

# IN THE RED CROSS WORLD

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## LEAGUE OF RED CROSS SOCIETIES

A number of meetings, attended by over 200 delegates and observers representing 65 National Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Lion and Sun Societies, were held in Geneva in September 1972. Various advisory and statutory committees met first, and their views and recommendations were submitted to the Executive Committee which deals with general policy questions of the League in the intervals between the biennial sessions of the Board of Governors.

**Youth.**—“Community Action with Children and Youth” was the main theme of the fifteenth session of the Youth Advisory Committee. The intention was to provide National Societies with guidelines that would enable them to develop the capabilities needed to involve children and young people in community action programmes. After listening to some papers that were read on the subject and participating in discussions, the members of the Advisory Committee split into discussion groups and examined specific case studies prepared by certain National Societies. These included “Urban development” in Peru, “Rural health programmes” in the Republic of Korea and “Drug education and rehabilitation programme” in Sweden.

At the conclusion of these discussions, it was clear that for youth there was a continuum of community action and that the Red Cross was in a transition period in which community action was moving away from the service concept towards that of community development and social action. Among the basic elements that emerged from the work, it was felt that the Red Cross as a whole should be committed to the community action programme

without distinction between youth and adults, and that youth should be involved in any discussion, decision-making or planning that takes place.

The Youth Advisory Committee paid specific attention to certain questions raised at the World Red Cross Youth Council held at Oaxtepec (Mexico) in 1971. These included the problem of peace and the role of the Red Cross in this sphere and the question of the need for better information to be given to the general public on the Geneva Conventions and their basic principles.

**Health and Social Service.**—In opening the fourteenth session of the Health and Social Service Advisory Committee, its Chairman stressed that the two main points on which efforts had been concentrated since the previous session had been the dangers threatening the environment, and social development. She pointed out that, in view of the new problems emerging from the rapidly changing world, the Red Cross should reconsider its approach to its work.

The participants, divided into four groups, discussed the first topic set down for discussion: “*What does your community expect from its National Society today, specifically in terms of activities?*” It was proposed that the term “community” be taken as the population as a whole. Among a number of other points that emerged, emphasis was placed on the following: on the whole, the community counted on the Red Cross to continue its traditional services; further, the Red Cross was expected to develop its role and be prepared to meet new needs; to determine this role, it was important for the Red Cross in each country to maintain close co-operation with the government and with non-governmental organizations; moreover, the participation of youth was essential.

The second topic for discussion by the different groups was: “*What does your National Society expect from its Federation?*”

But the most important problem examined by the Advisory Committee concerned the human environment, which is referred to in resolution 14, mentioned below. The Advisory Committee issued a recommendation to the Executive Committee to adopt a resolution urging National Societies to approach their respective

Governments with a view to defining their role in the national plans for the protection of the environment and requesting the League Secretary General to maintain and increase co-operation between the League and the United Nations in this field.

#### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The eighty-ninth session of the League Executive Committee was held from 27 to 29 September 1972 under the chairmanship of Mr. José Barroso, Chairman of the Board of Governors.

After Mr. Henrik Beer, Secretary General of the League, had spoken on the activities of the League and the amendments to the 1972/73 Plan decided upon in Mexico last year, the delegates adopted twenty resolutions. Parts of some of the resolutions are quoted below. Thus resolution No. 12 on the Development Programme

*... Solicits the unreserved support of all Societies, donor and beneficiary alike, for this vital Programme.*

In resolution No. 13 on the " Study on the reappraisal of the role of the Red Cross ", the Executive Committee

*... Welcomes the decision of the ICRC to join with the League in the Study. . .*

*... Agrees that a Joint ICRC-League Committee be established to replace the present League Sub-Committee and assume its mandate including the responsibility for the appointment of the Study Director. . .*

In its resolution No. 14, entitled " Participation of the Red Cross in the Protection of the Environment ", the Executive Committee

*... Decides to establish, under the aegis of the Health and Social Service Advisory Committee and in co-operation with the Youth Advisory Committee, an ad hoc working party composed of a small number of specially qualified representatives of National Societies, to study and determine the possible forms of Red Cross action for the protection of the environment. . .*

## IN THE RED CROSS WORLD

In its resolution No. 19 ("The Red Cross and Violence"), the Executive Committee,

*Deeply concerned by the acts of violence which are occurring in many parts of the world and by the threats these incidents pose to the future of mankind,*

*Appalled by the heavy price paid by innocent people in terms of death and suffering,*

*Noting that these acts of violence constitute a serious violation of humanitarian law and the Red Cross Principles,*

*Convinced that our Organisation cannot remain indifferent to acts of violence and their causes,*

*Aware of the humanitarian mission devolving on it,*

*Calls on National Societies*

- (a) to urge their Governments to act, both individually and collectively particularly through the United Nations, to ensure effective solutions to problems which cause so much suffering ;*
- (b) to ensure a wider dissemination of the Red Cross Principles among the public in order to contribute to the establishment of a climate of mutual understanding and respect for human dignity.*

Two other items of interest may be mentioned: it was decided provisionally to admit to membership of the League of Red Cross Societies the Bahrain Red Crescent which the ICRC had recognized in September 1972; and Mr. Eustasio Villanueva Vadillo, Vice-President of the Spanish Red Cross, was elected Treasurer General of the League.