

In the Red Cross and Red Crescent world

The Final Declarations recently adopted by two Regional Red Cross and Red Crescent Conferences are reproduced below.

- ***Kampala Declaration***, adopted at the 4th Pan African Conference, on 27 September 1996, in Kampala (Uganda)
- ***Copenhagen Declaration***, adopted at the 5th Regional European Conference, on 20 March 1997, in Copenhagen (Denmark)

Kampala Declaration

The 4th Pan African Conference was convened in Kampala, Uganda, from 23 to 27 September 1996 with delegates from 46 African National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in attendance.

Under the theme of “Together for Africa’s Future” the Conference focused on key issues of particular relevance to the African continent, namely:

- the challenge of assisting refugees and internally displaced people;
- the building of strong National Societies;
- the future of Africa and the role of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in that future.

After a week of analysis and discussion, the Conference:

notes that of Africa’s 800 million people a significant percentage are unable to meet their basic needs; that there are 30 million pre-school children who are severely malnourished; that Africans have the lowest life

expectancy in the world; that the AIDS pandemic increases the vulnerability of populations throughout the continent; and that a significant proportion of the population do not have access to basic health services and safe drinking water;

acknowledges that Africa has seen striking successes in the past few years. There has been an increase in the number of representative governments, an end to major long-running conflicts, and economic growth and development in some regions. However, the continent still faces a more challenging future than any other region of the world. The prevailing serious socio-economic and political conditions may give rise to renewed instability and population displacements, and a further deterioration of the situation of the most vulnerable;

recognizes the major role women play in Africa in food production, child rearing and maintenance of the health of families whilst noting with concern their unequal status and marginalization, and the violence perpetrated against women;

acknowledges that the International Federation, by adopting its Strategic Work Plan for the Nineties, is committed to direct its collective efforts towards meeting the challenge of improving the situation of the most vulnerable. This will form the framework for shaping the priorities and programmes of the Federation's Secretariat and the network of National Societies into the 21st century;

acknowledges that the humanitarian challenges facing the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in Africa are immense, that conflicts and forced population movements, brought on by socio-economic degradation and ethnic and political tensions, have increased at an alarming rate during the past few years, resulting in a total of 7 million refugees and 20 million internally displaced people on the continent today;¹

is concerned about the legacy of armed conflicts; the proliferation of landmines; child soldiers and other children affected by armed conflict; the abuse of women; and the problems associated with demobilization;

recognizes that African National Societies must respond in a prominent way to meet the needs of the most vulnerable despite diminishing resources, the proliferation of humanitarian agencies and the poor economic basis of many African countries;

¹ Figures provided by the Organization of African Unity

agrees that the ultimate aim of development is to improve the quality of life of Africa's people, with special attention to the most vulnerable, through sustainable community-based programmes which build on their capacities and reduce long-term dependency on external assistance;

highlights the strength of the Movement and its unique advantage of being one of the largest and most comprehensive humanitarian networks on the continent. There are now 53 National Societies in Africa with nearly 2.5 million volunteers donating their time and energy, supported by 7,000 professional staff;

is committed to the Fundamental Principles of the Movement and its humanitarian mission; is dedicated to working as the International Federation in Africa and to sharing expertise and resources in promoting workable solutions in partnership with populations at risk.

Recognizing the critical situation of the African continent, the Conference declares:

- i. as National Societies we will set our own agendas to put the Fundamental Principles of the Movement and the Mission statement of the International Federation into practice. We will define our own priorities based on a thorough identification of the most vulnerable and the reasons for their vulnerabilities;
- ii. as well as taking action to alleviate suffering, we will ensure respect for human dignity and humanitarian values. We will do more to advocate on behalf of the most vulnerable, speaking from our experiences and without compromising our Fundamental Principles;
- iii. we will participate in community-based development with a special emphasis on health care;
- iv. we will ensure gender equality and proportionality in the governance and management of our Societies, and a gender perspective in our programme design and implementation;
- v. we will enable our youth to assume responsibilities in the decision-making and management processes of our Societies, at the national and international level;
- vi. in order to be respected we will create a credible, transparent and honest image for the National Society. We will establish standardized and sound administrative and financial procedures for our assistance programmes. This will be backed by a communication

strategy which guides and builds our communication with the world outside our Society;

- vii. in our relief efforts we will strengthen our own human resource base and provide relief in a way that builds upon the capacities of the affected population and integrates developmental activities;
- viii. we will decentralize authority in the National Society to the branches whilst maintaining strong systems of accountability. We will improve our accountability to our membership, those we assist and those from whom we receive assistance;
- ix. where government services and the rule of law and order have broken down, National Societies will continue to provide humanitarian services regardless of the absence of a functioning government;
- x. we will commit to developing local sources of income for self-sustainability;
- xi. many of Africa's challenges and opportunities cross national boundaries. We will strengthen regional cooperation between National Societies, making full use of the facilities of the Federation's regional delegations;
- xii. we are committed to being effective members of the International Federation, to contributing to policy development and to identifying and training competent African individuals to act as delegates within the International Federation's programmes, particularly within Africa. We will make our past and present statutory contributions in full to the International Federation;
- xiii. we recognize that there are clear and complementary roles for the governance and the management functions of our National Societies. We will build governing structures with integrity and management structures with the necessary professional skills to run our organizations. We will clearly define the relationship between governance and management functions;
- xiv. in providing assistance and ensuring respect for human dignity, our prime resource is our people. We will strengthen our human resource base of both volunteers and employees;
- xv. in working as the International Federation and cooperating with the ICRC, we will define the nature of our relationships, particularly focusing on issues of integrity, cooperation accountability, roles and responsibilities, and mutual respect;

- xvi. we declare our commitment to implement our adopted plan of action, in partnership with the most vulnerable people, and call upon the Federation Secretariat, the ICRC, sister Societies, governments and other partners to support our efforts whilst respecting our priorities and plans.

In committing ourselves to this declaration and action plan, we call for the following relations with our partners:

from our community:

participation in setting our priorities;
feedback on the quality of service we are delivering;
volunteers to provide service to their communities;

from the Movement:

understanding that the provision of relief and community services are the responsibility of the National Society;
respect for our priorities and plans;
commitment to supporting our capacity-building in development and relief;
refraining from undermining our capacity through independent action;

from our governments:

respect for our auxiliary and independent role;
promotion of National Society development and appropriate financial support;
action to follow up commitments made at the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (Geneva 1995), in particular with regard to:

- protecting the civilian population in times of war;
- promoting the principle of non-recruitment and non-participation in armed conflict of children under the age of 18;
- moving towards a total ban on landmines;
- encouraging the use of the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and non-governmental organizations;

- permitting relief operations of a strictly humanitarian character in States under sanctions;
- recognizing the specific role of their countries' National Society in disaster response activities;
- helping create a beneficial environment for the overall development of their National Society;

from external agencies:

understanding and respect for our independence;

partnerships in common causes, including adoption of the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and non-governmental organizations.

The Copenhagen Declaration — Action and advocacy

adopted by the 5th regional European Red Cross and Red Crescent Conference, on 20th March 1997

“The people of Europe and their governments have a high expectation that you, the Red Cross and Red Crescent, will use your unique position of neutrality, impartiality and independence to be a key force in promoting positive change in the situation of the most vulnerable. You are challenged to be the social conscience of the new Europe.”

Quote from key-note speaker

The Conference has provided an opportunity to learn from expert speakers, the media round table and each other. We have risen to many of the new challenges but we must continue to seize the opportunity to