

REPORT ON THE 9TH PAN AFRICAN CONFERENCE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report covers the proceedings of the 9th Pan African Conference, providing an account of the event's various sections, including the Youth Forum. It describes the work and outcomes of the plenary sessions and the thematic working groups of the two commissions.

It also outlines the decisions and recommendations adopted and includes a number of annexes.

INTRODUCTION

The 9th Pan African Conference was held in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) from 9 to 12 April 2017 and hosted by the Red Cross Society of Côte d'Ivoire, with the support of the Ivorian government.

This regional conference is held once every four years as a statutory meeting of African National Societies. It aims to: (1) promote cooperation, networking and partnerships among African National Societies; (2) identify common humanitarian concerns and issues; (3) formulate common strategies for the implementation of the decisions of the International Federation's General Assembly and the resolutions of the Council of Delegates and the International Conference; (4) submit proposals to the International Federation's Governing Board on matters relating to the General Assembly and the Movement's statutory bodies.

The 9th Pan African Conference maintained the same theme as the 8th Pan African Conference held in Addis Ababa in 2012. In the Plan of Action adopted in 2012, the African National Societies undertook to step up efforts to secure more domestic, regional and international investment, with a view to delivering more sustainable and effective services to vulnerable communities, groups and individuals.

The theme of the Conference is "Investing in Africa", focusing on two avenues of strategic reflection: (1) investing in National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to do business differently; and (2) investing in community resilience by enhancing the role of National Societies as auxiliaries to the public authorities and redefining strategic partnerships. The Conference served as a constructive platform for reflection on delivering effective and targeted humanitarian action.

The Conference was attended by representatives from 52 African countries, partner National Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), non-governmental organizations, government and the private sector. Highlights of the proceedings of the 9th Pan African Conference included: (1) the Youth Forum, which provided young people from different National Societies with a valuable opportunity to exchange information and experiences; (2) a general debate on the topic "Investing in Africa's leadership, governance, sustainability and resilience"; (3) discussion of the findings of the end-term review of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action; (4) two plenary commissions which addressed the Conference sub-themes, one with three working groups and the other with four.



COMMISSION A: Investing in National Societies; doing business differently

1. What should African National Societies do to address integrity, leadership and governance issues?
2. How should African National Societies focus on developing human resource capacities and systems?
3. Youth and volunteers doing business differently?

Commission B: Investing in community resilience: localization of aid, auxiliary role and partnership

1. How to strengthen community capacities and skills to better prepare for and respond to natural disasters, food insecurity, health problems and the impact of climate change.
2. How to strengthen the auxiliary role of African National Societies.
3. What types of investments and partnerships (Movement, private sector, regional institutions, development banks and the African Union) would be conducive to African National Society capacity building and sustainability?
4. African National Societies and migration.

A focused strategic approach building on the outcomes and lessons learned from the previous Conference was set down in a Plan of Action which lays the foundation for resilient National Societies able to act in an effective and sustainable way.

YOUTH FORUM

Over 60 youth delegates from African National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies came together to exchange and share innovative ideas on the role of young people in addressing humanitarian challenges in Africa.

The Youth Forum was attended by various personalities, including the President of the International Federation, the Vice-President for the Africa region, the President of the Red Cross Society of Côte d'Ivoire, the Federation's Secretary General, the Federation's Vice-Presidents, special guest Mr Masai Ujiri and the Regional Director for Africa.

The Forum kicked off with a series of addresses that underlined the high level of youth engagement in African National Societies. It was noted that over half of the 16 million Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers around the world are under the age of 30.

National Society leaders therefore see a need to focus on the priorities, needs and rights of young people affected by disasters, conflicts, forced displacement and other humanitarian crises. They are also keen to strengthen the capacities and skills of young people in order to further the development of their National Societies.

Mr Masai Ujiri from Nigeria is currently President of NBA basketball club the Toronto Raptors. He is a former basketball player, scout and executive and the only non-American to have won the prestigious NBA Executive of the Year Award, which he received in 2013.

He put across a clear message about being successful, based on his own personal experience, and encouraged young people to follow their dreams, create a life plan and strive to achieve their ambitions, showing initiative, tenacity and perseverance. He praised the critical role that young

people play in dealing with emergency situations and delivering emergency response and urged them to try to get on in their own country and not necessarily abroad.

The Youth Forum highlighted the importance of investing in youth in order to address the humanitarian challenges facing Africa. The young people spoke about the crucial role they play in their National Societies, responding in crisis and disaster situations and assisting the most vulnerable communities.

Young people need to be more closely involved in decision-making. The Red Cross and Red Crescent leaders attending the opening of the Youth Forum received this message with enthusiasm, stressing that youth is not just the future, but also the present and that it is important to step up efforts to mobilize youth in National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The youth participants were unanimous in highlighting the need for every National Society to have a youth policy.

On completing their work, the African youth delegates adopted a plan of action, setting out the following main areas of action: (1) develop localized national youth policies using inclusive approaches led by young people and ensuring that the youth voice is strongly represented; (2) create national youth structures, in which governance and management complement each other; (3) points 1 and 2 are based on previous Federation initiatives (International Federation's 2011 Youth Policy; the 2013 Youth Engagement Strategy and National Society best practices).

African youth networks cover different parts of the continent: West and Central Africa; Southern Africa; East Africa; and North Africa. Investing in the creation of solid, effective networks will: (1) enable young people to be well-informed and to share, information, knowledge and experiences; and (2) contribute to strengthening the capacities of young leaders so that they can help the most vulnerable. Africa's youth networks form the world's largest humanitarian network, but they need to develop their potential more fully and work more effectively together to do more, do better and reach further.

At the end of the Youth Forum, the African youth delegates undertook to (1) improve the structure of sub-regional youth networks by increasing formalization and establishing well-defined mandates; and to (2) formulate and submit specific plans of action for their sub-regional networks and work together to implement them.

CONFERENCE OPENING CEREMONY

The opening ceremony of the 9th Pan African Conference, held on Monday, 10 April 2017, began in a lively atmosphere with a cultural celebration, attended by Mr Daniel Kablan Duncan, Vice-President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, Mrs Dominique Ouattara, First Lady of Côte d'Ivoire and Honorary President of the Red Cross Society of Côte d'Ivoire, Mr Tadateru Konoé, President of the International Federation, the representative of Prime Minister Mr Amadou Gon Coulibaly, Dr Abbas Gullet, Vice-President of the International Federation and Chair of the Steering Committee of the 9th Pan African Conference, Ms Karidiata Souaré, President of the Red Cross Society of Côte d'Ivoire and Conference Chair, Mr Elhadj As Sy, Secretary General of the International Federation and Ms Raymonde Goudou Coffie, Minister of Health and Public Hygiene, as well as leading figures from the Red Cross and Red Crescent, other international organizations, diplomatic missions, development partners and the private sector.

Addresses were given by several speakers, including Mr Daniel Kablan Duncan, Mrs Dominique Ouattara, Mr Tadateru Konoé, Dr Abbas Gullet, Ms Karidiata Souaré, Ms Raymonde Goudou Coffie, Ms Christine Beerli, Vice-President of the ICRC, and Ms Eva Von Oelreich, Chair of the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

The Conference Chair opened the ceremony by wishing the participants *akwaba* (welcome) and calling on them to “reflect together on the continent’s current humanitarian priorities, with a view to determining the Movement’s strategic directions for the next four years”. She noted that the central theme “Investing in Africa” called for a series of investments in the local human resources and governance of National Societies. If National Societies are to enhance their role as auxiliaries to the public authorities and civil society actors in the humanitarian field, they must strengthen their institutional capacities and expertise.

The Vice-President for Africa stressed the importance of good governance, transparency, accountability, the pooling of experience and collective responsibility within the Movement, saying: “We will hold each other accountable, pool experiences, identify common challenges and propose joint solutions. This meeting is essential for the future of Africa’s National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.”

The President of the International Federation hailed regional conferences as “an opportunity for us to take stock, to look back on the period since we last gathered and to ask ourselves if we have done enough. The themes and sub-themes of the Conference show that the African National Societies’ leaders have themselves again recognized the need to improve their effectiveness to contribute to greater trust and accountability. We must be honest with ourselves and with others. We have had successes: our shared response to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa is one. The outbreak claimed thousands of lives but would have claimed many more without the dedication and courage of Red Cross volunteers. This remains a high point in our collective history. As our Secretary General, Mr Elhadj As Sy, said, ‘when [other actors] left, we stayed, and more than stayed, we surged, expanded and responded, and in doing so we saved lives. This is something that I am immensely proud of.’”

He paid tribute to the 17 people who died in the Grand Bassam attack and to our colleagues, Mr William Eteki Mboumoua, President of the Cameroon Red Cross Society, and Dr Tahar Cheniti, Secretary General of the Tunisian Red Crescent and Governing Board member representing Africa.

He emphasized that it is only by deepening our tradition of togetherness through joint action, accountability and partnership that we will be able to achieve our common goals.

In a video message, the President of the Republic of Guinea, His Excellency Mr Alpha Condé, thanked the National Societies in his own name and on behalf of his West African counterparts for their remarkable work saving lives during the Ebola virus epidemic.

As Chairperson of the African Union, he commended the work undertaken in response to the acute food crisis affecting Ethiopia, South Sudan, Somalia, Nigeria and Kenya in very difficult security conditions.



He noted that the 9th Pan African Conference, with its highly topical theme, was perfectly aligned with the policy choices made by the African States establishing Africa's position on the Sustainable Development Goals.

He reaffirmed his readiness to undertake advocacy for increased support for the most vulnerable among fellow leaders.

Mr Daniel Kablan Duncan, representing the President of Côte d'Ivoire at this important ceremony, remarked that the presence of a significant number of representatives from the Ivorian government was a sign of the keen interest in the theme of the 9th Pan African Conference "Investing in Africa". It focuses the attention of relevant actors on this issue of utmost importance to African countries, which needs to be explored in depth.

He added that all initiatives aimed at increasing Africa's development potential are worthy of attention and should be supported by the Ivorian government because Africa still does not have all the logistics infrastructure it requires for its development, despite the efforts undertaken in this respect.

In his view, the localization of aid is possible, provided that there is a commitment to mobilizing local aid and concerted efforts are undertaken in this respect. However, aid can only be effectively de-westernized, if the actors concerned join forces and act collectively.

Despite its wealth of natural resources and predominantly young population, Africa continues to be affected by under-employment, immigration, disasters, recurring health crises and the effects of climate change. Mr Duncan therefore called on key stakeholders in the humanitarian field to become involved and address the problem within their area of responsibility:

- Governments: put in place policies for coordination and facilitation through regional strategies supporting the plans of action developed by National Societies.
- National Societies: create synergies in development projects and humanitarian activities at the local level and become involved in all development sectors to foster complementarity among activities.
- Communities: become more involved in humanitarian activities carried out for their benefit by National Societies; community involvement guarantees the success and sustainability of actions designed to assist communities.
- African civil society: develop its philanthropic policies to respond to requests for funding made by National Societies.

Mr Duncan once again wished the participants a warm welcome and a pleasant and fruitful stay in Côte d'Ivoire. He urged all the participants to devote their best efforts to the work of this important meeting, the outcomes of which would be keenly awaited.

On behalf of Mr Alassane Ouattara, President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, he declared the 9th Pan African Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent open, wishing the participants a productive and successful Conference.

FIRST PLENARY SESSION

The first plenary session was chaired by Federation Vice-President and Chair of the Pan African Conference Steering Committee Dr Abbas Gullet. He remarked that humanitarian crises have increased in number, scale and complexity and that, in spite of the challenges they pose, African National Societies have been the first to respond and, in many cases, among the very few organizations with access to vulnerable communities and people. The National Societies have endeavoured to reinforce their unique position and improve their performance, but the sacrifices have been enormous. Volunteers and staff continue to lose their lives in the performance of their duties. Since the beginning of the year, 16 Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers have been killed in the service of humanity in Mali (1), Nigeria (6), Mexico (2) and Syria (7).

I. FINDINGS OF THE END-TERM REVIEW OF THE PLAN OF ACTION ADOPTED BY THE 8TH PAN AFRICAN CONFERENCE

It was important to evaluate progress in implementing the Plan of Action adopted in Addis Ababa, assess its impact and draw lessons in order to inform the discussions and exchanges of the 9th Pan African Conference.

The Addis Ababa Plan of Action, setting out the commitments made by the African National Societies, aimed to achieve the following objectives:

1) Promote the role of National Societies as auxiliaries to the public authorities and mobilize different types of resources domestically

National Societies are the partner of choice of their country's government in disaster risk management, in spite of their limited financial resources. It is important to improve the structuring of National Society operations, enhance their performance and reinforce their status as auxiliaries to the public authorities:

1. This dialogue can be conducted through Federation diplomacy missions together with African National Societies.
2. It is necessary to improve the visibility of African National Societies.
3. Other partners should invest in developing the communication and advocacy capacities of African National Societies.

Different types of resources should be mobilized domestically in order to meet the following objectives:

1. Make National Society operations and services less dependent on support from external donors.
2. Increase the operational efficiency and reliability of African National Societies by ensuring sustainable resources to facilitate an immediate response to identified needs.

To achieve this, African National Societies must endeavour to develop an effective resource mobilization strategy, increase visibility, improve its human resource management policy and, ultimately, establish long-term relationships with local partners.

2) Strengthen good governance and accountability mechanisms

In this regard, National Societies should carry out an overall audit process. Audits are risk management tools that ensure transparency and accountability and thereby attract further investment. National Societies tend not to go any further than the project audits required by external donors. This creates and perpetuates a situation of dependence, limiting access to strategic funding opportunities and new partners.

3) Investing in youth: from policy commitments to implementing strategy

Youth is a critical component of Red Cross and Red Crescent work globally. The majority of volunteers are young people, who are a strategic group to be targeted by National Society programmes. Youth participation in National Society governance structures also provides an avenue for leadership development and training and enables National Societies to invest in capacity building for future leaders.

4) Data collection, management and sharing

The review of the 8th Pan African Conference was characterized by poor response rates. This points to weaknesses in National Society data collection, management and storage capacities. Data can be used to show achievements and progress and to identify opportunities for growth. The Federation-wide databank and reporting system (FDRS) is a tool for collecting and analysing data from National Societies, developed to provide insights into their capacities, services, strengths, gaps and future potential. Data from the FDRS has been used to assess the collective reach of the Federation through the work of its member National Societies.

5) Continuous assessment of existing capacities

This process is important for National Societies to achieve their goals and fulfil their mission successfully. It enables them to identify their weaknesses and correct them. Although there are various capacity assessments available (NEPARC, STAR, OCAC, etc.), National Societies reported that the identification of weaknesses in such assessment processes did not necessarily attract support directly in line with the findings. It is therefore necessary to identify useful processes to follow up on assessments and to link National Society development support from donors and partners to the outcomes of institutional assessments.

6) Good governance: getting the legal base right

National Society statutes establish the legal framework for good governance, accountability and stability. Reviewing the legal base is therefore a core strategy for the success of African National Societies.

African National Societies are institutions that seldom attract leadership from either the private or public sector. Term limits combined with regular elections create a mechanism to remove unproductive, incompetent and uncooperative leaders likely to undermine the development of a National Society.

Conclusion of the Plan of Action end-term review

Beyond the findings of the review, African National Societies must address the question of whether the right attitudes, dynamics and tools exist in their organizations and what type of specific support is required and available from their partners. A key challenge for African National Societies is the existence of different frameworks for planning and programme implementation informed by donor priorities, national government strategies and emerging humanitarian needs. A delicate balancing act is therefore required when it comes to developing a centralized National Society development plan. The Addis Ababa Plan of Action and subsequent commitments arising from the Pan African Conference should therefore be seen as a compass indicating the specific direction that African National Societies should take as they engage in their own development.

II. INVESTING IN AFRICA'S LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE, SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE

The Conference featured a general debate on this topic, which was moderated by Ms Constance Motshumi, Chairperson of the South African Red Cross Society. There were contributions from Ms Gina Din Kariuki, communication expert; Dr Ousmane Doré, Director General for Central Africa at the African Development Bank (AfDB); and Mr Elhadj As Sy, Secretary General of the International Federation.

Discussion focused on investment policies and strategies for optimal governance, sustainability and resilience. The speakers highlighted the importance of the private sector in the process of building strategic partnerships, for example, AfDB financing tools and strategies, and the need to explore new tools for collaboration and synergies with National Societies.

The debate was followed by two plenary commissions, one with three working groups and the other with four, which addressed the Conference sub-themes.

- 1) Commission A (three working groups): Investing in National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; doing business differently.
- 2) Commission B (four working groups): Investing in community resilience: localization of aid, the auxiliary role of National Societies and innovative strategic partnerships.

COMMISSION A: INVESTING IN NATIONAL SOCIETIES; DOING BUSINESS DIFFERENTLY

Dr Gullet opened the session on this topic, calling on National Societies to conduct a thorough assessment of their strengths and weakness, with a view to addressing and resolving integrity, leadership and governance issues more effectively.

Integrity issues in the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement are detrimental to its fundraising efforts and to the development and implementation of effective programmes to reduce vulnerability. It has been observed that the number of cases of fraud, corruption and mismanagement is on the rise.

The 8th Pan African Conference examined the intrinsic link between accountability in African National Societies and their ability to attract investment. The National Societies are committed to investing continuously and rigorously in increasing the capacities and professionalism of their governance and management teams. The 8th Pan African Conference also decided to establish a peer review body with oversight responsibility for monitoring overall governance among African

National Societies. Established by African National Society leaders, this mechanism is a peer support structure tasked with developing good governance and accountability in African National Societies.

THE CONCEPT OF INTEGRITY AND THE ROLE OF THE COMPLIANCE AND MEDIATION COMMITTEE

Dr Muctarr Jalloh, Chair of the Compliance and Mediation Committee (CMC), provided an overview of the concept of integrity and compliance and interaction with those responsible for dealing with integrity issues. He explained that “integrity” is defined as the extent to which National Societies have “the will and the ability to act in pursuit of their respective declared objectives, policies and standards in full accordance with the Fundamental Principles of the Movement”. He added that a “dashboard” featuring eight criteria had been developed, which facilitated the rapid detection of integrity issues.

The International Federation’s Secretary General called for standard operating procedures to be developed in order to deal with integrity problems arising within the International Federation. Such procedures would enable African National Societies to strengthen their integrity protection and accountability mechanisms.

He then outlined the evolution of the integrity framework from 2007, when the CMC was created, through to 2015, when it was granted the “right to initiate a review”.

The CMC can exercise this right of initiative when no progress has been made after a two-year period during which efforts were undertaken to resolve an integrity breach and when the National Society simultaneously fails to fulfil the following three dashboard criteria: (1) the National Society has not reviewed its Statutes in the previous ten years; (2) the National Society has not submitted an annual report for three consecutive years; (3) the National Society has been declared in default.

Dr Jalloh clarified roles and responsibilities in this area, highlighting the following points: (1) the role of the National Society, which is required to remedy any integrity issues; (2) the role of the Federation Secretariat, which helps National Societies in accordance with its standard operating procedures; (3) as a last-resort measure, the CMC will intervene to resolve the breach of integrity; (4) if the National Society is unable to remedy the breach of integrity and the organization’s reputation is being damaged, the Federation Governing Board can impose sanctions.

He ended the session with an overview of the lessons learned in the period from 2007 to 2015, which included the following: (1) resolving integrity issues is a complex matter; (2) each case is different and must be dealt with using a personalized approach; and (3) the determination of the National Society to resolve the integrity issue is critical. The role of the CMC is to work with the National Society to find a solution, using diplomacy and persuasion and constant monitoring to ensure that the process remains on track, overcoming resistance with persistence. In short, it is a joint effort by the CMC, the Secretariat and regional groups.

WORKING GROUP 1: What should African National Societies do to address integrity, leadership and governance issues?

This session provided African National Societies with an opportunity to gain a better understanding of ways of investing in their organization’s accountability and integrity and of the benefits, risks and challenges involved.

The objectives were to: (1) examine the causes and factors leading to integrity and accountability issues in National Societies; (2) give participants a clearer idea of the tools, procedures and frameworks that the Federation has in place to manage risks and reduce fraud and corruption; (3) highlight the progress achieved and the obstacles faced by African National Societies in terms of good governance, leadership and accountability; (4) examine the experiences and analyses of the Africa Governance Group and the specific measures it has undertaken to enhance accountability, transparency and good governance; and (5) examine existing support mechanisms and facilities that can help African National Societies to strengthen leadership and governance.

Based on the lively and interesting discussions, the participants of this working group drafted the following recommendations:

1. Understand and comply with the accountability frameworks and integrity standards in place in the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.
2. Explore the options, tools and frameworks available to strengthen governance and accountability, including:
 - clear recruitment procedures (governance and management teams), based on skills, capacities, experience and diversity (Movement and civil society)
 - clearly defined roles and responsibilities for governance and management bodies
 - in-service training to strengthen individual and institutional capacities
 - regular review and dissemination of National Society statutes
 - internal and external audits
 - application of and compliance with domestic law.
3. Understand and use mechanisms through which support is provided by peers, Movement partners and donors:
 - the importance of regional groups, such as the Africa Governance Group, and sub-regional groups
 - Movement partners
 - other external partners.
4. Form a local and regional early warning and response framework for fraud, corruption and mismanagement risks:
 - put in place monitoring and evaluation systems
 - impose sanctions (governance and management) for failure to comply with internal rules and regulations
 - impose sanctions on National Societies in accordance with CMC criteria.

WORKING GROUP 2: How should African National Societies focus on developing human resource capacities and systems?

An analysis of shortcomings in terms of leadership, governance and accountability in numerous African National Societies has highlighted the need to strengthen human resource capacities and systems in order to increase transparency and accountability and overcome problems relating to fraud and corruption.

The focus was on leadership issues, recruitment and selection processes, cooptation, induction, management of codes of conduct and leadership development. The working group explored the systems as well as the processes and technologies that need to be put in place to support them.

The participants contributed to a very productive discussion on National Society interest in working towards achieving excellence in governance and on the need to invest in human resource capacities and systems.

The current environment is a competitive one, and while African National Societies do not operate according to the conventional rules of competition, they do need to professionalize their human resources and develop modern management tools to promote transparency and accountability in keeping with the spirit of the Movement's policy on organizational development adopted in Sydney.

The National Societies agreed that they should each define a vision before talking about what types of investment are needed in Africa in general and in their National Society in particular. They expressed their interest in establishing a long-term partnership to make the Conference theme a reality.

These discussions resulted in the formulation of the following recommendations:

- Prepare a development plan, including a vision and a logical framework.
- Put in place management tools, financial procedures, procurement systems and human resource management tools.
- Promote the professionalization of members, volunteers and staff and develop indicators to measure progress and results in this respect.
- Conduct regular self-assessments to evaluate performance, progress in implementing the policies adopted and the professional capacities of human resources.
- Incorporate the advantages offered by information and communication technology into the day-to-day management of all professional and operational activities.
- Promote ownership of policies among members.
- Undertake targeted recruitment to ensure the quality of the governance team and seek external expertise to ensure the quality of the executive team.
- Promote close professional collaboration between governance and management bodies.

WORKING GROUP 3: Youth and volunteers doing business differently

Young people account for almost half of all volunteers and are affected by issues such as urbanization, violence, drug use, mental health problems, unemployment and the global economic downturn. However, faced with these multiples challenges, young people have a host of resources at their disposal to address them, with increased access to information, rapid technological advances, improved mobility and entrepreneurship offering opportunities for excellence.

The discussions of this working group focused on (1) increasing youth and volunteer involvement in decision-making processes; (2) strengthening the capacities of young people and volunteers to enable them to take on leadership roles; and (3) recognizing the contribution of young people and creating spaces for young people in different cultural contexts.

The following points were made: (1) the need to train young people and volunteers, with a focus on the Movement, principles and values, National Society areas of activity and governance and leadership skills; (2) the need to create environments conducive to inclusion; and (3) the need to operationalize regional networks in order to pool experience and address common challenges; and (4) the need to set up an innovation and creativity platform.

The following recommendations were made:

- Formulate relevant volunteer loyalty strategies, including motivation and incentive mechanisms.
- Encourage young people to become fully involved in volunteer problems and concerns in their National Society.
- Allocate sufficient financial resources to youth-related activities.
- Innovate with new forms of volunteering in National Societies and effective data validation and management systems to keep pace with technological advances and other developments.
- Strengthen volunteer capacities, with a view to mobilizing domestic and international resources.
- Develop partnerships with Movement components and other organizations to support youth.

PLENARY COMMISSION B: INVESTING IN COMMUNITY RESILIENCE: LOCALIZATION OF AID, AUXILIARY ROLE AND PARTNERSHIP

The debate, moderated by Dr Fatoumata Nafo-Traoré, Regional Director for Africa, centred on food security. Five countries – Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, South Sudan and Somalia – gave an account of their experiences in this field. It was a highly topical subject because, at the time of the Conference, the continent was in the grip of a severe humanitarian crisis: some parts of South Sudan had already been classified as in famine, and Nigeria and Somalia seemed to be heading the same way. The crisis was also threatening Kenya and Ethiopia.

It was observed that, while great strides have been made, food security remains elusive in sub-Saharan Africa. Although the figures show a significant decline in famine from 27% in 1990 to 20% in 2016, famine has actually increased in real terms, taking into account population growth, climate change and conflicts (232.5 million people in 2016, compared with 181.7 million in 1990).

Dr Nafo-Traoré pointed out that “as long as we have conflicts and fail to take effective measures to mitigate the effects of climate change, food insecurity will always be a major problem”.

The discussions focused on the following points:

- **Community preparedness and development**

Community disaster preparedness is a long-term partnership model designed and implemented by local communities. The National Society’s role is to provide a forum to match local community needs with development opportunities, interests and support available through donors and partners. It ensures that all the programmes developed and implemented are designed, understood and needed by the community. Long-term preparedness can only be achieved through a community-centred approach that tackles the underlying structural drivers of vulnerability, including those arising from laws and policies. A short-term project-based approach would not be successful.

The participants confirmed that the majority of National Societies favour the community development model in which partners, following consultations with the community and in collaboration with the local authorities, agree on an acceptable plan of action that gives the

community responsibilities, within its capacities, and uses their volunteers as agents of community mobilization and facilitation.

Emphasis was placed on the need for National Societies to work closely with the public authorities of their country and cooperate with all social actors, civil society, traditional leaders and informal groups in order to reduce and manage disaster risks and bring about long-term change.

- **Communication for social and behavioural change**

Most projects aimed at food and nutrition security entail efforts to bring about social and behavioural change in the community.

Effective training and the mobilization of local structures will enable National Societies to collect and analyse data that will help to identify geographic inequalities, pockets of poverty and threats to food and nutrition security. Identifying the measures best suited to the local context minimizes the risk of failure.

Food security initiatives generally go hand in hand with disaster risk reduction and management activities, giving them added value.

WORKING GROUP 1: How to strengthen community capacities and skills to better prepare for and respond to natural disasters, food insecurity, health problems and the impact of climate change

Disaster preparedness is essential, leading to the creation of regional networks of National Societies and strengthening the Movement's collective impact on disaster preparedness and response globally. This session focused on disaster preparedness, community resilience, food security, health issues and climate change adaptation.

Community resilience has been a major priority for the Movement in recent years. There is a real need to strengthen resilience and ensure that communities are better prepared to cope with the threats and hazards they face.

This working group looked at gaps in disaster preparedness and sought to identify best practices for capacity building, the development and implementation of activities and the enhancement of the role of National Societies as first responders through legal advocacy (disaster law projects).

The participants raised the following points during the discussions:

- Local actions need to be incorporated into local development planning, and steps must be taken to strengthen the auxiliary role of National Societies.
- It is important to develop the volunteer base at the community level.
- It is necessary to establish a body of evidence-based knowledge through an operational research process to strengthen resilience building programmes.
- It is important to take into account participatory approaches in which communities are involved in jointly creating services (rather than just being the beneficiaries of such services).

The following recommendations were made:

- Develop an integrated approach incorporating a holistic, multi-sectoral perception of vulnerability capable of delivering a strong impact to achieve the desired change.
- Establish internal and external links for community resilience nationally and globally.
- Build on and learn from the natural resilience of communities in the long term to avoid introducing new ideas that are unlikely to be successfully adopted.
- Ensure that resilience building programmes are evidence-based by investing in data collection, analysis and storage.
- Carry out community resilience building programmes based on local risk identification and mapping in partnership with governments, universities and research institutions.
- Strengthen community engagement strategies to develop capacities (laboratories, innovation centres), raise awareness and promote effective resource management and sustainability.
- Incorporate sustainable development strategies, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Sendai Framework, the International Federation Framework for Community Resilience, etc., into resilience programmes.
- Ensure that resilience building programmes are carried out in the form of long-term investments and clearly defined, multi-year partnerships.
- Improve local resources (human and natural).
- Ensure that food security initiatives do not focus solely on agricultural production, but on the whole value chain (value-added production and marketing).
- Ensure that solid and effective management and governance structures are in place as they are an essential prerequisite for resilience building programmes.
- Undertake advocacy efforts with governments and partners to promote resilience building.
- Make the most of volunteer capacities and youth engagement.
- Develop more long-term partnerships to build effective networks.

WORKING GROUP 2: The auxiliary role of African National Societies

National Societies are recognized by the government of their country as auxiliaries to the public authorities in the humanitarian field to complement and support it in times of humanitarian crises and emergencies.

Resolution 2 of the 30th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent explains the nature of the role of National Societies as auxiliaries to the public authorities. This role, which is based on one of the Movement's Fundamental Principles, is an essential part of the identity of a National Society and has a great influence on its work. The resolution explains how National Societies should perform this auxiliary role within their own country, and African National Societies must now be more active in using this unique position to greater effect nationally. While some African National Societies have achieved this, many others have not yet had the opportunity to do so.

It is necessary for members of parliament to have a clearer understanding of the auxiliary role as it is they who adopt the laws establishing the legal framework within which National Societies operate.

This session explored new ways for African National Societies to use their auxiliary role to greater effect and to ensure that they are the “humanitarian partner of choice” in their country.

The following points were raised by the participants in the course of the discussions:

- The Geneva Conventions provide for the creation of National Societies and their role as auxiliaries to the public authorities.
- African National Societies have a sound institutional footing: they have (1) membership of the International Conference, alongside States and (2) membership of bodies created by States to deal with humanitarian assistance.
- They enjoy a variety of benefits: (1) tax and customs benefits; (2) personal property and real estate benefits; (3) grants and human resource allocations; (4) protocolary standing, etc.
- African National Societies are required to: (1) ensure that high standards of integrity are maintained in their organization; (2) build a relationship of trust with the government through permanent communication; and (3) ensure that members, staff and volunteers do not become involved in political controversies and are not active in political parties.

The following recommendations were made:

- Strengthen the credibility and governance of African National Societies to ensure that they are able to perform their role as auxiliaries to the public authorities more effectively.
- Raise awareness at all levels of government to ensure full acceptance of the auxiliary role of African National Societies in the humanitarian field.
- Remind States of their obligations so that African National Societies are able to perform their auxiliary role in the humanitarian field more effectively.

WORKING GROUP 3: What types of investments and partnerships (Movement, private sector, regional institutions, development banks and the African Union) would be conducive to African National Society capacity building and sustainability?

It was recalled that the Addis Ababa Plan of Action sets out the conditions required to attract investment, enhance the auxiliary role, strengthen good governance and accountability mechanisms and ensure more effective engagement in local and international partnerships. The Plan of Action also emphasizes the privileged position that African National Societies have in their country owing to their auxiliary status and underlines the importance of them being the partner of choice for public and private sector actors.

Cooperation among several different actors is required to tackle ever-growing global challenges. Innovative partnerships and investments can contribute to achieving development goals and increasing a country’s resilience.

The International Federation and the African National Societies must therefore mobilize actors from different sectors, including governmental and non-governmental actors, multilateral organizations, the private sector, universities, the media, civil society and communities in order to deliver a more effective humanitarian response.

It should be taken into account that innovative approaches to improving the humanitarian response and disaster risk reduction and prevention often rely on private sector expertise. For example, innovative technological solutions and tools to support disaster risk management, such as early warning systems and novel insurance products capable of increasing the resilience of disaster-prone areas, require private sector products and services, such as mobile phone cash transfers.

The session aimed to (1) familiarize the participants with the tools, processes and frameworks available for innovative partnerships and investments; (2) explore how the Movement should adapt to developments in the investment landscape; and (3) discuss strategies aimed at encouraging private investment and attracting traditional donors.

This group had the advantage of diversity as its members included representatives from UNICEF and other partners as well as National Societies.

The discussion began with a brief address by the UNICEF representative, who expressed his pleasure at having been invited to the Pan African Conference. He recalled that UNICEF has signed a global memorandum of understanding with the International Federation, which can subsequently be progressively applied to different countries.

He observed that the two organizations have points in common in terms of target beneficiaries and programmes. Indeed, given the Movement's extensive volunteer network, the Red Cross and Red Crescent is a strategic partner for UNICEF. He also stressed that the focus needs to be on prevention rather than response.

The discussion on strategic partnerships covered the following points:

- A partnership must be relevant, centred on strengthening National Society capacities and based on a long-term process rather than an agreement to deliver results in the short-term.
- A true partnership enables the partners to move forward together and strengthen fundraising capacities.
- The aim is to do business differently and concentrate on strengthening the partner's capacities.
- It is essential to have a partnership strategy that will provide mutual benefits.
- It is necessary to prioritize goals during the partnership negotiation phase.
- Partnerships must be guided by needs identified on the ground.
- Partnerships should deliver benefits both in terms of funding and expertise.
- It is important to ensure that the partnership is a good fit.
- UNICEF appreciated the close relations that National Societies have with communities compared to other organizations.
- National Societies have an impact on communities.

Discussions

- There is a need for prevention programmes, for example, programmes promoting best practices in hygiene.
- More information needs to be shared with our partners for a better understanding of the different mandates.
- It is important for partners to invest in National Societies to strengthen their capacities.
- The viability of partnerships should be assessed.



- For a partnership to be successful, the capacities of the National Society must be sufficiently developed.
- Appropriate systems must be in place in the field (clear standard framework for involving the private sector with the support of the International Federation).
- When entering into partnerships, the scale of the programmes or operations should be taken into account.
- Partnerships should be of the kind that empower National Societies by strengthening their capacities and not of the kind that use up their resources.
- It is important to encourage longer-term partnerships.
- Partnerships should be developed with other institutions, such as United Nations agencies, banks, etc.
- All partnerships must conform to the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

WORKING GROUP 4: African National Societies and migration

Mr Elhadj As Sy, Secretary General of the International Federation, provided an overview of migration issues. He noted that the number of migrants, the majority of whom are economic migrants, has soared over the past 15 years. It rose from 173 million in 2000 to 222 million in 2010.

Migration has recently become an issue of great concern to the international community. While the focus has been on the movement of people towards Western countries, in particular Europe, the scale of migration in Africa is not to be underestimated. In 2015, there were 21 million migrants in Africa (18 million of whom were international migrants from African countries who stayed in Africa). According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 86% of refugees worldwide remain in Southern countries, and many of them stay in their region of origin. Neighbouring countries are also seriously affected by large refugee movements and often bear a disproportionate part of the “burden” because of their geographic proximity. This burden is exacerbated by increasing attempts by destination countries to stop migrants and refugees from entering their territory, creating a climate of “transition” and even greater uncertainty.

Migrants and refugees are often exposed to a wide range of protection issues in countries of origin, transit and destination. They face serious hardships throughout their journey. There are numerous challenges in terms of basic protection, such as being sent back, as well as physical and administrative obstacles preventing migrants from receiving protection and humanitarian assistance.

Migrants are increasingly at risk from human trafficking, abduction and violence as well as from arbitrary arrest and detention. Over 5,000 people died in 2016 trying to cross the Mediterranean, and there are no accurate figures for people who lost their lives crossing deserts on their way to the North African coast.

Migration in Africa is mainly intra-regional and involves different categories of people, including migrant workers, migrants without valid documents, nomads, seasonal migrants, cross-border workers, refugees and highly qualified professionals. Worsening socioeconomic and political conditions in the region have led to a surge in irregular migration, the diversification of migration routes and a rise in human trafficking and smuggling.

The International Federation's Policy on Migration, adopted by the Council of Delegates in 2009, focuses on the needs and vulnerabilities of migrants, including refugees and asylum seekers. In 2011, the States party to the Geneva Conventions and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement unanimously adopted a resolution (Resolution 3 of the International Conference) calling on States to "ensure that their national procedures at international borders, especially those that might result in denial of access to international protection, deportation or interdiction of persons, include adequate safeguards to protect the dignity and ensure the safety of all migrants".

The Red Cross and Red Crescent must never deliberately prevent or promote migration, and our migration policy aims to link assistance, protection and humanitarian advocacy for migrants along migratory trails in countries of origin, transit and destination. No-one can deny that National Societies have a role to play in raising awareness and providing information about the migration process and in alleviating migratory pressures in migrant-sending countries. Steps that can be taken by National Societies include strengthening the dialogue with governments on the rights and needs of all migrants and identifying actors (within and outside the Movement) that it can partner with for operations, advocacy and funding.

Worsening trends, particularly the rise in irregular migration, the diversification of migration routes and the increase in human trafficking and smuggling, are the result of the deterioration of socioeconomic and political conditions in the region.

In view of rapid population growth, economic depression, conflicts, political instability, widespread poverty and rising unemployment in the region, migration movements, including refugee flows, are likely to continue increasing in the years to come.

In 2015, sub-Saharan Africa contained the largest number of refugees in the world, totalling around 4.4 million people. The number of displaced people in the region was also on the rise, with a surge in refugees from South Sudan.

Five African countries feature among the world's top ten refugee hosting countries: Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Chad.

In Africa, migrants contribute significantly to the host society (not only economically but also in terms of culture and diversity). It is necessary to focus on the positive contributions that migrants make and formulate policies that are beneficial to the countries of origin and destination and to the migrants themselves.

Efforts are required to "change the discourse" on migration, combat racism, intolerance and discrimination, promote social inclusion and present migrants and refugees as active and positive contributors to society.

It is necessary to go beyond short-term political considerations and develop a people-centred approach to migration that takes into account economic, social and demographic developments.

The main points raised by the participants during the discussions were as follows:

- Contextualize the complex dynamics of migration in Africa in order to better address vulnerabilities and meet the needs of migrants.

- Identify areas for collaboration and engagement, with a view to providing assistance and protection to migrants.
- Put in place regionally based solutions to alleviate migratory pressures and build stronger local communities.
- Share areas of activity among the different local, regional and international partners.

This working group drew the following conclusions:

- National Societies have a role to play in tackling the challenges posed by migration.
- Actors in this field must work together to provide synergic responses.
- Volunteers must be trained to meet the challenges posed by migration.
- The capacities of African National Societies must be strengthened to enable them to scale up their response to meet needs.
- National Societies must work with financial institutions to meet migrants' needs.
- Collaboration within the Movement needs to be strengthened.
- National disaster response teams should be deployed for cross-border operations.
- Actions and responses should be linked to establish a chain of solidarity.
- National Societies must be strictly neutral in their work to assist migrants.
- Efforts should focus on building a world of hope for young people.
- The focus should be less on diplomacy and more on undertaking specific actions.
- Civil society must change the way it communicates on the subject of migration.

The following recommendations were made:

- Tackle the root causes of migration.
- Implement humanitarian responses free from racism and discrimination under a partnership framework to establish a chain of solidarity along the migration trail.
- Strengthen partnerships within the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, pooling resources.

PLENARY SESSION

Given current developments and the rapid changes taking place in National Societies, it was considered very useful to set in motion a process to review the document *Guidance for National Society Statutes* in order to take these changes into account.

I. INFORMATION ON THE REVIEW PROCESS

Robert Kwesiga, Secretary General of the Uganda Red Cross Society and member of the small working group tasked with reviewing the document, explained the reasons for the process: (1) the document is at least twenty years old; (2) it is based on the European organizational model; (3) it does not take into account the diversity of National Societies belonging to the International Federation; and (4) it makes no mention of questions such as volunteering and resource mobilization.

The review process aims to: (1) strengthen the guidelines by incorporating relevant, updated standards; (2) ensure that the *Guidance* document is easy to use and accessible to leaders; (3) help National Societies to make clear choices that are compatible with their national context; (4) ensure

that the *Guidance* document is meaningful and user-friendly; and (5) reflect the diversity of environments in which National Societies operate, while at the same time ensuring respect for the Fundamental Principles.

The following areas were reviewed in depth:

- Leadership: need to review the current notion of separation of management and governance and look at other models with the required checks and balances.
- Compliance/integrity: need to include this issue as a key component of the new *Guidance* document.
- Volunteering/membership: the current *Guidance* document is silent on the subject of volunteers.
- Unity and headquarters–branch relations: need to promote an adaptable/agile National Society structure.
- Auxiliary role/independence: need to further strengthen the auxiliary role and independence.
- Financial matters: need to place emphasis on (mainly domestic) fundraising initiatives.
- Preparation of draft rules for National Society statutes.
- Each chapter should contain a description of the objectives, rules and duties/powers.
- Organization of consultations during the working group sessions at Statutory Meetings in 2017.
- Finalization of the *Guidance* document review in 2018.

II. ADOPTION OF THE PLAN OF ACTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Dr Muctarr Jalloh, the Conference Rapporteur, presented the following Plan of Action, which was adopted unanimously.

Investing in Africa: Abidjan Plan of Action

We, the leaders of the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of Africa, gathered in Abidjan from 9 to 12 April 2017 for at the 9th Pan-African Conference of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies,

Paying tribute to the Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers and staff who have lost their lives in the service of humanity;

Recalling the Ouagadougou Declaration adopted at the 5th Pan-African Conference in 2000, the Algiers Plan of Action adopted at the 6th Pan-African Conference in 2004, and the Johannesburg Commitments adopted at the 7th Pan-African Conference in 2008;

Building on the Addis Ababa Plan of Action adopted at the 8th Pan-African Conference in 2012;

Recognizing the recurring and growing risks facing Africa, particularly in the areas of disasters, food insecurity, health challenges, the impact of climate change, and migration;

Determined to grow and sustain Red Cross and Red Crescent work and community actions across Africa, with a renewed emphasis on local, national and regional partnerships;

Focusing on strengthening resilience of communities to respond to humanitarian challenges, by building capacities and skills locally;

Appreciating that the growing economies in Africa provide new opportunities to raise local and regional resources to support our humanitarian and development work;

Advocating for Movement partners to continue engaging with African National Societies to achieve sustainable structures and services;

Determined to maintain and enhance the positive reputation and public image of the Red Cross and Red Crescent locally, regionally and internationally;

We commit collectively and individually to investing in Africa, and the implementation of this plan of action.

Abidjan commitments: Key actions

1. Strengthen our capacities in leadership, including governance and management, accountability and sustainability.
2. Develop and sustain diverse partnerships that facilitate cross border collaboration to strengthen evidence-based programming, such as building community resilience, support to migrants, early warning and risk reduction, etc.
3. Reinforce our auxiliary role with the public authorities at all levels, through strengthened relationships and constant dialogue.
4. Include a youth representative as a full board member, and ensure that young people are engaged in both the development and implementation of programmes and activities;
5. Strengthen peer support mechanisms, such as the Africa Governance Group (AGG) and regional networks.

Together, we will work to build a culture of planning, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of these actions, guided by concrete indicators.

The actions will reinforce the capacity and sustainability of African National Societies and communities to scale up their development and humanitarian work across the continent.

Key indicators: Four key indicators have been identified to measure progress against the Abidjan Plan of Action:

Indicator 1: Number of National Societies with established risk management framework, and processes to develop a culture of transparency and accountability.

Indicator 2: Number of National Societies with more than 50 per cent of their income generated domestically, and that have revised legislation to ensure access to public funds.

Indicator 3: Number of National Societies that achieve full compliance with their statutory obligations, as recorded on the Compliance and Mediation Committee (CMC) dashboard.

Indicator 4: Number of National Societies that have both an implemented youth policy and an empowered youth representative on their board, elected by youth.

In support of these indicators, African National Societies will:

- **Maintain** the Africa Governance Group (AGG) as a peer review body with oversight responsibility for monitoring overall governance among African National Societies.
- **Request** the Pan-African Conference steering committee to prepare appropriate measurement tools to enable National Societies to effectively measure progress against this plan of action.
- **Request** the steering committee to review the composition, structure, and functions of the pan-African coordination team (PACT), in consultation with African National Societies.
- **Report** against the Abidjan Plan of Action indicators, coordinated by the PACT.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE HOST OF THE 10TH PAN AFRICAN CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN 2021

The question of which National Society would host the 10th Pan African Conference in 2021 was discussed. Three countries expressed an interest in hosting the event: the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya and Tunisia. They were asked to submit their candidature as soon as possible. They will be examined by an evaluation team, formed by a representative of the Pan African Conference Steering Committee, the Regional Director and the Regional Advisor for Africa.

CLOSING CEREMONY

Following addresses by the Conference Chair and the Ministry of Health representative, the Vice-President for Africa closed the Conference.

A warm tribute was paid to the volunteers of the Red Cross Society of Côte d'Ivoire for their dedication and contribution to the successful organization of the Conference.

After the closing ceremony, a press conference was held to provide national and international journalists with an overview of the Conference.

PRESS CONFERENCE

Secretary General Mr Elhadj As Sy made the following comment: “Apart from the shocks and stresses we are subjected to, there are fundamental aspects that we must address in the long term, and this requires investment, knowledge, capacities and financial resources, preferably resources from the African continent but also from partnerships with the Movement.”

For the Minister of Health and Public Hygiene, “investing in Africa means committing to solidarity, committing to humanity and humanism and committing to dealing with disasters caused by climate change which, unfortunately, are an increasingly common occurrence in our countries. In such cases, the Red Cross and Red Crescent works alongside the health and civil defence services to assist communities and governments.”

CONCLUSION

This event, hailed by participants as the best Pan African Conference yet, was very well attended, bringing together over 420 delegates representing all the African National Societies and numerous observers from the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and other organizations and partners.

From the start of the Conference preparations, the Steering Committee placed great emphasis on the participation of young people from all the African National Societies. A Youth Forum was held to discuss their priorities and hold an intergenerational debate with the African leadership. The meeting concluded with a well-received declaration, the most important points of which were incorporated into the Abidjan Plan of Action.

However, while the level of participation by young people in the working group on youth and volunteers was good, it was not as high in the other working groups of the two commissions. Greater encouragement is therefore required to ensure that young people are closely involved in all the topics addressed at the Conference.

The sessions were of an excellent standard. The numerous debates and constructive exchanges on the themes “Investing in National Society leadership and governance” and “Community resilience and sustainability” resulted in the formulation of the Abidjan Plan of Action, which will provide a reference framework for the actions to be carried out by African National Societies over the next four years. It aims to scale up the development and humanitarian work of the National Societies to assist the most vulnerable communities across Africa.

The adopted document is well designed and more concise than the 2012 plan, with five key actions instead of ten, and four indicators instead of seven. African National Society leaders unanimously agreed to maintain and strengthen the Africa Governance Group as a peer review body. It was also agreed to evaluate progress in implementing the Plan of Action against the established indicators and to produce a report on the findings in coordination with the Pan African Coordination Team.

The presence of a significant number of top Ivorian government officials was proof of the interest aroused by the theme of the 9th Pan African Conference and the crucial role of National Societies as auxiliaries to the public authorities. The Conference also provided an opportunity to further strengthen the excellent relations between the Ivorian government and the National Society. The government will continue to support this process, enabling the National Society to play its auxiliary role more effectively and assist the government in implementing humanitarian operations to help the most vulnerable communities.