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# Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Disaster Relief - Revision Newsletter N°2

 International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

6 December 2012

**Period covered:**  
September to  
November 2012

*National Disaster Response team  
training exercise in November 2012.  
Photo: Egyptian Red Cross*



## Overview

The Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Disaster Relief (P&R) regulate procedures, roles and responsibilities of the components of the Movement to cooperate, prepare for, and respond to disasters. References to the Principles and Rules are included in the Statutes of the Movement as well as the Constitution of the Federation stipulating that disaster response has to be conducted in accordance with these Principles and Rules.

The revision process has continued largely according to the plans and is reaching the end of the first consultation round. Zonal and regional consultations have taken place since April 2012 with over 200 participants, from 94 National Societies, IFRC and ICRC. National Societies have engaged actively as expected by the Governing Board. The drafting of the zero version of the revised document is under way, and it has been planned to be sent to the membership for feedback in December 2012.

## Background

The Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Disaster Relief were first developed in 1954 for the League's (IFRC) Board of Governors. They were adopted by the International Conference in 1969 and later amended in 1973, 1977, 1981, 1986 and 1995.

In **2007**, the Governing Board decided to review the P&R based on:

- Tsunami Forum Recommendations
- Revised Constitution
- The New Operating Model
- Seville Agreement (1997) and its Supplementary Measures (2005)

- On-going policy revision process in the DM area
- Need to look at recovery, improvement of planning, resource mobilization, mutual assistance and operational coordination in situations with multiple RCRC partners.

The **2008-2009** review and consultation process resulted in a revision which was submitted to the Governing Board (GB) in September 2009. The GB decided not to proceed with presenting the revised P&R to the General Assembly and instead requested the Secretary General to continue consultations with National Societies focussing on the following six objectives:

- Provide clear and consistent language and reference to relevant policy, commitments, standards and accountability measures
- Clarify the field of application of the P&R
- Include or refer to guidance on relations with external partners
- Further elaborate on the transition from emergency to early recovery
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities regarding the use of unspent funds
- Consider emerging operating modalities.

## Update on the Consultation and Revision Process

The 2012-2013 revision process has built upon the work done during 2008-2009, and focused on the priority areas identified by the Governing Board, as well as other contextual changes and developments.

- The **National Society** consultations through the Zones have taken place since April 2012 linked to other regional or zonal meetings. Second round of consultations in early 2013 is being encouraged.
- The **Expert group** consultations have taken place with follow up consultations planned for January/February 2013.
- **Government** consultations have not yet started. They are expected to be given more focus in 2013 by the National Societies as well as Federation Secretariat through Geneva-based Permanent Missions.
- **IFRC Secretariat** consultation was organised in Geneva on 14 November and a second consultation will be likely arranged in February 2013.

**Disaster and Crises Management Advisory Body (DCMAB)** oversees the consultation and revision process. The DCMAB focussed their September 11-13 meeting on the Principles and Rules. The individual DCMAB members have served as co-facilitators and/or resource persons at the regional National Society consultation meetings and provided continuous support to the consultation and revision process.

**IFRC Secretariat**, Disaster and Crisis Management department in Geneva, and the Zone offices have been responsible for practical arrangements, developing the agenda, and co-facilitating the National Society consultations. **Secretariat Working Group**, chaired by Simon Eccleshall, has analysed the consultation feedback, discussed key revisions and proposed revised content in their monthly meetings since July 2012.

**ICRC** has participated into National Society consultation meetings and has been represented in the Secretariat Working Group. ICRC representatives met with the DCMAB in September 2012 to discuss ICRC involvement in the revision process. In the meeting, the interest of the ICRC to be involved in the revision process was confirmed.

### Secretariat Working Group composition:

Cooperation and Governance Support  
 Community Preparedness and Risk Reduction  
 Finance Department/Budget and Analysis  
 Health Department  
 Learning and Organisational Development  
 Legal Department  
 Planning and Evaluation  
 Risk Management and Audit  
 Strategic Partnerships and International Relations

ICRC: Cooperation and Coordination within the Movement

## Update on the Received Feedback

### Governing Board

Disaster and Crisis Management Advisory Body (DCMAB) Vice-Chair, Mr. Walter Cotte, presented the report of the DCMAB Chair to the IFRC Governing Board on 8 November 2012 in Geneva. The Governing Board approved the report and its recommendations which highlighted the following:

- The schedule to present the revised Principles and Rules to the Governing Board approval in its May 2013 meeting;
- The National Society consultation process was on track to achieve the target of over 100 National Societies;
- The expectations of National Societies that the revised Principles and Rules strengthen cooperation and coordination within the Movement and strengthen the National Societies' auxiliary relationship with governments and Movement relations with external actors in the field of disaster preparedness, relief and early recovery;
- The request to the Secretary General to ensure appropriate human and financial resources to undertake a comprehensive NS consultation process and to also consider the costs related to communications and effective dialogue with the governments.

### Expert Groups: Audit and Risk Committee of the Finance Commission

After a short introduction to the consultation and revision process, the Audit and Risk Committee members engaged actively in discussions in their meeting on 9 October 2012. They noted that some of the rules were aspirational even 17 years ago and thus would need to be either taken out as unrealistic, or enforce their adherence. It was pointed out that the rules may not necessarily be adhered to because of lack of desire but lack of skills. The Committee also recognised the changing dynamics with external partners and the need to update the text for that part, and highlighted the importance of involving Secretary Generals from the National Societies in the consultations. Overall, their recommendation was that accounting and auditing principles and rules should be included into the document, but without going into detailed instructions. Overall, the text would need to be self-explanatory, and the document concise.

The Audit and Risk Committee requested to be updated on the P&R in their next meeting in 18-19 February 2013.

In addition, the **Secretary General**, Mr. Bekele Geleta, was interviewed by Simon Eccleshall and Paula Uski on 4 October 2012. Presentation was made also at the **Annual meeting of National Society Legal Advisors** and others in charge of legal matters on 5 September 2012.

### Geneva Secretariat consultation

The Geneva Secretariat consultation took place on 14 November 2012 gathering altogether nearly 40 participants from 17 different departments or units and the ICRC. The purpose of the consultation was to ensure that the Principles and Rules revision is informed by Secretariat-wide cross-departmental expertise, as complementary to National Society and expert group consultations, and reflects the views and concerns of matters considered critical to the future success of Red Cross and Red Crescent disaster response.

The meeting was kick-started by Mr. Jagan Chapagain, USG/Programme Services (acting), who highlighted how the document used to be one of the key reference documents frequently used in disaster response. Unfortunately not enough attention had been paid to the document in recent years, and it had gotten somewhat lost. He reminded that we had tested the limits of the Movement in various recent major disasters; now the document had to be modernised, taking into account external factors that cannot be ignored and changed Movement dynamics. Lot of the basic principles from 1954 were still valid though. The aim to get International Conference adoption in 2015 was very clear.

It was recognised during the day that this was a great opportunity to modernise the document. While many changes were needed, it was also highlighted that a number of matters should not change. It would be important to retain the essentials and keep the document at the high level. It was also emphasised that the principles and rules needed to be disseminated, advocated and enforced, and make that happen by already now looking beyond the consultation and revision process.

The discussions focused on the below questions and provided very useful inputs for the drafting of the P&R (detailed notes available upon request). **Further feedback is welcomed to the team!**

Disaster Management colleagues from the IFRC Zone and Regional Offices will provide their substantive inputs during their end of January meeting in Geneva. A second consultation meeting will also be organised for the Geneva Secretariat likely in February 2013.

#### **Disaster preparedness and preparedness for internal response:**

- *What should be the field of application and scope of the P&R?*
- *Which core response preparedness duties should be addressed by the P&R to ensure that RCRC disaster response is consistent and of high quality?*
- *What principles and rules should be considered by the NS both in low and high-income countries be able to receive international assistance from the Movement components?*

#### **Coordination:**

- *What are the critical internal coordination tasks that must be covered? Who should be responsible for them?*
- *What should be the minimum Federation Secretariat coordination role regardless of the situation in any country?*
- *What should be looked at regarding coordination with the ICRC?*

#### **Request and response mechanisms for international response:**

- *What are the new mechanisms for requests for assistance that should be reflected in the P&R?*
- *How the new ways of working internationally in disaster response should be considered in the P&R?*
- *What rules should be considered for establishing IFRC/Movement-wide reporting on response?*

#### **Accountability:**

- *What are the critical matters related to accountability and auditing that need to be included into P&R?*
- *What kind of system/mechanism for compliance could be envisaged?*

#### **Strengthening auxiliary role:**

- *What critical measures to strengthen NS position and auxiliary role towards governments must be included in the P&R?*
- *What benefits, privileges and immunities are needed from the states to avoid delays in the delivery of humanitarian relief?*
- *Is there such a thing as an internationally auxiliary role for NS?*

#### **Civil protection and civil-military coordination:**

- *What should be the rules for National Societies wishing to deploy their disaster response personnel and/or assets with the civil protection agencies in their auxiliary role?*
- *On what conditions could military and civil defence assets be accepted by RCRC operation?*

#### **Working with the UN and INGOs:**

- *What are the key concerns related to the RCRC relations with the UN and/or INGOs that P&R should address?*

#### **Working with the private sector:**

- *What are the key concerns with the private sector relations that P&R could address?*
- *How can the P&R help Movement components make informed choices about which external partnerships will enhance the Movement's action, and which could compromise the neutrality, independence, impartiality and identity?*



Working with civil protection agencies - a topic considered in the revision. Photo: IFRC

## National Society Consultations

The following consultation meetings were organised between April and August 2012 (details included in Newsletter 1):

- **South East Asia** Consultation meeting in Bangkok; 27 April 2012, 8 National Societies represented.
- **Pacific** Consultation meeting; April 2012, 10 National Societies represented.
- **Middle East & North Africa** Consultation meeting in Beirut; 2 May 2012, 15 National Societies represented.
- **Americas** Consultation meeting in Toluca, Mexico; 5 May 2012, 12 National Societies represented.
- **Caribbean** Consultation meeting in Barbados; 5 May 2012, 14 National Societies represented.
- **Europe and Central Asia** Consultation Meeting in Ankara; 18-19 June 2012, 21 National Societies represented.

The following consultation meetings have been organised with the National Societies since September 2012:

### East Asia Consultation meeting

The East Asia consultation meeting was organised as part of the Leadership Meeting of the East Asia National Societies in 6 September 2012. The meeting was attended by the five National Societies, the ICRC and representatives from IFRC Beijing Regional Office, Mongolia Country Office, Zone Office, and Geneva Secretariat. The discussions were co-facilitated by Mr. Simon Eccleshall (Head of DCM) and Mr. Jean-Philippe Tizi (Canadian Red Cross), member of Disaster and Crises Management Advisory Body.

#### *National Societies represented (5):*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Red Cross Society of China</li> <li>▪ Japanese Red Cross Society</li> <li>▪ Red Cross Society of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Republic of Korea National Red Cross</li> <li>▪ Mongolian Red Cross Society</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

### Southern Africa Consultation meeting

A full day consultation meeting was held as part of regional DM Coordinators meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa. Nine National Societies, ICRC and German RC representatives attended.

The meeting was facilitated by Ms. Christine South, Senior Officer for Quality Assurance at the Federation Secretariat.

*Participants of Southern Africa consultation meeting in Johannesburg.  
Photo: IFRC*



#### *National Societies represented (9):*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Angola Red Cross</li> <li>▪ Botswana Red Cross Society</li> <li>▪ Lesotho Red Cross Society</li> <li>▪ Malawi Red Cross Society</li> <li>▪ Mozambique Red Cross Society</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Namibia Red Cross</li> <li>▪ South African Red Cross Society</li> <li>▪ Baphalali Swaziland Red Cross Society</li> <li>▪ Zambia Red Cross Society</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

### Remaining Zone/Regional Consultations

The following National Society meetings have been currently scheduled:

- **West and Central African** Consultation in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, 12-13 December 2012.
- **South Asia** Consultation Meeting on 20 December in Islamabad, Pakistan.
- Consultation with **Indian Ocean** National Societies during Regional DM meeting in 10-12 December 2012.
- Consultation with **East African** National Societies during Regional DM meeting in 24-26 January.

### Additional information sharing sessions

Presentation was made at the **Asia Pacific Red Cross / Red Crescent Cooperation Forum** in Beijing on 9 September 2012 by Mr. Simon Eccleshall and Mr. Jean-Philippe Tizi.

Ms. Birte Hald, Head of Emergency Operations, facilitated a session on the P&R during the Annual Meeting of Focal Points of Disaster Management in **West and Central Africa** in Abidjan on 21 November 2012. 23 National Societies who were represented engaged in active discussions.

**Pan African Conference Side Event** on African Consultation on the revision of the Principles and Rules for RCRC Disaster Relief was scheduled for 20 October 2012 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, as an excellent opportunity to reach African National Societies. The side event was unfortunately rescheduled due to delayed PAC programme and eventually it had to be cancelled.

### Revised Principles and Rules

The actual drafting work towards a zero draft started in mid-October 2012. Based on the consultation the following key changes are currently expected in the revised document:

- Changed structure of the document to provide more clarity. Preamble and clear principles added in the beginning and list of relevant reference documents annexed at the end.
- Modernised document which is response focused, covering response preparedness, relief and early recovery. Discussions on field of application have shown a consensus that the document should be applicable to all disasters and emergencies, including crises.
- Focus on what is needed internally to better work together internationally.
- Addressing the emerging, or already existing different operating modalities, and new mechanisms for requests for assistance, and ruling out unilateral or uncoordinated assistance.
- Aiming at IFRC/Movement-wide reporting and including the management of contributions outside appeals.
- Adding principles and rules for relations with external humanitarian actors, in particular with civil protection, military, humanitarian agencies, media and private sector.
- Emphasising strongly accountability and quality and leaving some of the internal procedural text out on financial accounting.
- Overall emphasis on the role of a National Society in its own country. The document is written much more from a National Society perspective rather than from the Geneva institutions perspective.



### Summary Timeline

The below timeline is based on the Disaster and Crises Management Advisory Body's recommendation to present the revised Principles and Rules to the Governing Board in 2013. Previous revisions of the P&R have been submitted by the Governing Board to the General Assembly, which has endorsed and referred them to the International Conference of Red Cross and Red Crescent.

Time	Consultation milestones	Primary target audience
December 2012 / January 2013	Consultation on Zero Draft	National Societies
February 2013	Consultation on revised Zero Draft	Disaster and Crises Management Advisory Body and Global Senior Management Team
12 April 2013	Submission of the Draft Revised P&R to IFRC Governance Support, to be submitted to the GB ahead of their meeting in May 2013	Governing Board

## Food for Thought

### Large Scale Disasters in High Income Countries

The list of recent disasters in high-income countries is extensive: Japan's earthquake and tsunami, New Zealand's Christchurch earthquake, Australia's (Victoria) bushfires operations, America's Katrina and others, the UK's floods and cold weather, Canada's floods and fires, and Germany's floods. How are high-income countries managing with disaster response and preparedness requirements? The topic *large-scale disasters in high-income countries* was addressed in a meeting taking place in Australia and New Zealand in October 2012 with the participation of Australian RC, New Zealand RC, American RC, British RC, Canadian RC, German RC and Japanese RC representatives and the Federation Secretariat.

Discussions on the relevance of the Principles and Rules for RCRC Disaster Relief for large-scale disasters and high-income countries centred around operating modalities; the emergency appeal system which had not been utilised in these contexts; the field of application and different National Society mandates in preparedness, relief and recovery work; and Movement's internal and external relations. Simon Eccleshall shares the below observations made, lessons learnt and ways forward which are also relevant to the Principles and Rules revision.

#### Preparedness challenges and way forward

- Many National Societies in high-income countries are generally not well prepared for large-scale disasters; contingency plans and procedures for receiving assistance (financial and in-kind) are lacking. ➤ *There would be an interest for planning for very large-scale disasters and catastrophic risks at global and regional levels and improving contingency planning e.g. through simulations.*
- Mandates and responsibilities are generally not well defined with local authorities or they are limited in scope when compared to operational needs in large-scale disasters. ➤ *There is a strong interest in preparing pre-disaster agreements, particularly with neighbouring countries and for Federation Secretariat coordination support.*
- Difficulties in working across regions or states are often greater than to working internationally.

#### Relief / Surge

- Domestic responders of many National Societies are not aware of / familiar with global tools, but they have a strong interest to explore potential for deployment. ➤ *There is an interest in accessing global surge capacity in key operational support roles, e.g. relief / early recovery planning, coordinating international assistance (funding), reporting, communications.*
- Pressure to spend large amounts of funding immediately is often greater than pressure on demonstrating accountability. ➤ *Guidance is needed on how to spend large amounts of money quickly and demonstrating accountability.*
- Cash-transfer is a preferred method for relief and early recovery programming.

#### Recovery

- Recovery planning is not well incorporated into assessments and early planning leading to later than desirable commencement of recovery activities. ➤ *Develop tools that are applicable to a range of contexts (low, middle, high-income), recognizing that options for using cash and voucher based approaches increase with levels of development.*
- The challenges in programming include the issue of how to address the needs of disaster affected populations versus pre-disaster chronically vulnerable people.
- Existing IFRC tools and guidance tend to focus on early recovery in low income countries and rural contexts – which cannot be applied easily to middle or high-income contexts

### Coordination

- National and international departments generally don't work efficiently together in large-scale responses. There is little integration and little understanding of each other's work.
  - National Society response roles tend to be often directed more by authorities than on basis of independently assessed needs, which leads to gaps not being covered.
- *This presents enormous potential for improving response through more joined up work between national and international response facilitated by e.g. restructuring, joint planning and collaboration.*

### Information management

- There is a need for much better information sharing within National Societies.
- *Excellent tools and programmes for information management with stakeholders and affected communities exist and should be utilised even more.*
- *IFRC / Reference Centre dissemination roles can also support that.*

### Principled Humanitarian Action

The Fundamental Principles and the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organisation in Disaster Relief form the basis of this P&R revision process. The principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence are fundamental values that guide all humanitarian work.

Norwegian Refugee Council highlights in its new publication: *Tools for the job: Supporting principled humanitarian action* (available at [www.nrc.no](http://www.nrc.no)) that principles are not just theoretical or ideological concepts; they are used as operational tools to get the work done. Humanitarian organisations use the principles in navigating difficult, insecure, politicised and/or unpredictable contexts, in negotiating access and safe delivery of aid to populations, in drawing attention to vulnerabilities and e.g. in improving the quality of programming. Humanitarian principles need to be respected and promoted now more than ever.

### Further information

#### For further information, please visit:

- Principles and Rules at FedNet:

<https://fednet.ifrc.org/en/resources/disasters/disaster-management/dm-policies/principles-and-rules-of-disaster-relief/>

### Contact information

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