7 April 2017

- Federation policy review –

Status of existing Federation policies and recommended next steps

1. Background

The IFRC currently has 23 policies that have been adopted by the General Assembly or Governing Board and are binding and applicable to all National Societies and the IFRC Secretariat. In 2011, the IFRC Secretariat engaged a consultant to undertake a review of these existing policies. The aims of the review were to assess the status, relevance and level of application of those policies and to gauge their consistency with Strategy 2020 and existing Movement policies. Based on the review, existing policies were categorized as **'obsolete'**, **'needs updating'** or **'is up-to-date'**, as reflected in the table below.

Subsequently, the 2013 General Assembly adopted an "IFRC Policy Framework" and requested the launch of a review process of the existing policies against the new Policy Framework. Also, the General Assembly recommended to set up a governance body to oversee the review of existing policies and to act as a governance "clearing house". Furthermore, the General Assembly recommended that the Governing Board set up ad hoc advisory bodies on a case-by-case basis for the creation and further revision of IFRC policies.

2. Status update of Federation policies

Since the 2013 GA decision, progress on cancelling policies or conducting an overall revision of the policy body is on-going. As reported in this paper, the Secretariat has undertaken a brief review of the consultant's findings from 2011 to provide more current advice from relevant internal file holders. The conclusions of that review are reflected in the table below, under 'status in 2017'. Using the 2011 review and the 2017 status update, recommendations are proposed for the Governing Board Working Group on Governance Excellence as to next steps. These include calling for several policies to be retired as obsolete and also directing the Secretariat to consult appropriately and develop a phased plan as to whether and how to update and revise other policies (in light also of other potential policy priorities) in order to build a relevant and coherent body of policy for the Federation.

2.1 Obsolete Policies

Four Federation policies are recommended for retirement as obsolete:

2.1.1 Malaria control policy
IFRC and RC/RC National societies are using both WHO malaria control recommendations and national (MoH) malaria control policy. In light of these external references, it is considered that IFRC's malaria control policy should not be updated and the old version officially made obsolete as it is no longer aligned with WHO recommendations. Since this policy was adopted only by the Governing Board, that body could also retire it directly.

2.1.2 Social welfare policy
The social welfare policy is considered to be out of date and no longer relevant. The realm of social welfare has changed significantly, newer priorities are e.g. ageing populations or multicultural societies. If governance/ leadership feels that an updated social welfare policy should exist, it should be based on an in-depth analysis on the policy need in the realm of social welfare that goes beyond the direction of S2020 and only if there are controversies that call for a clear positioning of the organization. Therefore, the current policy should be officially retired by the General Assembly.

2.1.3 Development cooperation policy and development policy
The development cooperation policy (1997) and the development policy (1995) are the oldest IFRC policies. Since their adoption, other normative instruments, such as the National Society Development Framework (2013), have been approved by the General Assembly. The Framework does not refer to the policies and provides more up-to-date direction for National Society development and therefore practically replaces the main content of the policies. Furthermore, a National Society development compact is being developed that will largely replace the content of the development cooperation policy. Therefore, these two policies should be retired by the General Assembly.

2.2 Policies needing updating
The updated analysis categorised 14 policies needing updating and two policies which are already under review with the aim of bringing a reviewed/ updated version to the General Assembly 2017. The fact that there are 16 policies out of 23 requiring a review reflects the general 'age' of Federation policies. The majority of our policies are from the late 1990s or early 2000s, i.e. 15-20 years old.

Some of these policies have also been identified as requiring updating already in earlier reviews (e.g. the 2008 policy audit of disaster policies). The reviews have identified the need to update the language, add references, create better coherence between policies etc. However, those policy revisions had been postponed due to institutional changes and processes. Now with the IFRC Policy Framework in place and with a dedicated Policy and Diplomacy Unit established in the Secretariat, it would be a suitable time to take action to review and update those individual policies that are still relevant.

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2.3 New policies to be developed

The update of policies should also take account of proposals for new policies that may be required, either for the IFRC or for the Movement as a whole, in order to prioritize the order of work. For example, suggestions have been floated (with an eye to the statutory meetings in 2019) to develop new IFRC policies on the environment, responsible use of data, cash transfer programming and pandemic response, as well as a Movement policy on accountability to affected populations and a revision of Movement guidance on civil-military relations.   These proposals need to be assessed[1] and well consulted.

3. Overview of the status of Federation policies

	Analysis from 2011 policy review					Update from 2017	
	Policy title	**Policy Adopted (by/year)**	**Obsolete**	**Needs updating**	**Is up-to-date**	**Comment in 2011**	**Status in 2017 (by Secretariat analysis)**	**Relevant GBWG or Commission**
	Programmes and services							
1.	Essential drugs and medical supplies policy	GA October 1999	X	X		Requires discussion whether needed,	Needs updating, not obsolete	tbc

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[1] The IFRC Policy framework defines that Federation policies should be created only in areas which meet at least one of the below criteria. These criteria should therefore be considered when considering new policy development and reviewing current policy:

- require clear guidance and positioning because they describe a core business or cross-cutting area with specific characteristics of the Red Cross and Red Crescent;
- require clear guidance and positioning because they describe a work area, where National Societies enter a new field;
- describe a specific approach, e.g. in order to assure quality standards;
- require clear boundaries on what to do and what NOT do;
- require clear guidance and positioning because of controversy;
- bear high risk – reputational, financial, legal, ethical or other.

					if yes, it needs revision		
2.	First Aid policy	GB October 2007		X		Push for movement policy	For FA policy there is a plan to update the policy as advised by the review and the process of updating it would be discussed at length in the upcoming steering committee meeting with IFRC Global FA reference Centre and IFRC health and care department.	tbc
3.	Health policy	GA November 2005		X		Requires discussion whether health at large isn't better positioned with a strategy accompanied by policies in specific technical areas that require a clear positioning of RCRC activities.	Feedback pending.	tbc
4.	HIV/ AIDS policy	GB November 2002			X	Content is entirely up to date but some of the terminology has evolved and should be adapted, as well as the list of references need updating	Policy needs to be updated. Further feedback pending.	tbc
5.	Malaria control policy	GB April 2005	X	X		Since main reference are	IFRC Malaria control policy is obsolete and should not be updated.	tbc

						WHO regulations that evolve very quickly is questionable whether an IFRC policy on malaria is really needed	IFRC and National Societies are using both WHO malaria control recommendations and national (MoH) malaria control policy. IFRC's malaria control policy should not be updated and the old version officially made obsolete as it is no longer aligned with WHO recommendations.	
6.	Migration policy	GA November 2009			X	Content-wise entirely up to date, structure is deviant from all other policies, could easily be aligned without changing the content	Feedback pending.	Operational, Coordination and Resource Excellence
7.	Psychological support policy	GB May 2003		X		Terminology needs updating and stronger reference to S2020	For MHPSS policy, the plan is to develop and update the policy as per the review in close consultation with NS. The idea is to aim for a joint Movement policy.	tbc
8.	Quality provision in blood services policy	GB/GA November 2011		X		Review process underway	Requires revision (previous review process not completed). Note: the policy includes a 'sunset clause' which says the policy needs to be reviewed within 5 years and the process needs to be initiated by end 2014.	tbc
9.	Social welfare policy	GA October 1999	X			Need for discussion whether this policy is needed	IFRC's Social Welfare Policy is out of date and is no longer relevant. It should be officially made obsolete	tbc

						(some elements of it could be included in a wider health and care policy)	
10.	Water & Sanitation policy	GB October 2003		X	X	Update would be fairly cosmetic, few minor changes, explicit reference to S2020 could be made	The new strategic direction for WASH, rolled out in January 2017, operationalises the policy and is to be seen in addition to it. New strategic directions of IFRC are well aligned. The policy still stands and doesn't need revision.	tbc
	Emergency response							
11.	Disaster preparedness policy	GA October 1999		X			The whole resilience language needs to be reflected in this and other disaster policies. Needs updating.	Operational, Coordination and Resource Excellence
12.	Emergency response policy	GA November 1997		X			Needs updating, some revised language suggested separately. Note also: separate cash policy suggested to be developed.	Operational, Coordination and Resource Excellence
13.	Food security and nutrition policy	GB October 2003		X		Minor changes needed, such as dated references	Needs updating, some language suggested. (revision should be done together with Health department)	tbc
14.	Post-emergency rehabilitation policy	GA October 1999		X			The "post-emergency policy" is often referred to as a "Recovery policy" and we have a number of tools and guidelines that are linked to it but as "Recovery" (e.g: IFRC Recovery Guidelines). Needs updating, some language suggested.	Operational, Coordination and Resource Excellence

15.	Integrating relief, rehabilitation and development policy	GA October 2001		X			The policy is not very clear with the terminology and may be confusing for the NSs. Needs updating	Operational, Coordination and Resource Excellence
	Institutional capacity							
16.	Development cooperation policy	GA November 1997	X			Replaced by the Framework for Building strong National Societies	Should be declared obsolete. This policy is partially replaced by the 2013 (GA) NS development framework and the NS development compact will address largely similar topics.	National Society and Volunteer Excellence
17.	Development policy	GA November 1995	X			Replaced by the Framework for Building strong National Societies	Should be declared obsolete. This policy is partially replaced by the 2013 (GA) NS development framework.	National Society and Volunteer Excellence
18.	Integrity policy	2009			X	Newly adopted by GA 2009	Relevant and up-to-date.	Compliance and Mediation Committee
19.	Gender policy	GA October 1999		X		Position IFRC as organization that promotes gender equality, complemented by IFRC Gender Strategy	A new Framework for Gender and Diversity Issues covers 2013-2020, and covers the majority of the areas of the policy 1999 . However it is a good policy and important to keep it available online for our reference.	Gender and Diversity
20.	Volunteering policy	GA November 2011		X		Currently updated version underway, will be present to the GB in Sep 2011	Currently under review, reviewed/revised policy planned to be presented to the GA 2017.	National Society and Volunteer Excellence

21.	Youth policy	GA November 2011		X		Revised version is going to be presented to GB and GA 2011 for adoption	Currently under review, reviewed/revised policy planned to be presented to the GA 2017.	Youth Commission
	Financial resources							
22.	Fund-raising policy	GA November 1997		X		Number of new policies are planned, aligned to S2020 and the new Federation-wide RM strategy	Feedback pending.	Operational, Coordination and Resource Excellence
	Humanitarian Diplomacy							
23.	Humanitarian Diplomacy policy	GA (?) 2009			X		Needs updating. Reconsider the scope of the definition in light of practical experience since the adoption.	tbc