

Moreover, the Finance Development Competency Network, the first CoP related to financial sustainability, which was launched in June 2022, has grown to include 954 members from 131 National Societies. The community saw the benefits of peer-to-peer support through increased knowledge-sharing initiatives as well as deeper engagement through discussion, events, collaboration and resource sharing, which continues to grow through sub-communities on topics such as integrity in finance, core cost, and financial systems and compliance.

## **F) POOLING RESOURCES AND EXPERIENCE TO STRENGTHEN INTEGRITY**

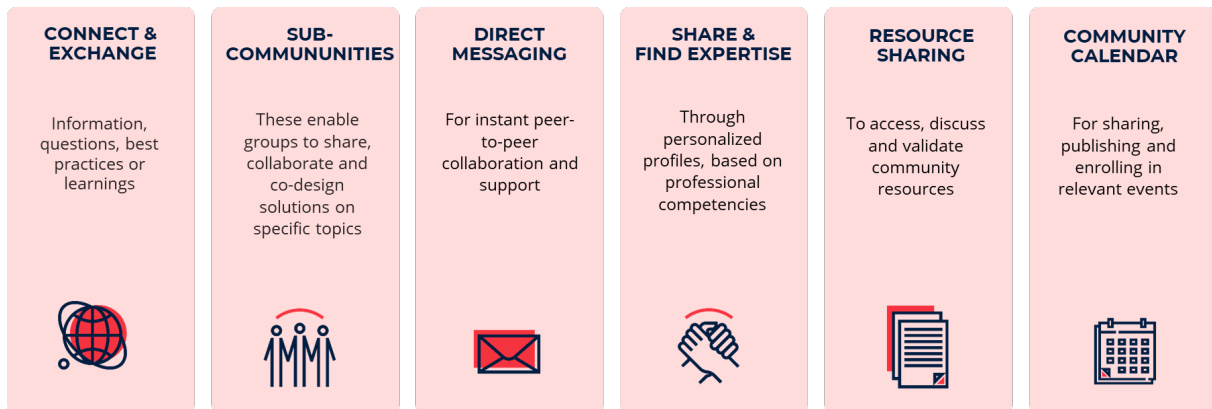
The Statement on Integrity includes a commitment to pool resources and experience in order to provide effective support, training and guidance, with a view to strengthening integrity across the Movement.

The **IFRC's Capacity Building Fund (CBF)**, which was reengineered in August 2021, increased support to address emerging NSD needs, in line with the seven transformations set out in the IFRC's Strategy 2030. The CBF is open to all National Societies, at all times, and is designed to support seven specific development priorities, one of which is "Integrity, transparency and accountability". From August 2021 to May 2024, 32 out of the 119 standard grants provided by the CBF addressed this development priority.

The **National Society Investment Alliance (NSIA)**, a joint IFRC/ICRC pooled funding mechanism, provides funds to National Societies to support NSD priorities, one of which is the reinforcement of their capacity to manage financial resources transparently, accountably and according to internationally recognized standards. The NSIA addresses capacity gaps by supporting the development and sustainability of National Societies in fragile contexts. In its first five years, the NSIA has supported 51 National Societies in carrying out 65 initiatives, with funding amounting to over CHF 13 million.

It was acknowledged that the Movement already has many policies, guidelines and tools in place to strengthen integrity but that it was necessary for them to be better disseminated and utilized across the Movement. Another gap identified was the need to enhance exchanges, dialogue, the sharing of good practice and peer-to-peer learning among the Movement components on the topic of strengthening integrity. Therefore, the Working Group for the Follow-up of the Statement on Integrity has focused its efforts on developing a **Strengthening Integrity CoP** which includes a resource library. The CoP is intended to become a global community of Red Cross and Red Crescent practitioners in the field of strengthening integrity, with a digital platform for collaborating and sharing resources and expertise and providing peer-to-peer support. It provides a space for exchange and learning on a wide range of integrity-related topics, but it does not serve as a mechanism for reporting integrity concerns or addressing and managing integrity cases. The figure below shows some of the key functions of the CoP in more detail.





To develop the CoP, several engagement sessions were held, which explored a variety of integrity-related topics, such as learning about reporting systems, including the Integrity Line. Participatory sessions were also held on how to better define the key interest topics and ways of engaging in a CoP. Through these sessions, an active community of National Society, ICRC and IFRC practitioners has emerged and interest in sharing knowledge and good practices has been reinforced. This is a good starting point for the CoP and helps build momentum for the planned launch of the Strengthening Integrity CoP in September 2024 on the <http://communities.ifrc.org/> platform.

## G) REVISION OF STATUTORY AND LEGAL BASE AND RELATED REGULATORY AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS

A sound and comprehensive legal and statutory/constitutional base is key to ensuring integrity. The ICRC and the IFRC continued to work closely together during the reporting period to support National Societies in reviewing and strengthening their legal base and statutory frameworks in line with the Movement's agreed standards. Through the **Joint ICRC/International Federation Commission for National Society Statutes (JSC)**, support and advice has been provided over the past two years to National Societies to help them revise their statutes/constitutions and related frameworks and bring them into line with the 2018 Guidance for National Society Statutes and its 25 standards (relating to the application of the Fundamental Principles, good governance, transparency and the establishment of effective internal integrity, compliance and dispute resolution mechanisms and processes). As part of the support provided on related legal frameworks, the JSC also helped several National Societies with the revision of their Red Cross/Red Crescent law or recognition act, in line with the 1999 model law. For greater detail on the progress made by National Societies and on the Movement's commitment to supporting National Societies, please see the JSC's biennial report to the 2024 CoD.

To support National Societies in strengthening their legal base, a proposal for a revised **model Red Cross or Red Crescent law** is currently in preparation and consultation within the Movement. The aim of the revision of the model law is to provide a modern and ambitious benchmark for the review and amendment of national Red Cross and Red Crescent laws.

To help National Societies develop a solid policy base, particularly in the area of integrity, **an IFRC Starter Kit for Policy Development** (with a focus on integrity-related policies) has been developed. This Starter Kit includes general guidance on effective policy processes for National Societies and model policies on key integrity-related areas, such as PSEA, child safeguarding, whistleblower protection, and fraud and corruption prevention and control. The model policies draw on good practice examples of policies from National Societies, the IFRC Secretariat and the broader humanitarian sector. The model policies provide guidance on the expected content of a policy and, at the same time, allow for them to be adapted to different contexts and legal frameworks. Overall, the Policy Starter Kit aims to support policy

development, which also leads to good policy adherence and implementation throughout the National Society. In Section C of this report, more detailed figures on progress in developing integrity-related policies are provided, and the steady progress achieved over the last two years is highlighted.

## H) ENSURING THAT PARTNERSHIP CONDITIONS REFLECT A FIRM COMMITMENT TO INTEGRITY

There is growing emphasis on demonstrated trust and accountability towards the communities served, partners, donors and the broader public. National Societies and other Movement components need to demonstrate accountability through rigorous processes, such as due diligence and safeguarding assessments. While the emphasis on accountability and integrity is welcomed, the proliferation of requirements established by donors and partners, each with its unique set of standards and procedures, poses a significant challenge to organizations with constrained resources. There is therefore a need to develop a mechanism that allows National Societies to demonstrate their capacity to be the trusted partner of choice and streamline due diligence assessment requirements.

In response to the increasing demands and emphasis on integrity and accountability and with the aim of strengthening trust in National Societies and enhancing their accountability, the IFRC is developing a more sophisticated **IFRC certification** system, based on the experience gained over the years and new trends in the humanitarian system. This certification provides a comprehensive standard and allows National Societies to demonstrate their credibility and adherence to it. The standard aims to consolidate different aspects of accountability,<sup>1</sup> based on existing IFRC commitments and standards and key due diligence requirements, aligned with industry standards, thereby allowing both the specificities of National Societies and sector-wide expectations of humanitarian and development organizations to be taken into consideration.

External verification will be conducted by an independent, third-party body to ensure the independence and credibility of the certification. Tailor-made support will be provided to National Societies that are aiming to be certified or have identified particular areas for improvement as part of the certification process. IFRC certification will seek recognition from key Movement and external partners and donors, with the objective of harmonizing and reducing due diligence assessment requirements imposed by donors on National Societies and facilitating access to direct funding. Access to reliable, readily available information on a National Society's capacity in key due diligence areas will also benefit donors as it will make for faster, simplified assessments. Additionally, it will serve as a mechanism for self-assessment, empowering National Societies to pinpoint areas for growth and enhancement. The new certification concept will be brought to IFRC governance in 2024 and further developed in 2025.

This initiative is also welcomed by the ICRC, which recognizes the burden that multiple and disparate due diligence assessments can have on the National Society concerned. The new certification system was also developed taking into account lessons learned from another pilot initiative that brought together a number of National Societies, the ICRC and the IFRC in an attempt to harmonize due diligence assessments. The ICRC also centralized its National Society due diligence assessments. This work started at the end of 2021 and was completed at the beginning of 2022. The digital platform provides better oversight and monitoring, including the development of a tableau-based dashboard that provides an overview of all due diligence assessments and their completion status.

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<sup>1</sup> Focusing on areas such as financial accountability; CEA; safeguarding and duty of care; environment, leadership and legal and statutory base; and strategic and operational planning, monitoring and reporting.

Another way for Movement components and their partners to demonstrate their firm commitment to integrity is through partnership agreements. To that end, the ICRC has revised all its partnership agreement templates over the course of the past two years, including the Movement-specific Annex on Partners' Duties and Commitments, which emphasizes mutual commitments and obligations relating to integrity. As for due diligence assessments, the ICRC centralized all Movement partnership agreements on the same digital platform, called Red Loop, providing better oversight of the many partnerships the ICRC has with National Societies and the IFRC globally. At the end of the first quarter of 2024, there were over 300 such partnerships in place.

**I) IFRC COMPLIANCE AND MEDIATION COMMITTEE (CMC), IFRC OFFICE OF INTERNAL AUDIT AND INVESTIGATIONS (OIAI) AND ICRC ETHICS, RISK AND COMPLIANCE OFFICE (ERCO)**

In its concluding sections, the Statement makes specific reference to the bodies entrusted with addressing and helping resolve integrity issues.

**The IFRC CMC is a constitutional body** established to assist the bodies of the IFRC in taking appropriate steps to resolve any potential breaches of integrity by a National Society or any IFRC body. Over the past two years, the CMC focused on two types of activities: **(1) raising awareness on integrity and (2) handling allegations of breaches of integrity**. For the first, **the CMC dashboard** was used to develop a culture of accountability and transparency within the IFRC network, monitor the organizational health of the Federation and its members and help identify where the Secretariat should focus its support. The CMC contacts National Societies on a regular basis to inform them about their status of compliance with the eight dashboard criteria. It is currently handling ten allegations of breaches of integrity. During the reporting period, the CMC successfully closed three integrity cases.

**The IFRC OIAI performs independent and objective assurance and investigation functions** that add value to and enhance the performance of the IFRC and its members. It helps the organization accomplish its objectives by establishing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluating and improving the effectiveness of governance, risk management and control processes. To ensure the OIAI meets its obligations, the IFRC has adopted the International Standards of the Institute of Internal Auditors for its audit work, and the Code of Professional Standards of the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (ACFE) and the Core Humanitarian Standard for its fraud and SEAH investigations. These internationally recognized standards set out best practice in internal auditing and investigations.

In 2023, the OIAI received 399 complaints. Thirteen investigations were substantiated in 2023, all of which led to internal action being taken. In response to its growing caseload, the OIAI has increased its investigation capacity and now has investigators based in each region. The OIAI also publishes a report on its activities annually, as committed to in the Statement.

**The ICRC Ethics, Risk and Compliance Office (ERCO)** has five interconnected functions – ethics, risk management, internal control, investigations and compliance reporting. It focuses on strengthening the ICRC's culture of integrity by reinforcing the importance of ethical and risk-informed decision-making for the benefit of the people it serves. The Integrity Advisory Group, an interdepartmental group led by ERCO, worked to improve staff members' understanding of their roles and responsibilities with a view to strengthening a culture of integrity. The group also supported a network of Code of Conduct facilitators, first established in the field in 2020.

Following industry standards, the ICRC promotes the reporting of complaints through specific channels. Complaints may be directed to the ERCO Investigation Unit (IU), managers or other people in positions of trust. In 2023, the IU registered a total of 782 allegations of misconduct, which represented a 19% increase in reporting compared to 2022 and the highest number of

allegations recorded in a year since ERCO was established. To ensure that cases are dealt with efficiently, ERCO increased the IU's workforce of investigators, implemented measures to accelerate the processing and investigation of alleged violations of the Code of Conduct and continued to collaborate with other investigative bodies in the Movement and other international organizations. These measures enabled the overall number of open cases to be reduced, despite the higher number of allegations reported in 2023.

#### **4) IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING**

There will be a final progress report on follow-up to the Statement on Integrity at CoD 2026. Also, the resolution "Call for respect and support for principled humanitarian action", proposed for adoption at the 2024 CoD, includes key commitments for the components of the Movement on continuing to strengthen their integrity collectively and individually. The progress of this continued work on strengthening integrity and, particularly, progress made through the Strengthening Integrity CoP will be monitored and reported to the 2026 CoD through these reports.

#### **5) CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This report shows that despite the challenging operational environment, continued progress has been made by the Movement components in addressing the different areas of the Statement on Integrity. However, challenges remain, and it is therefore important for the Movement components to continue investing individually and collectively in strengthening integrity and ethical behaviour within the Movement. While significant progress has been made by the IFRC, the ICRC and National Societies, there is still a long way to go to reach the level of excellence that will ensure long-term implementation. This is a journey of permanent improvement and requires political will at all levels. Financial investment in strengthening integrity needs to be increased through domestic and international fundraising. Both are critically important to achieving an institutional culture of integrity and accountability without affecting the delivery of humanitarian operations.

To this end, the 2024 CoD resolution "Call for respect and support for principled humanitarian action" includes elements relating to strengthening integrity and calls on National Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC to step up their collective efforts to share their experiences and learning on strengthening integrity and trust. Furthermore, it welcomes the development of a CoP on strengthening integrity for continued learning and improvement and encourages all components of the Movement to join and contribute to it. It is recommended that active learning and peer-to-peer exchange on strengthening integrity take place across the Movement through the CoP.

The Working Group is thanked for its valuable contribution and dedication which has helped bring to life the Movement Statement on Integrity under its remit, as evidenced by the progress described in this report and the continuous work to promote learning and improvement in the field of integrity strengthening – notably through the CoP.