



Our Principles, our Move
Nos Principes, nos Actions
Nuestros Principios, nuestra Acción
مبادئنا, حراكنا



CROCE
ROSSA
SAMMARINESE

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12th Mediterranean Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Agenda item no. 1

Concept paper

***FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES AND
HUMANITARIAN DIPLOMACY***

CONCEPT PAPER
FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES AND HUMANITARIAN DIPLOMACY

[...] 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.

(IFRC, Constitution, Article 4, General Object)

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES REFLECTION

*From its very inception, Red Cross / Red Crescent has engaged in humanitarian diplomacy to encourage others to act in the interests of the most vulnerable and **uphold the principle of Humanity**. This responsibility was clearly stated in the 2009 Humanitarian Diplomacy Policy of the IFRC. In undertaking humanitarian diplomacy, **the Fundamental Principles must be placed at the centre of our efforts and explanations**. In particular, the principle of Neutrality is an essential tool for action and access, and must be balanced carefully when engaging in humanitarian diplomacy, in order to maintain the trust and confidence of all.*

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of this new millennium, many experts announce a new world order characterized by the true participation of nations in a joint project based on economic, as well as cultural and social relations. Similarly to the relationships amongst human beings, this type of participation needs to reflect humanitarian values for the envisioned changes to come about.

Although progress has been made in the 20th century in many areas all over the world, progress in the respect for human dignity still has a big path to be undertaken. On the other hand, the past century might be remembered for attempts of eradicating essential values of the human condition, as the most dreadful crimes against humanity were committed on the basis of politics, race or religious beliefs.

Conditions in the 21st century are changing ever more rapidly. Nevertheless it is in this time of change that opportunities arise to engage people and communities in working towards solidarity and sustainable solutions.

In this line, the humanitarian action of the International Movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent is characterised since its creation by specific Principles and values. The Fundamental Principles were approved in the 20th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent celebrated in Vienna in 1965. Since then, it has been the Movement's duty including that of National Societies, in their respective territories, to ensure the implementation of the Fundamental Principles reflecting humanitarian values such as human dignity, equality and equity.

Following the IFRC Strategy 2020, the International Movement keeps moving forward in its humanitarian mission, aiding victims, improving the lives of the most vulnerable and responding to the great humanitarian challenges of our times through the Enabling Action 2 of the very Strategy: *“Pursue humanitarian diplomacy to prevent and reduce vulnerability in a globalized world”*.

National Societies have the responsibility and duty to carry out their humanitarian activities respecting the Fundamental Principles. To succeed in the effective implementation of such Principles, it is necessary that the opinion leaders and decision-makers, from public and private sectors, are fully aware of the Fundamental Principles and include them in their national and international agendas, through humanitarian diplomacy, to constantly defend the interests of the most vulnerable people.

Advocacy campaigns in the interest of vulnerable people and to influence respect for Fundamental humanitarian Principles and empowering people giving them voice in their own recovery from disasters and crises are also a crucial areas of work for National Societies when dealing with their communities. Therefore the role of RCRC volunteers and youth are pivotal for the sharing and dissemination of core values of the Movement and key humanitarian messages at grassroots level

OBJECTIVES

National Societies, in their auxiliary role need to be in regular contact with their public authorities, influencing agendas in favour of addressing humanitarian concerns through persuasive Humanitarian Diplomacy. , The support of the wider International Movement is essential to contribute to building stronger and more effective National Societies, and to better addressing the needs of the vulnerable people.

Consider the support that National Societies receive from other National Societies in the region, the IFRC and the ICRC to develop humanitarian diplomacy actions.

Consider the accomplishments that can be achieved by Humanitarian Diplomacy in the activities carried out by National Societies to prevent and alleviate human suffering

Consider the support and the training that National Societies' young members can receive to improve their leadership as agents of behavioural change (ABC) to convey the Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values.

The general objective of the session is to improve the cooperation and the support amongst National Societies and the Movement's components across the Mediterranean in the framework of the IFRC Strategy 2020 to:

- Identify key issues of concern on which NS are engaging in humanitarian diplomacy

- Identify the limitations and obstacles that National Societies may encounter when carrying out their humanitarian work and diplomacy including how the Fundamental Principles interplay
- How the NS are carrying out HD actions? How Movement can work together for strongest impact of HD action?
- Define strategies of intervention for National Societies to increase the dissemination of the Principles and values in the Mediterranean.
- Define the role to be carried out by the Centre for the Cooperation in the Mediterranean in the reinforcement and dissemination of the knowledge about the Principles and values in the region
- Prepare a strategy to build the capacities of the Youth sections as leaders in conveying the Principles and values
- Agree on actions to develop with the Youth sections to make sure that the Principles and values continue to be a positive power in the region.

FORMAT

- Chair: Ms. Vesna Milenovic, Secretary General, Red Cross of Serbia
- Introductory speech: Ms Christine Beerli, Vice President, ICRC
- Panellists: Egyptian RC; Lebanese RC

Date: 26th May 2015

Time: 12:15pm – 13:30pm