

Declaration of Paris “Together for Humanity: 90 years and beyond”

WE, the National Societies Members of the Governing Board of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are gathered in Paris 90 years after the historic decision, initiated by the American Red Cross and supported by the Red Cross Societies of France, Italy, Japan and the UK, to establish the League of Red Cross Societies in the spirit of humanitarian solidarity and in the service of those in need in time of peace or war. This League became the Federation which today comprises 186 National Societies and assists tens of millions of beneficiaries per year. Driven by the spirit of Humanity, our unique organization does everything in its power to come to the aid and protect the human dignity of individuals and communities in need, particularly those facing extreme vulnerability, thereby contributing to building peace and harmony in society at large.

WE call on all members of the Federation and other organizations sharing our values to pay tribute to the League’s founding members for their historic initiative. Like 90 years ago, we call on the international community and all segments of civil society to recognise the plight of all people in need and address vulnerability wherever it may be found.

WE call on all people of good will to join this noble effort thereby enhancing the basis of our activities - our global fraternity of Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers.

WE remind States that it is their primary responsibility to provide humanitarian assistance to vulnerable persons on their respective territories. As auxiliaries to the public authorities in the humanitarian field, we, the National Societies of Red Cross and Red Crescent, stand ready to supplement them in the fulfilment of this responsibility.

WE call on States to broaden our humanitarian space by creating the conditions for more favourable access to people in need, which is a primary challenge when it comes to organizing a sustainable response. We also call upon all governments, as well as all donors, to assure a predictable and regular flow of resources adapted to the operational needs of their National Societies.

EMERGENCY response, which has long been the dominant paradigm of our work, is not enough. We call on the world community to promote a true culture of prevention as a humanitarian priority, emphasizing that early warning permits early action.

THE global scale of humanitarian challenges today, starting with the impact of climate change and the growing frequency of complex emergencies, exceeds the coping capacity of any one individual State or humanitarian organization. The time to act is now. We call upon States and other stakeholders to join us in urgently mobilizing all necessary human and financial resources to implement disaster-risk reduction and disaster-management policies and plans in response to growing humanitarian needs, giving priority to actions for the most vulnerable people.

BEING fully aware of the economic challenges faced by States in time of the current financial crisis, we, however, call upon them to work with our Member National Societies who, in turn, will help those in most need both domestically and abroad. We also urge that States find ways to ensure that humanitarian assistance budgets are not cut, but increased to tackle growing problems of vulnerability.

SINCE 1919 many others have followed the example of our first Member National Societies and today’s humanitarian community includes numerous organisations trying to make this world a better place by reducing human vulnerability. We call on the International Federation to promote and enhance partnerships with States, comprising public authorities at all levels, as well as other humanitarian actors and civil society, open to all in the spirit of its history and the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, to meet the major challenges facing the world today and thereby prepare safer times for all tomorrow.

Adopted the 4th of May 2009 in Paris