

1. The regional structures of the Red Cross (a review by Mr. Bergström, Under-Secretary-General of the League);
2. Disaster: preparedness and relief (presented by the New Zealand Red Cross and the Bangladesh Red Cross, followed by a statement by Undro);
3. Health and social welfare programmes (work by the Thai Red Cross followed by statements by Unicef and WHO);
4. Refugees (introduction to the subject by the Malaysian Red Crescent and the Australian Red Cross, followed by an intervention by the Pakistani Red Crescent, which attracted considerable attention, and by a statement by the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees);
5. International Humanitarian Law (an outline by the ICRC headed "Reflections on dissemination") and Information (presented by the Japanese Red Cross);
6. The Second Red Cross Conference on Peace (presented by the Indonesian Red Cross);
7. Youth (by the Philippine Red Cross and the Fiji Red Cross).

During a special session, two cheques, each worth 250,000 Australian dollars, were handed to the League and the ICRC for their activities in East Africa. This money had been collected at a public concert which a group of Australian singers and musicians had given free of charge. The concert had been organized with the support of the music industry of Australia and in co-operation with the Australian Red Cross.

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## **Sixteenth Conference of Arab Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies**

The Sixteenth Conference of Arab Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the annual regular meeting of the General Secretariat of Arab National Societies, was held in Tunis from 25 to 28 March under the direction of Mr. Abdel Ghani Ashi, Secretary General.

National Societies from the following countries sent representatives: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen Arab Republic.

A number of other Red Crescent Societies, although not members of the International Red Cross, also sent representatives: Djibouti, United Arab Emirates, Oman, the Palestinian Red Crescent, and the Red Cross and Red Crescent of Eritrea.

Delegates from several non-Arab Societies (Brazil, Canada, China, the Federal Republic of Germany, Pakistan, the Soviet Union, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Yugoslavia), and representatives from UNDRO (the United Nations Disaster Relief Office) and the International Civil Defence Organization attended as observers.

The Conference was also attended by an ICRC delegation headed by the President, Mr. Alexandre Hay, and a League delegation including Mr. Enrique de la Mata Gorostizaga, President, and Mr. Hans Hoegh, Secretary General, by Dr. Ahmed Abu Gura, Chairman of the Standing Commission of the International Red Cross, and Mr. J. Meurant, Director of the Henry Dunant Institute.

The purpose of the meeting was, as customary, to study topics of common interest to the Conference participants.

One of the topics was ICRC activities in the Middle East, on which President Hay gave a general talk. Mr. Carlos Bauverd then described ICRC activities in the region country by country. The presentations were followed by lively discussion, evidence of the participants' interest.

At the end of the discussion, the conference adopted two resolutions. Resolution 3 expressed appreciation for the ICRC's efforts for the victims of armed conflicts and other events in the Middle East and West Africa and asked it to increase its efforts on their behalf. As a corollary, the Conference urged the National Societies to make representations to their respective governments, encouraging them to sign the 1977 Protocols.

In Resolution 4, the Conference, recalling the humanitarian goals of the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement, launched an appeal for the application of international humanitarian law in favour of the victims of the current conflict between Iran and Iraq (prisoners of war and civilians exposed to aerial bombings); it also thanked the ICRC for its activities in the conflict and asked it to intensify them. It asked all national and international organizations to continue their efforts to bring an end to the conflict.

Another subject of discussion was the dissemination of international humanitarian law. The delegations from Egypt and Lebanon spoke of their accomplishments in dissemination to young

people. Mr. Andre Tschiffeli of the ICRC spoke on the importance of dissemination and the necessity of adapting the message to various target groups. The National Societies of Tunisia, North Yemen and Jordan informed the Conference of their intention to organize dissemination seminars.

Finally, the Conference held detailed discussions on the drought in Africa and adopted a resolution in which it thanked international organizations for their relief activities for the drought victims and invited them to take into account in their assistance programmes the protection of the environment.

The next Conference will be held in Mauritania, in 1986, at a date still to be fixed.

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### **Round Table on the safety of journalists on dangerous professional missions**

A Round Table was held under ICRC auspices on 23 and 24 April at Mont-Pèlerin sur Vevey (Switzerland) on the theme of the safety of journalists on dangerous professional missions. Sixteen international media organizations—including regional organizations of Africa, Latin America, the Arab world, South-East Asia and North America—had accepted the ICRC's invitation and sent representatives. The Round Table was also attended by numerous correspondents for major press agencies (AFP, Reuter, TASS, Associated Press, etc.), large newspapers with an international readership, and the Swiss Television. The United Nations, UNESCO and the ILO had sent observers.

The purpose of the Round Table was to examine the hazards facing journalists and to consider remedies, including the effectiveness of the legal protection afforded by existing international humanitarian law. Also under appraisal were specific measures already taken or which should be taken to ensure and increase the safety of journalists on dangerous missions.

The ICRC, true to its customary rôle, endeavoured to restrict the debate to the humanitarian aspect of the problem, i.e. to the protection of journalists as human beings victims of treatment and procedures violating the universal humanitarian principles applicable in conflicts and similar situations.