



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## CONSTITUTION

Revised and adopted by the VIth Session of the General Assembly  
Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), 23-26 November 1987

Amended by the VIIIth Session of the General Assembly  
Budapest (Hungary), 25-28 November 1991

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Geneva (Switzerland), 20-22 November 2007

## **PREAMBLE**

We, the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, being the basic units and vital force of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, founded in 1919 the League of Red Cross Societies “as a purely voluntary non-political, non governmental, non sectarian organisation, to anticipate, diminish and relieve the misery produced by disease and calamity in a systematic approach”<sup>1</sup>.

We are committed to protecting human dignity and to improving the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity.

We carry out our humanitarian activities in conformity with the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement: Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality, Independence, Voluntary service, Unity and Universality\*. To alleviate human suffering, we work as auxiliaries to our public authorities in the humanitarian field and through our global network of National Societies and the Movement.

With the objectives of ensuring the co-ordination of our international activities, the development and implementation of common standards and policies, organizational development, capacity building and effective international disaster management, and of having an international presence and recognition as a global partner in humanitarian assistance, we therefore have agreed to unite ourselves and to establish an international body, named the “International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies”, whose general aim is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities.

With these objectives in mind, we hereby set out the constitutional provisions of this international body and the related rights and duties by which we agree to abide.

We further recall that the mottoes “Inter arma caritas” and “Per humanitatem ad pacem” together express the ideals of the Movement.

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<sup>1</sup> Bulletin of “The League of Red Cross Societies”, Geneva, Switzerland, May 15, 1919

SECTION I  
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION

Article 1  
Membership Organisation

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| <i>Character of the Organisation</i> | 1 | The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (the “International Federation”) is a membership organisation established by and comprised of the National Societies. |
| <i>Status in the Movement</i>        | 2 | The International Federation is a component of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the "Movement").   |

Article 2  
Legal Personality

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| <i>Legal personality</i> |  | The International Federation acts under its own Constitution with all the rights and obligations of a corporate body with legal personality. |
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Article 3  
Headquarters

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| <i>Head-quarters</i> |  | Unless otherwise decided by the General Assembly of the International Federation (the “General Assembly”), the headquarters of the International Federation is in Geneva, Switzerland. |
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Article 4  
General Object

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| <i>General Object</i> |  | The general object of the International Federation is to inspire, encourage, facilitate, and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world. |
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Article 5  
Functions

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| <i>Functions</i> | 1 | To achieve the general object as defined in Article 4 of the |
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Constitution, in conformity with the Fundamental Principles and in the context of the Statutes of the Movement and the resolutions of the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (the "International Conference"), the functions of the International Federation shall be the following:

A. Services to National Societies:

- a) act as the permanent body of liaison, co-ordination and study among the National Societies and to give them assistance;
- b) encourage and promote in every country the establishment and development of an independent and duly recognised National Society;
- c) assist the National Societies in risk reduction, in disaster preparedness, in the organisation of their relief actions and in relief operations themselves;
- d) encourage and co-ordinate the participation of the National Societies in activities for safeguarding public health and the promotion of social welfare in co-operation with their appropriate national authorities;
- e) encourage and co-ordinate between National Societies the exchange of ideas for the education of children and young people in humanitarian ideals and for the development of friendly relations between children and young people of all countries, and to share good practices for the participation of youth in volunteer services and decision-making processes; and
- f) assist National Societies to recruit volunteers and members from the population as a whole and to promote awareness and understanding of the Fundamental Principles and ideals of the Movement to them and to the general public.

B. Humanitarian activities:

- a) bring relief by all available means to all disaster- affected persons;
- b) organise, co-ordinate and direct international relief actions in accordance with the "Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Disaster Relief" adopted by the International Conference;
- c) bring relief to victims of armed conflicts, to assist in the promotion and the development of international humanitarian law and to disseminate this law and the Fundamental Principles, in accordance with the agreements concluded with other components of the Movement; and

d) be the official representative of the National Societies in the international field, among others for dealing with any matters in connection with decisions and recommendations by the General Assembly, and to be the guardian of their integrity and the protector of their interests.

2 The International Federation shall in addition carry out any other functions validly given to it by the General Assembly.

3 The International Federation shall carry out the mandates entrusted to it by the International Conference.

4 In each country the International Federation shall act through or in agreement with the National Society and in conformity with the laws of that country.

## SECTION II NATIONAL SOCIETIES

### Article 6 Members of the International Federation

The membership of the International Federation shall include all National Societies duly admitted as members as per Article 7 (hereinafter the “National Societies”), on which the strength of the International Federation and its ability to achieve its general object depends.

### Article 7 Admission

*Eligibility* 1 To be eligible for membership of the International Federation a National Society must be recognised by the International Committee of the Red Cross.

*Admission* 2 A National Society becomes a member when it is admitted to the International Federation in accordance with this Constitution and the Rules of Procedure.

*Conditions for Admission* 3 Any National Society wishing to become a member of the International Federation shall apply to the President of the International Federation (the "President") and shall formally undertake to respect the provisions of the Constitution.

*Decision of Admission*

- 4 The admission of a National Society is subject to decision by the General Assembly. Any applicant National Society may be admitted provisionally by the Governing Board until the General Assembly takes a decision. A National Society admitted provisionally may take part in the work of the International Federation but has no voting right and cannot be elected to any official position in the International Federation.

Article 8

Rights and Duties of National Societies

- 1 In order to ensure that the International Federation is able to fulfil the functions set for it, and to guarantee the equal rights of its membership, National Societies have the following rights and duties:

*Rights*

A. Rights:

- a) National Societies shall have the right to be represented at and to participate in the work of the General Assembly, with the right to vote;
- b) National Societies may stand for election and nominate candidates, to all official bodies, commissions and committees of the International Federation;
- c) National Societies may call upon and receive from the International Federation any of the services and information which the International Federation has the power and the ability to provide, in conformity with its general object, functions, resources, and legal obligations;
- d) National Societies may submit, on their own initiative, in their name or in that of a group of National Societies, proposals to the General Assembly and to other bodies, commission and committees of the International Federation and;
- e) National Societies may call upon sister National Societies for support in accordance with the applicable rules of co-ordination and co-operation.

*Duties*

B. Duties:

- a) National Societies agree to act at all times in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement;
- b) National Societies agree to work diligently in pursuit of their humanitarian objectives as set out in the Statutes of the

International Movement, including minimising the impacts of disaster and disease; strengthening local capacity to address vulnerability; promoting respect for diversity and human dignity; and alleviating the suffering resulting from armed conflict and internal strife;

- c) National Societies agree to abide by the policies, decisions and rules adopted by the Council of Delegates and the International Conference;
  - d) National Societies, following the principle of Unity, agree to respect the territorial integrity and independence of one another;
  - e) National Societies agree to provide the necessary support to the International Federation in the pursuit of its general object and functions;
  - f) National Societies agree to follow the rules set out in this Constitution, as well as to apply the decisions adopted by the General Assembly and by the Governing Board;
  - g) National Societies recognize the necessity of ensuring their collective integrity, and agree to co-operate fully with the Compliance and Mediation Committee as well as to take the necessary steps to ensure adherence to the standards of integrity required of them;
  - h) National Societies agree to remit on the date set out in the Financial Regulations an annual contribution to the International Federation of the amount approved by the General Assembly;
  - i) National Societies agree to contribute to the International Federation-wide reporting and performance management systems, once such a system have been adopted by the General Assembly, and to provide the International Federation with annual reports and audited financial statements and;
  - j) National Societies agree to inform the International Federation, through the Secretary General, of any proposed amendments to their Statutes and of the composition of their main governing and managing bodies.
- 2 National Societies shall enjoy all the rights granted to them and comply with all the duties stipulated in this Constitution.
- 3 None of the provisions of this Constitution shall limit in anyway the National Societies' mandate as set out in the Statutes of the Movement

Article 9  
Cessation of Membership

- Dissolution*      1      A National Society shall cease to be a member of the International Federation when it is dissolved and in the circumstances set out in paragraphs 2 and 3 below.
- Withdrawal*      2      Any National Society may withdraw from the International Federation provided it gives the President six months' written notice of withdrawal.
- Expulsion*      3      A National Society may be expelled from the International Federation by decision of the General Assembly in accordance with Article 13 of this Constitution.

Article 10  
Integrity and Compliance

- Standards of Integrity*      1      National Societies and constitutional bodies of the International Federation are expected to comply with applicable integrity policies adopted by the General Assembly and National Societies also with the duties of National Societies as set out in this Constitution.
- Breaches of Integrity*      2      Any failure to comply with the policies or duties referred to in paragraph 1 above will be considered a breach of integrity and shall be referred to the Compliance and Mediation Committee, as set out in Article 31.

Article 11  
Financial Default

Any failure to pay the required statutory contributions shall be subject to the rules and regulations stipulated under Article 35 of this Constitution.

Article 12  
Suspension

- Suspension*      1      The Governing Board, after examining the recommendation of a Panel formed by the Compliance and Mediation Committee and in accordance with the Rules of Procedure, may decide to suspend a National Society from membership status in the International Federation.

<i>Grounds for suspension</i>	2	<p>A National Society may be suspended:</p> <p>a) if it ceases to fulfil the conditions for admission provided for in this Constitution, in particular if, because of modification, its Statutes are no longer in conformity with the Fundamental Principles;</p> <p>b) if the National Society on its own initiative or under pressure from the government of its country contravenes any of the Fundamental Principles;</p> <p>c) if the National Society uses its connection with the International Federation for a purpose which is not in conformity with any of the Fundamental Principles;</p> <p>d) if the National Society acts contrary to the general object of the International Federation and persistently refuses to comply with its duties under the Constitution; or</p> <p>e) if the National Society is considered by the Governing Board to having committed a breach of integrity.</p>
<i>Consequences of suspension</i>	3	A suspended National Society shall immediately lose its rights as a member.
	4	An individual holding any office on appointment by a suspended National Society, except such individuals elected or appointed to such office in their personal capacity, shall forfeit the right to perform any official function -
	5	Any vacancy created by the suspension of a National Society shall be filled by the competent body, committee or commission according to the procedures for appointment or election to such office at its next session.
<i>Reinstatement</i>	6	The Governing Board may revoke the suspension of a suspended National Society when the reasons for suspension no longer apply.

Article 13  
Expulsion

<i>Expulsion</i>	1	When the Governing Board determines that the continued membership of a National Society is a grave risk to the International Federation or its membership, the Governing Board may recommend to the General Assembly, as a last resort, expulsion of that Society.
<i>Consequences of expulsion</i>	2	An expelled National Society shall remain liable for all obligations to the International Federation or its membership incurred prior to expulsion.

- 3 An expelled National Society shall immediately lose its rights as a member.
- 4 An individual holding any office on appointment by an expelled National Society, except such individuals elected or appointed to such office in their personal capacity, shall forfeit the right to perform any official function
- Readmission* 5 A National Society which has been expelled can reapply for admission following the procedures laid down in Article 7 once the reasons for expulsion no longer apply.

### SECTION III

#### BODIES OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION

##### Article 14 Statutory Bodies

The Statutory Bodies of the International Federation, are those bodies having governance functions, which are:

- § The General Assembly;
- § The Governing Board;
- § The President;

and the body with executive functions, which is the Secretary General.

##### General Assembly

##### Article 15 Definition

Subject to the Constitution, the General Assembly shall be the supreme governing body of the International Federation.

##### Article 16 Composition

The General Assembly shall be composed of the National Societies.

Article 17

Functions

1 The General Assembly shall, among others, exercise the following functions:

*Policy* a) determine the general policies that govern the International Federation and the National Societies;

*Admission/  
Sanctions* b) take decisions on the admission of National Societies and expulsion as set out in Articles 7 and 13 respectively;

*Election  
President* c) elect the President of the International Federation;

*Election  
Vice-  
Presidents* d) elect those four National Societies, one from each region, which shall be entitled to appoint a Vice-President of the International Federation ("Vice-President");

*Election  
Societies  
members of the  
Governing  
Board* e) elect the National Societies members of the Governing Board;

*Appointment of  
Constitutional  
Bodies* f) appoint members of the constitutional commissions and committees;

*Representa-  
tives  
to Movement  
bodies* g) designate the representatives of the International Federation to the bodies of the Movement;

*Other bodies* h) set up other bodies, including, among others, advisory bodies and bodies with legal status required for the activities of the International Federation, and to appoint their members;

*External  
auditors* i) designate as external auditors, on the recommendation of the Governing Board, a firm of internationally recognised independent auditors;

*Budget* j) approve, on the recommendation of the Governing Board, the biennial plans, budgets and financial reports of the International Federation;

k) take note of the report of the external auditors;

*Statutory  
contributions* l) approve, on the recommendation of the Governing Board and the Finance Commission, the annual scale of contributions of the National Societies;

<i>Constitution, Rules of Procedure and other regulations</i>		m) amend the Constitution and the Rules of Procedure and adopt any other regulations necessary for the implementation of the Constitution;
<i>Reports</i>		n) consider the reports of the Governing Board and Secretary General and of all bodies set up by the General Assembly and discharge the Secretary General and the Governing Board on its delegated activities;
<i>Proposals from National Societies and bodies</i>		o) decide on the proposals presented by National Societies, the Governing Board and other bodies of the International Federation;
		p) ratify general agreements concluded with the International Committee of the Red Cross or any other international organisation or institution that create obligations for National Societies; and
<i>Transfer of the Headquarters</i>		q) decide on the transfer of the headquarters of the International Federation;
<i>Delegation of powers</i>	2	The General Assembly may not delegate to another body of the International Federation the powers defined in paragraph 1 of this Article, with the exception of the following, which are hereby delegated to the Governing Board between sessions of the General Assembly and until the General Assembly decides otherwise: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) set up commissions and committees, including, among others, those with legal status, required for the activities of the International Federation, and to appoint their members;</li> <li>b) decide on the reports of bodies set up by the General Assembly;</li> <li>c) decide on proposals presented by National Societies or other bodies of the International Federation; and</li> <li>d) designate the representatives of the International Federation to the bodies of the Movement;</li> </ul>
<i>Financial implications</i>	3	Before the General Assembly takes decisions involving expenditure, the Secretary General, after having consulted the Finance Commission, shall submit a report to it on the administrative and financial implications of any such proposal. If the expenditure proposed cannot be covered by the budget, no commitment in this respect can be made before the General Assembly has taken the necessary measures to make available the additional funds required.

Article 18  
Sessions of the General Assembly

- Ordinary sessions*      1      The General Assembly shall meet in ordinary session once every two years. Such sessions shall normally be held where the headquarters of the International Federation are located.
- 2      A session of the General Assembly shall be held in the same place as and before the International Conference when the latter has been convoked.
- Change of place of the session*      3      In exceptional circumstances, the President, in consultation with the Secretary General and with the agreement of the majority of the members of the Governing Board, may change the place and/or the dates of the session of the General Assembly.
- Extraordinary sessions*      4      An extraordinary session of the General Assembly shall be held in the same place as and before any extraordinary session of the International Conference when the latter has been convoked.
- 5      Extraordinary sessions of the General Assembly may also be held on the initiative of the President in agreement with the majority of the members of the Governing Board or on the initiative of at least thirty-five percent of the National Societies.

Article 19  
Quorum

- 1      With the exception of the quorum required to amend the Constitution, to transfer the headquarters of the International Federation and to dissolve the International Federation, decisions taken at an ordinary or extraordinary session of the General Assembly shall be valid only with a quorum of fifty percent of the National Societies.
- 2      The quorum required to amend the Constitution, to transfer the headquarters or to dissolve the International Federation, shall be sixty-five percent of the National Societies.
- 3      Should less than fifty percent of the National Societies be in attendance at any ordinary or extraordinary session, the General Assembly shall be re-convened after at least 24 hours have elapsed. At such session, decisions shall be validly taken with a quorum of twenty-five percent of the National Societies.
- 4      Should the provisional or adopted agenda include the admission of National Societies or the expulsion of National Societies, the adoption of the biennial budget, the transfer of the headquarters of the International Federation, the election to the positions referred to in Article 33, the dissolution of the International Federation or

amendments to the Constitution, another session shall be convened not less than forty-five and not more than ninety days after the one preceding it. At such a session, decisions shall be validly taken with a quorum of twenty-five percent of the National Societies.

## Article 20

### Voting

- 1 Each National Society represented at the General Assembly shall have one vote.
- 2 Except as otherwise provided in the Constitution, decisions of the General Assembly shall be taken by a simple majority of the National Societies present and voting.
- 3 *Absolute majority* An absolute majority of the National Societies present and voting is required to elect the President.
- 4 *Qualified majority of sixty percent* A qualified majority of sixty percent of the National Societies present and voting is required to admit National Societies (Article 7) and expel National Societies (Article 13), to reconsider a decision previously taken at the same session of the General Assembly, to classify a matter as an important matter, and to decide on any matter classified by the General Assembly as an important matter.
- 5 *Qualified majority of seventy-five percent* A qualified majority of seventy-five percent of the National Societies present and voting shall be required to amend the Constitution (Article 46) to transfer the headquarters of the International Federation (Article 17.1.q) and to dissolve the International Federation (Article 44).
- 6 *National Societies present and voting* Within the context of the Constitution, the term "National Societies present and voting" shall mean National Societies present and voting for or against. National Societies abstaining from voting are considered as not having voted.

## Governing Board

### Article 21

#### Definition

The Governing Board is the body which governs the International Federation between sessions of the General Assembly.

Article 22  
Composition

The Governing Board shall be composed of :

- a) the President;
- b) the four Vice-Presidents;
- c) the ex officio Vice-President;
- d) twenty National Societies;
- e) the Chair of the Finance Commission;
- f) the Chair of the Youth Commission.

Article 23  
Functions

- 1 The Governing Board shall exercise the following functions :
  - a) decide on any matter assigned or delegated to it by the Constitution or by the General Assembly;
  - b) appoint and dismiss the Secretary General of the International Federation;
  - c) define, within the framework of the general policies determined by the General Assembly, the policies for the various fields of activity of the International Federation and the National Societies;
  - d) interpret the decisions of the General Assembly, advise the President and give guidance and support to the Secretary General in implementing the decisions of the General Assembly;
  - e) monitor on behalf of the General Assembly the implementation of the mandates entrusted to the International Federation by the International Conference;
  - f) draw up the provisional agenda of the General Assembly;
  - g) submit advice and proposals to the General Assembly when so requested by the latter or on its own initiative;
  - h) submit to the General Assembly the proposed members of the Election Committee;

- i) study any questions relating to the implementation of the functions of the International Federation, and submit advice and proposals in this respect to the General Assembly;
  - j) recommend to the General Assembly as external auditor a firm of internationally recognised independent auditors;
  - k) examine the reports on activities as well as the financial and budgetary reports and reports on risk matters presented by the Secretary General and the Finance Commission, and recommend, for final approval by the General Assembly, the biennial budget, plans and financial reports of the International Federation, including the scale of contributions of National Societies and the formula for fixing their financial participation;
  - l) ratify general agreements concluded with the International Committee of the Red Cross and any other international organisation or institution not requiring General Assembly ratification as set out in Article 17.1.p;
  - m) provisionally admit the National Societies,
  - n) apply any or a combination of the following sanctions towards National Societies in case of a breach of integrity:
    - recommend a particular action to one or more National Societies;
    - render the breach public or may make an appeal to the conscience of the world;
    - terminate any International Federation support to the National Society;
    - suspend the National Society;
    - take any other measure it deems appropriate;
    - as a last resort, recommend to the General Assembly that the National Society be expelled
  - o) declare in default National Societies that have not paid their annual contribution in accordance with Article 35;
  - p) approve the selection of candidates for appointment to the posts of (or equivalent to) Deputy and Under Secretaries General or Directors; and
  - q) approve the outline structure of the Secretariat of the International Federation proposed by the Secretary General.
- 2 The Governing Board shall report to the General Assembly on the accomplishment of its functions.

*Financial implications*

- 3 The Governing Board must not take decisions involving expenditure not included in the budget before the Secretary General and the Finance Commission have submitted a report to it justifying the

administrative and financial implication of any such proposal. If the expenditure proposed cannot be covered, no commitment in this respect can be made before the General Assembly has taken the measures to make available the additional funds required.

*Emergency  
authorisation*

- 4 If in the opinion of the Governing Board an emergency exists and it is impossible or impracticable to convoke a session of the General Assembly, the Governing Board is authorised, subject to Article 43, to take such measures as it deems necessary to deal with the emergency. Decisions so reached by the Governing Board shall be reported to and discharged by the General Assembly at its next session.
- 5 If the Governing Board decides that there is an emergency affecting the International Federation, the Secretary General shall as soon as is practicable thereafter inform all National Societies that the Governing Board has decided that an emergency exists, stating the nature of the emergency and all decisions and actions taken by the Governing Board to deal with it.

Article 24  
Procedure

- 1 The Governing Board shall meet in ordinary session twice a year, when convened by the President. In addition the President shall convene the Governing Board on his/her own initiative or whenever requested by a majority of its members, and may also do so at the request of the Secretary General.
- 2 The decisions of the Governing Board shall be valid with a quorum of sixty percent of its members and shall be taken by a simple majority of the members present and voting. In the event of a tie the President shall have the casting vote. A decision to suspend or to recommend expulsion of a National Society shall be taken with a qualified majority of sixty percent of the members of the Governing Board.
- 3 The President may invite any person to attend the meetings of the Governing Board as an observer.

President

Article 25  
President of the International Federation

- 1 The President is the highest personality of the International

Federation. The President shall be responsible to the General Assembly for ensuring that the International Federation pursues its general object and exercises its functions as defined in the Constitution. The President acts under the authority of the General Assembly and of the Governing Board to guide the affairs of the International Federation, including the activities of the Secretary General, in conformity with the decisions of the General Assembly and the Governing Board.

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| <i>Functions</i>                              | 2 | The President shall :<br><br>a) convene and preside over the sessions of the General Assembly and the Governing Board;<br><br>b) present to the General Assembly a review of the state of the International Federation;<br><br>c) present to the Governing Board and General Assembly the report of a firm of internationally recognised independent auditors;<br><br>d) co-ordinate the work of the governance bodies, commissions and committees of the International Federation;<br><br>e) represent the International Federation in its relations with the other components of the Movement and with other international organisations and institutions;<br><br>f) have the ability to call upon the Vice-Presidents and the Chair of the Finance Commission, to assist him/her individually or collectively, in his/her functions;<br><br>g) carry out any other function entrusted by the General Assembly or by the Governing Board. |
| <i>Delegation</i>                             | 3 | The President may delegate a part of the functions under this Article to any of the Vice-Presidents.  |
| <i>Replacement during a meeting</i>           | 4 | The President may charge one of the Vice-Presidents with replacing him/her during a meeting or part of a meeting.   |
| <i>Vacancy in the office of the President</i> | 5 | In the event of a vacancy arising in the office of the President or the President being unable to carry out his/her functions, the Governing Board, at its next ordinary session, shall designate a Vice-President who shall serve as Acting President until the next session of the General Assembly. At this session the General Assembly shall elect the President to fill the vacancy for the remaining period of the current term of office. Until the designation of a Vice-President as Acting President by the Governing Board the ex-officio Vice-President shall fulfil this function.  |

Article 26  
Vice-Presidents of the International Federation

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| <i>Role of the Vice-Presidents</i> | 1 | The Vice-Presidents of the International Federation shall support the President and may be called upon individually or collectively by the President to assist in the execution of his/her functions. They participate in the sessions of the General Assembly in their personal capacity.             |
| <i>Ex-officio Vice-President</i>   | 2 | The President of the National Society of the country in which the International Federation has its headquarters or his/her designated representative appointed from and by the governing body of that Society shall be ex officio Vice-President.  |
| <i>Functions</i>                   | 3 | The elected Vice-Presidents shall:<br><br>a) ensure communication on governance matters between the General Assembly, the Governing Board and the National Societies in their regions; and<br><br>b) promote the decisions of the General Assembly and Governing Board, particularly in their regions. |
|                                    | 4 | In regards to the regional conferences in their regions the elected Vice-Presidents shall serve as chairs of the relevant preparatory bodies.  |

Secretary General

Article 27  
Secretary General of the International Federation

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| <i>Appointment</i> | 1 | The Secretary General shall be appointed by the Governing Board, for a period of up to four years, renewable. The contract between the International Federation and the Secretary General shall be drawn up by the Governing Board in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Rules of Procedure, any applicable conditions set by the General Assembly and the labour law governing the International Federation. |
| <i>Functions</i>   | 2 | The Secretary General, as defined in Article 14 is the Chief Executive Officer of the International Federation and carries out the following functions:<br><br>a) implement the decisions of the General Assembly and the Governing Board;<br><br>b) be responsible for the administration of the approved budget, in accordance with Article 36.6;   |

- c) direct the Secretariat and be responsible for the execution of the work entrusted to it;
- d) organise the different services of the Secretariat in accordance with the decisions of the General Assembly and of the Governing Board; appoint the staff of the Secretariat, keeping in mind the principles of gender equality and geographical distribution; and when necessary terminate the engagements of such staff;
- e) make appointments to the posts of (or equivalent to) Deputy and Under Secretaries General, such as Directors, after obtaining the Governing Board's approval of the candidates selected by him/her;
- f) in the absence of the President or as otherwise agreed appropriate, represent the International Federation in its relations with other components of the Movement and with other international organisations and institutions;
- g) be the authorised representative of the International Federation in relation to third parties and courts of law for all transactions whatsoever, including transactions executed in notarial form relating to the acquisition, administration and expenditure of the resources of the International Federation;
- h) assure the execution of the functions set out in Article 5, including direct relief actions or other actions decided upon by the General Assembly or the Governing Board. In exceptional or urgent circumstances, the Secretary General shall take all appropriate measures after consultation with the National Society concerned to the extent possible;
- i) carry out any other function assigned to him/her by the Constitution or entrusted to him/her by the General Assembly or the Governing Board;
- j) report on the activities of the Federation to the General Assembly and to the Governing Board;
- k) keep the President and Vice-Presidents, as appropriate, closely informed in carrying out his/her functions; and
- l) establish relations with those National Societies or organisations recognised as auxiliaries to the public authorities in the humanitarian field who accept and respect in their action the Fundamental Principles, even though they may not be components of the Movement or members of the International Federation.

- 3 The Secretary General shall ex officio be secretary of the General Assembly and of the Governing Board and, unless the Constitution provides otherwise, of all bodies set up by the General Assembly and the Governing Board. The Secretary General may delegate these functions to other officials of the Secretariat.
- Participation in the General Assembly and the Governing Board*
- 4 The Secretary General participates in the sessions of the General Assembly and the Governing Board.
- 5 The Secretary General shall be assisted in the implementation of his/her executive task by a Secretariat.
- 6 The Secretary General shall establish the structure of the Secretariat, the general outline of which shall be subject to the approval of the Governing Board.

SECTION IV  
CONSTITUTIONAL COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES OF  
THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION

Article 28  
Constitutional Commissions and Committees

The Constitutional Commissions and Committees of the International Federation are:

- § The Finance Commission;
- § The Youth Commission;
- § The Compliance and Mediation Committee;
- § The Election Committee.

They have advisory or such other functions as set out in this Constitution.

Finance Commission

Article 29

- Composition*
- 1 The Finance Commission shall be composed of :
- a Chair; and

- nine members,

appointed in a personal capacity by the General Assembly on presentation of candidates by the Election Committee.

- Functions*            2    The functions of the Finance Commission shall be:
- a) to give advice on all financial and risk matters affecting the International Federation;
  - b) to comment on the financial report and on the budget drawn up by the Secretary General;
  - c) to receive from the President the report of the external auditors, and to comment on the same to the President and the Governing Board;
  - d) to comment on the handling and investment of available funds and to make recommendations to the General Assembly and the Governing Board on any financial measures which it deems appropriate;
  - e) to review periodically the formula for fixing the financial participation of National Societies and every two years to establish the annual scale of contributions of National Societies for submission, through the Governing Board, to the General Assembly for approval;
  - f) to establish the annual contributions of National Societies applying for membership prior to the application being considered by the General Assembly;
  - g) to hear appeals from National Societies in accordance with Article 35, paragraphs 3 and 4, to acquaint itself with arrears in payment of contributions by National Societies and to express its views to the Governing Board and the General Assembly on whether a Society should be declared in default in accordance with Article 35, paragraph 5;
  - h) to assist the Governing Board in applying and implementing the decisions of the General Assembly on the financial management of the International Federation; and
  - i) to report on its work to each session of the General Assembly and of the Governing Board.
- Authority of the Chair*    3    The Chair of the Finance Commission shall have the right to obtain from the Secretary General all information and documents of a financial and budgetary character and those related to risk matters.

- 4 The Chair of the Finance Commission shall advise the President and the Secretary General on all financial and risk matters affecting the International Federation.
- Procedure* 5 The procedures of the Finance Commission shall be laid down in the Rules of Procedure.

### Youth Commission

#### Article 30

- Composition* 1 The Youth Commission shall be composed of:
- a Chair; and
  - eight members,
- appointed in a personal capacity by the General Assembly on presentation of candidates by the Election Committee.
- Functions* 2 The functions of the Youth Commission shall be:
- a) to give advice on all matters concerning youth and youth-related activities throughout the International Federation;
  - b) to promote and assess the implementation of the youth policy decided by the General Assembly or the Governing Board, as well as to consider and study as requested by the Board matters of policy development in the area of youth;
  - c) to review and suggest revisions of the youth policy to the Governing Board or the General Assembly (as the case may be) for adoption;
  - d) to seek youth opinions on the implementation of relevant International Federation policies and to ensure that those opinions are communicated to the Statutory Bodies of the Movement;
  - e) to advise the Secretary General in the implementation of the youth policy and all other policies and strategies as they relate to youth within the Movement; and
  - f) to report to the General Assembly and Governing Board on its general activities on a regular basis.
- 3 The Chair of the Youth Commission shall receive from the Secretary General all relevant information and documents necessary to enable the Commission to fulfil its functions.

- 4 The Chair of the Youth Commission shall advise the President and the Secretary General on all issues affecting youth in the Movement.
- Procedure* 5 The procedures of the Youth Commission shall be laid down in the Rules of Procedure.

### Compliance and Mediation Committee

#### Article 31

- 1 A Compliance and Mediation Committee shall be established to assist the bodies of the International Federation in taking the appropriate steps to resolve any potential breaches of integrity on the part of a National Society or any body of the International Federation, and to help settle any disagreements submitted to it.
- Composition* 2 The Committee shall be composed of thirteen individuals, three from each of the four statutory regions of the International Federation, and one individual who shall be named to serve as Chair. It shall serve as a pool for the formation of individual panels. All members shall be appointed by the General Assembly on presentation of candidates by the Election Committee.
- Complaints* 3 Allegations of a breach of integrity or any dispute may be brought to the attention of the Chair of the Compliance and Mediation Committee by any National Society or body of the International Federation.
- Compliance and Mediation Panel* The Chair shall review the allegation in accordance with the Rules of Procedure and if an inquiry is merited shall ensure that a panel of three to five members is formed to consider the allegation, with due regard to geographical representation.
- Mandate of Panel* 4 Upon receipt of a complaint the panel, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure and with full respect for due process, shall investigate the matter and make a determination as to the nature and extent of any breach. In cases where breaches are substantiated the panel shall recommend to the National Society steps to resolve the matter.
- 5 If the matter is not resolved, the panel shall submit a report to the Governing Board, including a summary of its findings, measures taken to try to resolve the matter and any further action recommended to be taken by the Governing Board or General Assembly.
- 6 The Compliance and Mediation Committee shall report to the General Assembly and Governing Board on its general activities on a regular basis.

## Election Committee

### Article 32

- Composition*      1      The Election Committee shall be composed of:
- a Chair; and
  - four members, one from each of the four statutory regions,
- all five to be appointed in a personal capacity by the General Assembly on the proposal of the Governing Board.
- Functions*          2      The Election Committee shall:
- a) develop electoral standards for campaigning;
  - b) draw up criteria for the positions of President and Vice-President, to be approved by the Governing Board at least one year before the relevant election;
  - c) review against the relevant criteria the applications of all candidates for the Governing Board (ad persona and National Societies);
  - d) establish, after consultation with the Governing Board, a list of proposals of candidates for the Finance Commission, the Youth Commission and the Compliance and Mediation Committee, for appointment by the General Assembly;
  - e) monitor and oversee all elections to these positions; and
  - f) announce the results of elections to these positions.

## SECTION V

### ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

#### Article 33

#### Election of the President, the Vice-Presidents, the National Societies Members of the Governing Board, and the Appointment of the Chairs and the Members of the Constitutional Bodies

- Periodicity*      1      Elections shall be held in ordinary sessions every four years. The appointments of the members of the Finance Commission, Youth

Commission, Compliance and Mediation Committee and Election Committee shall be made in ordinary sessions every four years, not coinciding with elections of the President, Vice-Presidents and National Societies members of the Governing Board.

<i>Term of office</i>	2	The term of office of all elected and appointed positions is four years. It begins at the close of the session of the General Assembly at which the incumbents have been elected/appointed and expires at the close of the session of the General Assembly which elects/appoints their successors.
<i>President</i>	3	The General Assembly elects the President in a personal capacity. A person who has served two consecutive four- year terms as President is not eligible to stand again for election until a further four-year term has elapsed.
<i>Vice- Presidents</i>	4	The General Assembly elects four National Societies, one from each of the four statutory regions established in accordance with the Rules of Procedure, for the purpose of each of them appointing a member of their National Society to the post of Vice-President for a period of four years. Once appointed, the Vice-Presidents shall serve in a personal capacity.
<i>Societies members of the Board</i>	5	The General Assembly elects twenty National Societies as members of the Governing Board, respecting geographical distribution as set out in the Rules of Procedure. A National Society elected member of the Governing Board shall appoint one individual to serve as its representative on the Governing Board. The appointed individual should normally not be changed during the elected Society's term of office. The National Societies of which the President or the Vice-Presidents are members must not be proposed for candidature to the Governing Board.
<i>Rotation</i>	6	Any National Society elected for the purpose of appointing a Vice-President or a National Society member of the Governing Board and having served two consecutive four-year terms in either capacity or combinations thereof is not eligible to stand again for election until a further four-year term has elapsed.
<i>Chair and members of the Finance Commission, Youth Commission, and Compliance and Mediation Committee</i>	7	The General Assembly shall appoint the Chair and members of the Finance Commission, Youth Commission and Compliance and Mediation Committee. Any person who has served two consecutive four-year terms as Chair or as member of any of these bodies shall not be eligible to stand again for election as Chair or as member of such body until a further four-year term has elapsed.
<i>Election committee</i>	8	The General Assembly shall, on the proposal of the Governing Board, appoint the Chair of the Election Committee and four

members, one from each of the four statutory regions.

## SECTION VI

### FINANCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION

#### Article 34

#### Finances and Property

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <i>Civil liability</i>                       | 1 | The International Federation shall be solely responsible, to the exclusion of the National Societies, for all its transactions and commitments.  |
| <i>Resources</i>                             | 2 | The regular resources of the International Federation shall consist of contributions from National Societies and income derived from investments.  |
| <i>Properties and unrestricted resources</i> | 3 | Within the limits laid down by its general object and functions the International Federation shall acquire, own, dispose of and administer any property. It may accept unrestricted contributions and assistance in any form from National Societies, individuals, governments and other public or private bodies. |
| <i>Earmarked resources and real estate</i>   | 4 | The International Federation may accept as an agent or trustee funds or property earmarked for particular use provided that such use is within the general scope of its activities, general object and functions. It may accept any conveyance of real estate for its use or benefit.                              |
| <i>Reserves</i>                              | 5 | The International Federation may constitute and manage any reserves or other funds for its staff or for any of its activities.   |

#### Article 35

#### Financial Contributions

- |                                |   |  |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
| <i>Financial year</i>          | 1 | The financial year shall run from 1 January to 31 December.  |
| <i>Statutory contributions</i> | 2 | Each National Society shall pay an annual contribution to the International Federation in accordance with the scale of contributions established by the Finance Commission and approved by the General Assembly and within such time-limit as may be prescribed by the General Assembly. |
| <i>Appeals</i>                 | 3 | Any National Society which contests the annual contribution approved by the General Assembly shall have the right to appeal immediately to the Finance Commission. However, such an appeal   |

shall not invalidate the obligation of paying the uncontested part of the annual contribution within the time-limit fixed by the General Assembly.

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <i>Arrangements for payment of the contribution</i> | 4 | Any National Society unable, for any reason whatsoever, to pay its contribution may refer this matter to the Finance Commission in order to obtain appropriate arrangements enabling the National Society to pay it in conformity with the conditions fixed by the Finance Commission. However, such an appeal shall not invalidate the obligation of paying the contribution. |
| <i>Declaration in default</i>                       | 5 | <p>If a National Society does not pay the amount in accordance with paragraphs 3 or 4 of the present Article, the Finance Commission shall report the matter to the Governing Board.</p> <p>The Governing Board shall receive the recommendation of the Finance Commission and shall decide whether to declare the Society in default or not.</p>                              |
| <i>Consequences of the declaration in default</i>   | 6 | Any National Society which has been declared in default shall not be eligible for election or re-election to any body of the International Federation and, if so decided by the Governing Board, shall lose its right to vote.   |
| <i>Financial obligations</i>                        | 7 | Any National Society which has withdrawn, which has been suspended or which has been declared in default shall remain liable for payment of its contribution for the financial year during which any of the foregoing steps were taken, of any arrears of previous years and of any other debt to the International Federation.  |

### Article 36

#### Budget

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|---|---|---|
| <i>Preparation of budget and financial statements</i> | 1 | The Secretary General shall draw up the budget of the International Federation in consultation with the Chair of the Finance Commission. The Secretary General shall also prepare a report on the accounts relating to the preceding financial year and submit these documents to the Governing Board for study and to the General Assembly for approval. |
| <i>Approval of budget and financial statements</i>    | 2 | <p>The General Assembly shall examine and approve every two years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) the financial statements and reports covering the previous two financial years;</li><li>b) the budget for the next two financial years presented by the Secretary General and recommended by the Governing Board.</li></ul>               |

3 The Governing Board shall examine every year the annual report of the previous financial year, presented by the Secretary General.

4 In those years in which the General Assembly does not meet the Governing Board shall review the budget for the following year, and, if exceptional circumstances exist, adjust that budget in the light of those circumstances.

*Financial measures*

5 Subject to the provisions of Articles 17, paragraph 3, and 23, paragraph 3, the General Assembly, or failing it the Governing Board, may decide on any financial measures which may appear advisable, and shall take into consideration such recommendations as may be made by the Secretary General or the Chair of the Finance Commission.

*Administration and execution of the budget*

6 The Secretary General who is responsible for the administration of the approved budget shall:

- a) implement the budget as adopted, ensuring the payment of contributions and, depending on the needs, defraying the expenses authorised;
- b) receive and hold all funds paid to the International Federation for whatever purpose, be accountable for these funds to the General Assembly and the Governing Board, and dispose of them in accordance with the budget adopted; and
- c) decide on the handling and investment of the available funds after consultation with the Chair of the Finance Commission.

Article 37  
Audit

1 At the close of each financial year, the accounts of that year :

- a) shall be made the subject of a report prepared by the Secretary General; and
- b) shall be audited and reported upon by a firm of internationally recognised independent auditors to be designated by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Governing Board.

2 These reports shall refer to the budget and accounts of the International Federation and shall also cover the use of funds entrusted to the International Federation in the capacity of agent or trustee.

## SECTION VII

### CO-OPERATION

#### Article 38

#### Regional Conferences

- Definition* 1 A Regional Conference is a meeting of the National Societies of a statutory region as defined in the Rules of Procedure with the purpose of:
- § promoting co-operation, networking and partnerships amongst the National Societies of the regions;
  - § identifying common humanitarian concerns and issues;
  - § striving to achieve common strategies of implementation with regard to decisions of the General Assembly, the Council of Delegates and the International Conference;
  - § making proposals to the Governing Board on matters related to the General Assembly and the Statutory Bodies of the Movement.
- Timing* 2 In principle a Regional Conference shall be held in each statutory region once every four years.
- Reports from the Secretary General* 3 The Secretary General shall provide a report for the approval of the Governing Board on the agenda and the administrative, technical, financial and other implications of forthcoming Regional Conferences. He/she shall also present a report on the results of any Regional Conference held.
- Secretariat assistance* 4 The Secretary General shall assist the host National Society in organising and holding a Regional Conference.
- Applicable rules* 5 A Regional Conference shall be held in conformity with the Constitution and the Rules of Procedure.

#### Article 39

#### Co-operation with the ICRC

The International Federation shall maintain close contact with the ICRC. It shall co-operate with the latter in matters of common concern in accordance with the Statutes of the Movement and the agreements concluded between the International Federation and the ICRC.

Article 40

Co-operation with other international organisations

The International Federation shall co-operate within the terms of the Constitution with international, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, as it deems appropriate.

Article 41

Observers

The Governing Board and, if it is not in session, the President may, after consultation with the members of the Governing Board and in conformity with the Rules of Procedure, invite observers to participate in sessions of the General Assembly.

SECTION VIII

FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 42

Regulations

- 1 The General Assembly shall enact by a simple majority all regulations relating to procedure and other matters as may be necessary for the implementation of the Constitution as well as for the accomplishment of the tasks of the International Federation.
- 2 Within the framework of the Constitution and of the Rules of Procedure in force, and subject to the approval of the General Assembly, the Governing Board and other bodies of the International Federation may also draw up such regulations as are necessary for the accomplishment of their respective tasks.
- 3 The General Assembly may, in a manner consistent with the Constitution, at any time amend such regulations by a simple majority.

Article 43

Special Provisions

- 1 When, for any reason beyond its control, the General Assembly is prevented from meeting and thereby from electing the President, the

National Societies to appoint the Vice-Presidents or, the National Societies members of the Governing Board, or from appointing the Chairs and members of the constitutional bodies, those serving at that time shall be authorised to continue to perform their function until the end of the next session of the General Assembly.

- 2 When, for any reason beyond its control, the Governing Board is prevented from meeting, and decisions are indispensable or desirable, and if the Secretary General, is prevented from consulting the President or Vice-Presidents at the time when the session should have been held, the Secretary General shall take such steps as may be necessary to secure a decision by consulting the other members of the Governing Board by the most rapid means available. In this event, the Secretary General shall put each question in one and the same form to all the members of the Governing Board, and in such a manner that each question can be answered by a simple "yes" or "no". Decisions shall then be taken by a simple majority of the replies received and shall be valid if the number of such replies attains the quorum provided for in Article 24, paragraph 2. Such decisions shall come into force at the expiry of a period of twenty-one days from the date of dispatch of the last communication.

The same procedure may be applied at any time for any important and urgent question for which a decision of the Governing Board is required and which cannot be postponed until the forthcoming regular meeting of the Governing Board.

- 3 When circumstances no longer make it possible to obtain the decisions mentioned in paragraph 2 of the present Article, the Secretary General shall, in exceptional cases, and in order that the work of the International Federation may be carried on, take decisions on all matters that are normally within the competence of the Governing Board. Before taking such decisions, the Secretary General shall consult, insofar as it is possible, the President, the Vice-Presidents and any members of the Governing Board who remain accessible and shall keep them informed of the action taken.
- 4 As soon as circumstances permit, the Secretary General shall take steps to enable the President to convene the Governing Board. When the Governing Board meets, the Secretary General shall submit to it a report on all measures he/she has taken since the last ordinary session of the Governing Board. At the same session, the Governing Board shall consider, if the question arises, the convocation of the General Assembly, in particular for the purpose of holding elections.

#### Article 44 Dissolution

Decisions on the dissolution of the International Federation can be taken only by the General Assembly with a quorum of sixty-five

percent and a qualified majority of seventy-five percent of the National Societies present and voting. In this case, the net assets of the International Federation, after settlement of the debts, will be transferred to a body with legal capacity set up by the Governing Board with the purpose of endowing the capital of the International Federation if reconstituted within a year from the effective date of its dissolution, or of distributing the assets to any body or organisation the objects of which are as close as possible to those of the International Federation.

Article 45  
Interpretation of Texts

Any question or disagreement concerning the interpretation or application of the Constitution which for any reason is not settled by the General Assembly shall be referred to the Governing Board and then submitted again to the General Assembly for its final decision.

Article 46  
Amendments to the Constitution

- 1 The provisions of the Constitution can be amended only by the General Assembly with a quorum of sixty-five percent and a qualified majority of seventy-five percent of the National Societies present and voting.
- 2 Proposals to amend the Constitution may be put to the vote only when submitted by a National Society supported by at least five National Societies, or by the Governing Board.

Article 47  
Entry into force

Subject to Article 48 this Constitution shall come into force at the end of the 16th session of the General Assembly, 23 November 2007, at which time the former Constitution shall stand repealed.

Article 48  
Transitional Provisions

*Finance  
Commission*

- 1 The mandate of the Chair and members of the Finance Commission shall be prolonged by two years until the General Assembly 2011. These additional two years shall not be counted against the maximum

of two consecutive terms of office. If however the Chair or a member resigns prior to the General Assembly 2011 the General Assembly shall fill any such vacancy during such time in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and Rules of Procedure then in force. This appointment shall not count against the maximum term of two consecutive terms of office.

*Compliance  
and Mediation  
Committee*      2

Notwithstanding Article 31, the Governing Board shall appoint at its first ordinary session after the General Assembly 2007 the Chair and members the Compliance and Mediation Committee for a term of office lasting until the General Assembly 2011.

*Election  
Committee*

Notwithstanding Article 32, the Governing Board shall appoint at its first ordinary session after the General Assembly 2007 the Chair and members of the Election Committee for a term of office lasting until the General Assembly 2011.

*Youth  
Commission*

The Youth Commission set up by the General Assembly pursuant to Rule 36 of the Rules of Procedure in force prior to the adoption of this Constitution shall be regarded as the Youth Commission set out in Article 30 as a Constitutional Body. The Chair and members appointed by the General Assembly 2007 shall be appointed for a term of office of four years.

The Chair of the Youth Commission at the time of the entry into force of this Constitution shall become a Board member as set out in Article 22.



## **The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement**

### **humanity**

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, co-operation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

### **impartiality**

It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

### **neutrality**

In order to continue to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

### **independence**

The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

### **voluntary service**

It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

### **unity**

There can be only one Red Cross or one Red Crescent Society many one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

### **universality**

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all Societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.

The Fundamental Principles were proclaimed by the XXth International Conference of the Red Cross, Vienna, 1965. This is the revised text contained in the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, adopted by the XXVth International Conference of the Red Cross, Geneva, 1986.