

The challenges of human development

**the future of the Red Cross in
Latin America and the Caribbean**

I



**INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF
RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES**

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17, Chemin des Crêts, Petit-Saconnex
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Tel. 41-22-730 4222
Fax 41-22-733 0395
Telex (045) 412 133 FRC CH.

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The Challenges of Human Development

The future of the Red Cross in Latin America and the Caribbean

Director

Celestino del Arenal

Coordinator

Anja Toivola

Principal Investigators

José Antonio Sanahuja

Sary Montero

Study Commission

Celestino del Arenal

Professor of International Relations, Universidad Complutense de Madrid
Director of the Study and President of the Commission

Anja Toivola

Coordinator of the Study, Regional Delegation for the Americas
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
San José, Costa Rica

Guillermo Rueda Montaña

President of the Development Commission, International Federation of the Red Cross
President of the Colombian Red Cross

Kenneth Monplaisir

President of the Red Cross of St. Lucia

Santiago Gil García

Director, Department of Planning and Objectives Follow-Up
Spanish Red Cross

Margareta Wahlström

Deputy Director of Operations
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Geneva

Edelberto Torres-Rivas

Secretary General of the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO)
San José, Costa Rica

Mireya Palmieri

Sociologist, Institute of Nutrition of Central America and Panama (INCAP), Guatemala City

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José A. Aponte
Director of International Services, American Red Cross

Ben Thoolen
Principal Adviser on Development, Secretariat of the Federation (1992-1993)

Ian McAllister
Principal Adviser on Development, Secretariat of the Federation (1990-1991)

Jean-Luc Blondel
Head of Division, Principles and Relations with the Movement
International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) (1990-1991)

Olivier Dürr
Head of Division, Principles and Relations with the Movement
International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) (1992-1993)

Jean-Pierre Givel
Head of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) delegation in Guatemala

Augusto Ramírez Ocampo
Representative for Latin America of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (1990-1991)

Irma Acosta de Fortín
Rector, Universidad José Cecilio del Valle, Honduras

Jaime Montalvo
Rector, Universidad para la Paz of the United Nations, Costa Rica

Sonia Picado
Director, Inter-American Human Rights Institute (IIDH), San José, Costa Rica

Associate Investigators

Lorena Aguilar
Francisco Calderón
Armando Campos
Dina Jiménez

Gilberto Lopes
Rolando Quirós
Luis Samandú
José Luis Vega

Administrative Assistant
Ana Hidalgo

Production and Editorial Manager
Graham Sherlock

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FOREWORD

The publication of *The challenges of human development: the future of the Red Cross in Latin America and the Caribbean* is very good news for the Red Cross Movement. This Study is not only a major contribution to the region's Red Cross Societies and the Federation as a whole, but it also confirms the maturity those Societies have achieved.

It was the National Societies in Latin America and the Caribbean themselves which, aware of the problems and especially the challenges facing them in the future, raised the need to conduct an investigation of this nature. The result has been this ambitious and admirable document, completed after almost three years of intense effort in which the region's Red Cross Societies actively participated by opening their doors and collaborating in the project.

Among the most singular and useful features of the Study are:

First, it relates each country's socioeconomic conditions to the situation of its National Society in order to make the conclusions and recommendations more precise and realistic.

Second, the Study successfully manages to link up with the Federation's strategies in the region.

Third, it is comprehensive in that it analyzes all the activities of the region's National Societies by examining their programs, internal organization, and external relations.

Fourth, the conclusions and recommendations are precise and direct, and recognize both the strengths and weaknesses of each National Society.

Finally, the Study establishes explicit strategic guidelines for the future.

The entire Study is a major challenge to both the region's Red Cross Societies and the Federation, since it raises the key question of how the necessary and difficult process of change will be carried out. In any event, its initial effects have already occurred since the National Societies have begun to act and a significant movement has arisen in the region to put its recommendations into practice.

At the same time, it must be emphasized that the Study establishes useful conclusions for the direct collaborators of the region's National Societies—the Secretariat of the Federation, Participating National Societies, and the ICRC. There can be no doubt that all of us must draw appropriate conclusions from the region's messages about its wishes for change.

Further, for those Red Cross Societies which are not part of the region or directly involved in its work, the Study is a good example of how self-evaluation can be carried out and new guidelines established.

In sum, we can do no less than emphasize and be grateful for the boldness of the National Societies of Latin America and the Caribbean in carrying out this Study, as well as the major assistance which a number of National Societies have provided in its execution. We must also extend our thanks and congratulations to all staff and volunteers who took part in the Study process during the past three years.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Weber', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

George Weber
Secretary General

INTRODUCTION

A global scenario marked by crisis and change

The Study of the future role of the Red Cross in Latin America and the Caribbean, begun in 1990 and completed at the beginning of 1993, was conducted at a time of profound change, not only in the world, when its future is still full of uncertainties and unknowns, but also in Latin America and the Caribbean itself. It was thus carried out in a singularly problem-filled and fluid context in which many of the models and ideas that have so far held sway, the dynamics and problems considered priorities up to now, the policies that have so far predominated, and, what is even more important, the values that up to now have been taken for granted, are in crisis and subject to reformulation and change.

It is true that certain political and social, and national and international, agencies have been reformulating their strategies and objectives for years in trying to respond to new challenges and problems in their different fields of activity, but the magnitude and speed of the changes and the newness and acuteness of the challenges and problems have also given rise to such reformulations.

This complex and changing scenario we have just described, in which the Study took place, gives us an idea of the exceptional period in which it was conducted and allows us to adequately place its scope and meaning, as well as its timeliness and limitations. Studying the Red Cross National Societies in Latin America and the Caribbean in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and defining their future strategies and objectives, has

accordingly been an effort which was at once difficult and rewarding inasmuch as the limitations and problems in the effort went hand in hand with its timeliness, importance, and especially the encouraging stimulus of the Red Cross National Societies themselves, aware of their new challenges and problems and of the need to confront them.

In order to understand adequately what this Study has involved and tried to accomplish, all of the foregoing requires us to consider in this introduction, though in an absolutely schematic way, the main factors and dynamics that have inspired and conditioned it.

From the 1980s to the 1990s

The 1980s, and especially the transition from them to the 1990s, have made clear the dimensions and depth of the changes that all parts of the world system have undergone.

In their deepest manifestations, some changes could already be observed in the 1960s, but other manifestations only began to occur at the end of the 1980s and, what is more important, began to be really taken into consideration.

The universal and global nature of the international system, its profound diversity and complexity, its growing interdependence and immense scope, and the increasingly common nature of the challenges and problems that our world presents and, consequently, of the strategies and policies to respond to them on both the strictly state as well as the human planes, are realities theoretically assumed for some time by

different social agencies, but which have nevertheless not begun to be adequately reflected in the practical sphere until very recently. It has been necessary to wait until many social and economic problems and the disintegration of the postwar world order, with the chain of new conflicts following in its wake, became dramatically acute for the magnitude and depth of the challenges to begin to be really clear, thought to be given to the need to reformulate responses, and an effort begun to craft new or changed strategies and policies.

Some aspects of the new world scenario

Without considering the profound geopolitical changes that have taken place, which have brought about a radical transformation of the world system, from political and military bipolarity and the cold war to political and economic multipolarity, forcing international agencies to a readjustment in the new system, what interests us now are the new dimensions and dynamics which, from the perspective of humanitarian nongovernmental agencies, characterize the present world scene and, in consequence, have figured in the Study.

The first of these aspects is the erosion of state frontiers and the weakening of the state, not only as an autonomous unit on the international scene but also in its traditional sphere of domestic responsibilities. This is a result of the global nature of our world, of its growing complexity and interdependence, and of the difficulty of states in dealing in isolation with current problems and challenges.

All this has brought with it the transnationalization of social relations, internationalization of domestic problems, and internalization of international problems, which has upset traditional strategies and policies and required major innovations in the work of national and international agencies, very specifically in the field of humanitarian nongovernmental agencies.

The second noteworthy aspect, a result of the foregoing and at the same time hastening it, is the multiplication and growing leadership of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Today they are a fundamental and irreplaceable part of the world scene. They have developed as a result of the weakening of the state and the increasing difficulty it faces in dealing with the domestic and international problems of the most diverse nature that characterize our world. In ever increasing strength, NGOs have invaded fields that up to now belonged exclusively to states or new areas for which states do not want or cannot take responsibility.

Third, the fact must be noted that economic and social matters, in their various manifestations, have become the main spheres in which the problems of the present and future occur. Following the disappearance of political and military friction between East and West, which marked the entire postwar period, masking or distorting a reality plagued by many other problems, the grave economic and social problems that characterize the present have come to the fore in international relations, with their consequent mirroring within states.

It is not that these problems are new. What has happened is that they have grown to ever more dramatic dimensions on one hand, and, on the other, they were previously obscured by the confrontation between the two blocs.

In this new context, problems of development and underdevelopment in their various economic and social manifestations have become one of the keys to understanding today's world and its most pressing problems. The problems of the present and future thus run the gamut from poverty through xenophobia and racism to the environment and make clear the intimate relationship between them. The idea of sustainable development to some extent synthesizes the new challenge that must be faced.

An entire set of new or changed kinds of political, economic, social, and religious conflicts stemming from problems such as poverty, marginalization, immigration, xenophobia, and racism has come to mark the world scene deeply

and demand increasing attention from governmental and nongovernmental agencies.

Finally, the last characteristic we wish to stress, which stems from the problems noted above, is the reappraisal that the objective of international and domestic solidarity has undergone in this new context. The development of awareness about the transcendence of the humanitarian dimension of our world, from the most local to the most general problems, and that active solidarity is the value and attitude with which they must be faced, is a growing and hopeful phenomenon in today's world.

Humanitarian organizations in the new world scenario

The traits we have just noted explain the multiplication of humanitarian NGOs in recent times and their ever-increasing domestic and international leadership, as well as the need that traditional humanitarian NGOs, with long years of experience to their credit, have to redefine their role and activities by adjusting them to new challenges and problems if they do not want gradually to lose ground.

In today's world, humanitarian NGOs have taken on an importance unknown until recently by making themselves irreplaceable agencies, recognized by all, in dealing with the social and economic problems characterizing it. This greater leadership supposes more responsibilities and, in consequence, more complexity in their activity and greater professionalization of their operations, which are in no way incompatible with their essentially humanitarian nature.

Especially in the case of traditional humanitarian NGOs, there has occurred a clear upsurge in the classic fields of action in which they operated which has flooded their operations with a set of entirely new challenges and problems revolving mainly around the disaster/development axis and requiring the implementation of new activities and reformulation of traditional ones.

These new activities and reformulation of traditional ones appear directly related, on one

hand, to new kinds of emergencies stemming from dominant socioeconomic and environmental conditions, among which must be included new kinds and manifestations of conflict, and, on the other, to the new vulnerable social groups that have been emerging recently because of the foregoing.

In most cases, all this demands a not always easy redefinition of their humanitarian objectives, adaptation of structures, functions, and methods of action, and reformulation of the activities and priorities dominant up to now.

Latin America and the Caribbean in the 1990s: a new scenario for Red Cross activity

The world scenario we have just outlined takes concrete form in Latin America and the Caribbean, often in still more pressing form given the changes in that region in the 1980s and its expectations for the 1990s.

It is already a commonplace, though no less a real one, to say that for Latin America and the Caribbean the 1980s were a lost decade, just as it is beginning to be said that the 1990s may be the decade of recovery, though in at least some countries that may not turn out to be true.

The result is a complex panorama in which very diverse indicators and situations are mixed, which makes their accurate evaluation difficult and reveals something that should never be forgotten when talking of Latin America and the Caribbean in general terms, which is the enormous diversity of situations and the major differences existing between some countries and others, and thus the risk of making generalizations.

In any event, for Latin America and the Caribbean the 1990s will be decisively marked, on one hand, by the so-called "social debt" accumulated and made worse during the 1980s, with all it implies in instability and sharpening of conflict, and, on the other, by escape from the economic crisis, with all the expectations and optimism that arouses. The future of Latin

America and the Caribbean will depend in great measure on the application of economic growth to solve the "social debt." Again, the problem of development seems to be the key to the region's future.

As we have just noted, in the 1990s hope (in general terms, since economic recovery is not uniform) is again becoming a reality in Latin America and the Caribbean. Most armed conflicts have been solved or are being solved; democracy, despite its problems, is ever-increasingly taking root throughout the continent; inflation is decreasing, economies are growing, and investment is returning. Adjustment policies have begun to yield their first fruit, the various countries have been accommodating themselves to a new international political and economic scene by redefining their economic policies, and, despite setbacks, political reform continues to advance. In 1991 the gross domestic product (GDP) increased by almost 3%, per-capita GDP rose for the first time since 1988, and exports from the region grew by 19%. In 1991, for the first time since 1988, Latin America benefited from a positive net transfer of resources of around \$7,000 million, which contrasts with the flight of \$16,000 million in 1990. In the strictly economic sphere, projections for the region around the end of the century are generally optimistic.

Nevertheless, the 1980s have left a "social debt" of impressive size and a scene marked by a large increase in social vulnerability, the result of widespread poverty, an alarming fall in standards of living and real wages, an increase in unemployment, and broad cuts in public services, which may make the recovery unsustainable and ruin these optimistic forecasts. According to ECLAC estimates, 45% of Latin Americans live in poverty, and the proportion is 50% for the urban population, 25% of the work force is jobless. Unemployment and underemployment together affect 44% of the population, while 53% of workers belong to the informal sector of the economy. Regionally, real minimum wages fell by a third between 1980 and 1991. Generally speaking, the per-capita GDP in 1991 continued to be below its 1985 level.

These data appear even more dramatic looking toward the future if it is realized that migration from the countryside to cities will continue to increase, intensifying the problems noted above, and that most probably Latin America's population will increase from its current 448 million to a projected 540 million, as a result of which at least 100 million jobs will have to be created, not just to solve the unemployment problem but also to meet the needs of the new active population. Further, a real growth rate of more than 8% in the GDP will be needed to be able to begin winning the battle against unemployment.

Together with the foregoing, and paradoxically, it cannot be overlooked that in certain countries the fall in fertility rates and the aging of the population will cause a significant increase in the elderly population between now and the end of the century, together with the social and economic problems that entails.

If we add that in recent years, as part of adjustment and privatization policies, the state has been redefining its social role in the form of a considerable reduction in its economic and social responsibilities, which has resulted in the weakening of social policies as well as major cuts in spending in this area, with consequent deterioration in sectors such as health care, nutrition, employment, education, and housing, we will understand the extent of the social debt and the uncertain social panorama in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Finally, it cannot be forgotten that the increase in poverty and urban marginalization, together with population growth and migration, with resulting urban concentration, create greater vulnerability to natural disasters.

The impact that this problem has in the political sphere is also a cause for concern because it is creating and will continue to create greater political and social instability by increasing violence and conflicts because of socioeconomic causes, which may decisively affect Latin American democratic systems. The coexistence of democracy with increasing economic and social deterioration may actually become very

difficult and raise the bleak question the Group of Rio asked in 1988. How much poverty can freedom tolerate?

In this context, there has been an astonishing proliferation of new organizations, NGOs, and international cooperation agencies operating in the field of social development, disasters, and areas such as the environment and human rights, which have tried to respond to these problems, often with significant effectiveness and channeling major external funds. These organizations, whose function is generally vital in confronting the problems and challenges noted, often compete with Red Cross National Societies in fields such as health care, social action, and even relief, and so dilute their role and image and constitute a concern for their future.

All this has been shaping a new scenario for action by the Red Cross in Latin America and the Caribbean very different from that of the past, one basically distinguished by social problems, much greater competition, and demanding a redefinition of the role that different social agencies, including the Red Cross, must play if it wants to continue fulfilling its humanitarian mission and role as auxiliary to the public authorities, by modernizing its structures and dynamics, reformulating its objectives, adapting its activities to new or changed problems, and developing its human and material resources.

The Red Cross in Latin America and the Caribbean: criteria and guidelines for the new strategy for the 1990s

The Study, insofar as it involves analysis and evaluation of the role of the Red Cross in Latin America and the Caribbean and the consequent formulation of timely recommendations, has naturally been prepared on the basis of the specific criteria and guidelines that the Movement as a whole and the Federation in particular have defined in recent years

Accordingly, various standards, resolutions, and policies adopted by the Federation have been taken into consideration which relate directly to the Study's objective of contributing to the development of the National Societies and the effective accomplishment of their humanitarian mission.

Among them, unquestionably the most important document is the updated 1992 version of the "Strategic Plan of the Federation for the Nineties."¹ This document officially establishes the Federation's policies and priorities for coming years. Its importance springs not only from the fact that they have been approved by the Federation's appropriate organs and so enjoy broad legitimacy and consensus, but also and, especially from the perspective of the Study, because it defines the Federation's strategic objectives and means for achieving the goals and concepts employed. To the extent that the Plan establishes goals and objectives rather than realities, it implicitly defines an "image-objective" of the activities and role to be played in each country and the organizational profile of the National Societies and other components of the Movement, which has been of great use in defining the parameters of the investigation and the final recommendations

Specifically, the guidelines and content of the updated 1992 version of the Strategic Plan reflect the definition and concept of "development" adopted by the Federation in 1990 in its "Principles and Norms for Red Cross and Red Crescent Cooperation Development,"² which have been very useful in guiding both the institutional analyses of the National Societies and the final recommendations. According to this document, "development" is a dynamic twofold process: "First, development is the process through which communities and people become stronger and more capable of enjoying fuller and more productive lives less vulnerable to disasters. Second, development is defined as the strengthening of the National Societies so that they can effectively accomplish the humanitarian mission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent."³

From this starting point, some of the principal topics and guidelines of the Strategic Plan, which from the perspective of the Study must be noted because they have at all times been taken into account, are the following.

The Movement's strategic goal is "to improve the situation of the most vulnerable,"⁴ who are defined as "those in greater danger in situations in which both their lives and ability to live with a minimum of social and economic security and human dignity are threatened."⁵ In practice, this means that the priority spheres of action should be preparing the population for disasters, services to the community (often focused on health care), and the organizational development of the National Societies, though these will have to be made concrete in different programs and services depending on the situation and specific needs of the most vulnerable in each country and community.

So that programs and services will be relevant and adequately respond to the strategic goal noted, the Plan states that National Societies should make the necessary efforts to determine who the most vulnerable are by precisely identifying their location and characteristics and determining their needs and demands. All this is in order to strengthen the capacity of vulnerable communities in crisis and long-term situations, which is implicitly related to their development.⁶

In addition to being inspired by that goal, the Study is, in itself, an important step in this area because it identifies the most vulnerable communities in each country and their problems, thus giving the National Societies a relatively precise picture of the problem which may help them continue to move forward in defining and responding to it.

The process that the Plan proposes for the 1990s and the actual achievement of the strategic goal noted are naturally not possible without an adequate planning framework precisely defining long-term goals based on the needs of the most vulnerable. This will involve evaluating the pertinence of present services and, on that basis, readjusting, consolidating, reorienting, or abandoning some programs at the same time that new programs and strategies of action are developed.

The Plan specifically notes the need for more and better prevention activities in the field of disasters, primary health care (PHC) in health, social action in the refugee sphere, AIDS, children and young people, women, and the elderly and disabled as specifically vulnerable groups or persons against whom there is discrimination.⁷ These may consist of direct activities with the most vulnerable communities, intervention on their behalf, or cooperation with other bodies. Accordingly, the Plan refers explicitly to the need to develop a "promotion" strategy,⁸ which has traditionally been neglected in favor of direct provision of services of a decidedly charitable nature.

Initiation and implementation of these programs necessarily entails the parallel development of the organization and operational capacity of the National Societies. The Plan takes this into account by establishing four priority spheres of development for the National Societies—human resources, material and financial resources, structures and policies, and communication and public image.⁹

The Study naturally mirrors all these guidelines and has taken them into account in evaluating the National Societies and their activities and services, as well as in establishing the resulting recommendations.

It should further be noted that in carrying the Study out, the Decisions of the VIII General Assembly, held in 1992, were also taken into consideration, especially those dealing with specific spheres of activity such as AIDS, maternal and child health care, women, and young people, and those dealing with support for National Societies with greater needs for improving their capacity.¹⁰

Finally, it should be noted that other documents have also been considered which, because of their content, might help guide specific aspects of the Study. Among them we will mention, for the purposes of example, the "Contribution of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to Human Rights"¹¹ and the "Plan of Action for Women in the Development of the Red Cross and Red Crescent."¹²

The Study of the future role of the Red Cross in Latin America and the Caribbean

In light of the world and regional scenario just outlined and the Federation's strategic guidelines for the 1990s, the execution of a Study of the future role of the Red Cross in Latin America and the Caribbean was from its inception undoubtedly useful and timely because it clearly showed the vitality and future vision of the Red Cross National Societies in Latin America and the Caribbean in taking the initiative in conducting a Study of this nature.

Background and period of execution

The idea of conducting a Study of the future role of the Red Cross in Latin America and the Caribbean, which would serve to confront the challenges opening up to the National Societies of Latin America in the national and international conditions of the 1990s, came from the National Societies themselves. The idea was first discussed in various subregional meetings in the American continent in 1989. Later, at a meeting of the Inter-American Regional Committee, held in October 1989 as part of the General Assembly of the then League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the National Societies agreed to propose to the Secretariat that a practical study be carried out of their future role which would give special emphasis to the problems of development.

As a result, an initial working document containing an outline of the objectives, administrative structure, timetable, and budget of the Study was presented during the Information Meeting for the League's Donor Societies in Geneva in January 1990. The support that various National Societies, especially the Spanish Red Cross and Finnish Red Cross, gave the proposed Study from the start enabled its immediate implementation.

On this basis, the Study was begun in March 1990 in partnership with the Regional Delegation for the Americas in San José, Costa Rica. It ended in mid-1993, and it should be realized that the situation and problems facing the 32 National Societies that figure in the Study generally and with a few exceptions do not reflect events later than September 1992. Moreover, given the large number of National Societies examined, the corresponding institutional analyses have not always ended on the same date, and there has been a certain amount of staggering between June and September 1992 which is reflected in the data and problems mentioned.

Finally, it must be noted with respect to this point that the Study's first phase, relating to the National Societies in Central America, ended in the spring of 1991 and appeared in June of that year. This has allowed those Societies to follow up the Study since then, which, on one hand, has facilitated discussion within them and in some cases has enabled them to begin applying the recommendations formulated, and on the other hand it has required revision of the socioeconomic and institutional analyses made at that time as well as the conclusions and recommendations to bring them up to December 1992 in order to include them with the analyses of the other National Societies in the Study's final version.

Objectives

The purpose of the Study has been to analyze from a practical perspective and with the active participation of the National Societies themselves the situations in which the Societies find themselves socioeconomically, regionally, subregionally, and especially in the context of their own countries and the view of the socioeconomic trends visible for coming years, as well as their sphere of action in relation to the state and other agencies and ngos.

An effort has thus been made to examine both the adaptation of the operational, administrative, and financial structures and human resources of the National Societies to the chal-

allenges and problems of their own countries as well as the way in which activities are conducted in practice and in which the Principle of "Humanity" which is the basis of the Red Cross Movement becomes concrete action, and whether that practice is congruent with the situations in which "human suffering" and vulnerability are manifested in each country. The purpose of this is to define the priorities of action, guidelines, and recommendations that will help support the National Societies in drawing up their medium- and long-term Plans of Development.

The final objective is to strengthen the presence of the Red Cross in the region and increase the ability of the National Societies to respond to the population's needs in accordance with the Federation's policies and priorities.

Geographic coverage

The Study's geographic coverage is of all of Latin America and the Caribbean and embraces 33 National Societies as well as the International Federation of Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in relation to the National Societies in the area. Because of the refusal of its National Society, however, it has not been possible to study the Cuban Red Cross, as had been planned, as a result of which only 32 National Societies were analyzed in the end. We regret this absence, which to some extent has prevented us from completing the Study. Nevertheless, we wish to note that since the Study ended the Cuban Red Cross has showed great openness to international cooperation.

Methodology and execution of the Study

The Study has a practical approach, and its purpose is to make concrete and operational recommendations. Sponsored by the Federation, it has been conducted in close collaboration with the various National Societies, which have taken an active part in it, and with the Federation and

ICRC, as well as with recognized regional and national research institutions.

The breadth and complexity of the geographic area embraced by the Study, with sometimes very divergent situations and problems, required that it be carried out in two phases based on geographic criteria which would enable the task to be confronted and brought to a satisfactory conclusion.

The first phase centered on an examination of the National Societies in Central America, i.e., Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama.

The reasons for beginning the work in Central America were both methodological, stemming from the need to start with a small geographic area, which would enable easier initiation of the investigation, and due to the specific features of the area relating to its geographic and human homogeneity, the existence of its own mechanisms of integration and cooperation, generally common problems and, with a few exceptions, also common challenges, which allowed operating on a relatively individual basis, which facilitated verification of the practical validity of the study model used. The inclusion of Belize in this phase, despite its differences from the other countries in the subregion, enabled the different linguistic and cultural areas that characterize Latin America and the Caribbean to be analyzed from the first.

The results of the first phase of the Study were presented at the Inter-American Regional Conference, held at Ottawa in June 1991, and were disseminated starting in November 1991. Brought up to date, this Study has naturally been integrated in this document.

This experience enabled the Study's second phase to be approached with greater confidence. It embraced all the National Societies in Mexico, South America, and the Caribbean, which together presented much greater difficulty and complexity.

The specific working methodology in both phases was developed according to two basic thrusts of analysis, one a socioeconomic analysis at the regional, subregional, and national levels,

and the other an institutional analysis of each of the National Societies so that it would be possible to establish an adequate correlation between the problems and needs of each country and the possible future missions of each National Society. The appropriate conclusions and recommendations were formulated on this basis.

A socioeconomic analysis of the situation in which the National Societies operate was considered an indispensable part of the Study in order to be able to establish precisely and practically the present role of the Red Cross and the specific socioeconomic challenges and problems those Societies face in the context of the region and its various countries, as well as to be able to formulate appropriate conclusions and recommendations.

These analyses, which cover all the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, including Cuba, were prepared by the Study Team on the basis of preliminary national and subregional studies made by specialists of recognized prestige and investigative stature. In some instances, the work of these specialists consisted of selecting that information from the great wealth of available data which would be of use to the Study and, in others, of examining specific aspects of the problems most directly affecting the work of the Red Cross, which until then had not been explicitly analyzed.

Specifically, the following preliminary studies were undertaken: (a) three subregional studies of the socioeconomic problems of Central America and Mexico, South America, and the Greater Caribbean and English-speaking Caribbean, respectively; (b) 33 national studies of all the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean; and (c) nine studies of Central America focusing on areas and problems of interest to the Red Cross (the food and nutritional situation, poverty and urban informal work, education and culture, natural disasters and the environment, the humanitarian implications of violence, refugees and displaced and repatriated persons, the situation of women, children, and young people, and international development cooperation).

Supported by the Study Team, the Study Commission worked on these preliminary socioeconomic studies with the objective of preparing the regional and national socioeconomic analyses in this document. The criterion that inspired the preparation of these socioeconomic analyses by the Study Commission was to establish the present and future scenario confronting the National Societies through the substantiation and exposition of the socioeconomic data, verified and supported by reliable sources, which affect or may affect the activities and responsibilities of the Red Cross.

There was thus never any intention to present an exhaustive and complete picture of each country, but simply to set out those aspects or problems of greatest interest to the Red Cross and that demand its attention most clearly. This is why the socioeconomic problems of each country are stressed and other, untroublesome aspects tend to be omitted, and why negative predominate over positive aspects in the country analyses.

In any case, the result has been an important socioeconomic study of Latin America and the Caribbean, both from the perspective of defining the criteria and recommendations about the future role of the Red Cross, and from the perspective of Latin America and the Caribbean itself since, up to now, no study has been prepared of the region with the viewpoint and extent of the problems presented in this document.

The second thrust of the investigation, a fundamental part and the reason for the Study's existence, was an institutional analysis of each of the National Societies in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as of the role of the Federation and the ICRC in relation to them. This analysis was carried out using a methodology based on the active collaboration and participation of the National Societies involved, so that it was the Societies themselves that reflected on their present situation and prospects for the future through a process of self-analysis.

Following this thrust, making these institutional analyses was based principally on three sources of information. (a) documentary infor-

mation requested and received from the National Societies; (b) interviews carried out by the Study's Director or Coordinator or both with the Presidents and members of each National Society, and (c) the results of workshops held with the active participation of the leaders, technical and paid staff, and volunteers at different levels of each National Society in both its central headquarters and branches. Using participative and open methods, these workshops identified the weaknesses of each National Society and the threats to them from their environment on one hand, and the strengths and opportunities that may enable those problems to be overcome on the other. The results of the various workshops were later transmitted to the President of each National Society for information and comment.

Despite the magnitude of the effort, it must be noted that the Study nevertheless has certain limitations because of a lack of information, especially about the activities of the branches of the National Societies as a result of the impossibility of precisely determining all aspects of each of the 32 National Societies studied.

Contact and continuing communication between the Study Commission and the National Societies were chiefly through the National Coordinators that each National Society appointed for this purpose.

In relation to this point, it must be noted that, in addition to their active participation, almost all of the National Societies, most of which are aware of their problems and challenges as well as of the need to implement new strategies and changes, have supported and enthusiastically collaborated in the Study.

A provisional version of the institutional analysis of each National Society was sent to its President so that the National Society could make corrections and suggestions considered useful. In any event, it must be noted that the final version of each institutional analysis has always been the exclusive responsibility of the Study Commission, which reserved the right to accept or reject any suggestions.

Each of the institutional analyses intends to present a snapshot of or a status report on its

National Society, and follows the same expositive form for all the National Societies, which allows easier identification of its situation, problems, and challenges. The analysis therefore uses a twofold approach, at once internal and external, which is congruent with the concept and definition of "development" within the Red Cross, in accordance with which development, as noted above, deals with both the humanitarian work the National Societies can carry out on behalf of the development of the people and communities in each country, as well as improving the institution's organizational and operational capacity toward that end.

Accordingly, the main sections in the analysis of each National Society are, in principle, the following:

Introduction

(a summary of the main characteristics)

1. Organization

- 1.1 Organizational structure and geographic coverage
- 1.2 Administration and planning
- 1.3 Human resources
- 1.4 Finance and budget

2. Role and activities of the National Society in the context of the country

- 2.1 Principal activities
 - Health services
 - Social assistance and welfare services
 - Relief and emergency services
 - Other activities
- 2.2 Relations with the Government
- 2.3 Relations with other organizations and agencies

3. The role of international cooperation

4. The National Society's perception of its public image

This individual analysis of each National Society is also followed by specific and relevant conclusions and recommendations. The objective of the former is to present a summary of the chief problems of the National Society. The latter offer each National Society guidelines and areas of activity that will allow it to develop and better fulfill its humanitarian mission.

Together with the institutional analysis of the National Societies, a study was also made of the role of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and of the role of the ICRC in Latin America and the Caribbean in relation to the National Societies. The ICRC has followed the work of the Advisory Council and Study Commission as an observer. The ICRC has made a number of comments on some of the factual and legal aspects of the chapter devoted to it without, however, intervening in any way in the chapter's value judgments and recommendations, which are considered the exclusive responsibility of the Advisory Council and Study Commission.

All of the foregoing completes the picture, and a broad view of the reality of the Red Cross in Latin America and the Caribbean is possible. To present an overall summary, some general conclusions about the current situation of the National Societies studied have been prepared on the basis of these institutional analyses and the resulting specific conclusions and recommendations. The conclusions follow the same form used in the institutional analysis, though the section about the role and activities of the Red Cross in the context of the country is presented first in order to emphasize what is considered the Study's principal objective.

These general conclusions summarize and synthesize the main common characteristics, trends, and problems that the Study has found in the National Societies in Latin America and the Caribbean, apart from the extraordinary diversity of situations and significant differences existing among them. In consequence, they reflect the problems that the region's National Societies share to a greater or lesser extent, which does not mean that there are no exceptions to them.

Finally, in light of the socioeconomic and institutional analyses and specific conclusions and recommendations, general recommendations have been formulated about the future commitment of the Red Cross in Latin America and the Caribbean. In principle, these recommendations are

directed to the Movement as a whole, and in specific instances they also affect the National Societies in the industrialized countries with a presence in the region through cooperation, even though most of the recommendations naturally deal directly with the National Societies in the region. They therefore supplement the specific recommendations formulated about the National Societies, the Federation, and the ICRC.

Both the general and specific recommendations must only be taken as short-, medium-, or long-term guidelines and areas of action for development. Consequently, they do not in any way pretend to establish precise objectives or goals for the various National Societies, which each must naturally define and prioritize when it prepares its own Plan of Development on the basis of its own reality and specific situation as well as its possibilities and resources. The final result of this part of the Study therefore is purely recommendatory and guiding since it is exclusively the responsibility of the National Societies to reach the decisions they consider appropriate about their Plans of Development.

The recommendations have been divided into two levels. First, major strategic guidelines are presented that should guide the activities and development of the Red Cross in Latin America and the Caribbean, and each of them is then developed through specific recommendations. Although it may be surprising that a significant number of these general recommendations have a broad validity for the entire Movement, irrespective of the specific region of the world to which they refer, which demonstrates the universal nature of several of the problems which the Study has found, the relevance of the recommendations to Latin America and the Caribbean is in any case clearly evident.

The Study ends with a set of tables and figures in the appendix designed to illustrate the socioeconomic problems noted, and a bibliography listing the documents and studies used in preparing the Study.

Structure and research teams

The execution of the Study was supported by the following structure:

- a) An Advisory Council, appointed by the Secretary General of the Federation, which has made recommendations about general objectives and the approach and implementation of the Study by providing guidance to the Study's Director and Commission.

The Advisory Council, headed by Co-Presidents Mrs. Meneca de Mencía and Mrs. Carmen Mestre, held a plenary meeting in September 1990 at San José, Costa Rica, to which the Presidents of the National Societies in Central America were invited. The objectives and direction of the Study and the plan of work for Central America were discussed at this meeting. Subsequently the Advisory Council held an informal meeting in Geneva in April 1991, in which the Red Cross members of the Council took part, which dealt with the progress of the Study and the execution of its second phase. Another informal meeting was held at Córdoba, Spain, in May 1992. Finally, it held its last meeting, of the same nature, in Geneva in April 1993.

- b) A Study Commission, appointed by the Secretary General of the Federation and headed by the Study Director, has been responsible for the content and implementation of the investigation, supported by a technical team and administrative staff. The Commission's composition has changed with each of the phases of the work. Anja Toivola, the Study Coordinator, has acted as its Executive Secretary.

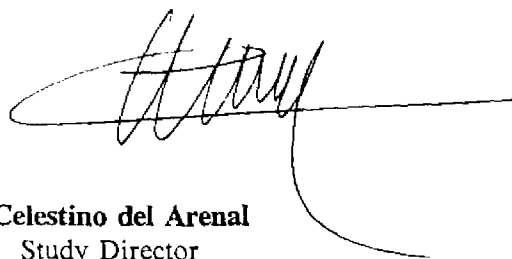
The Study Commission has held nine meetings: Costa Rica (April 1990), Madrid (July 1990), Costa Rica (September 1990), Guatemala (February 1991), Costa Rica (February 1992), Madrid (May 1992), Costa Rica (September 1992), Costa Rica (January 1993), and Geneva (September 1993).

The Study Commission has been supported in carrying out its work by a standing Study Team composed of the investigators

José Antonio Sanahuja and Sary Montero, and Ana Hidalgo as administrative assistant. In addition, nine short-term investigators have collaborated in the institutional analysis of the Red Cross National Societies, and more than 30 investigators chosen with the help of the Secretariat General of FLACSO, headquartered in Costa Rica and Ecuador, have collaborated in the socioeconomic analyses.

It is also necessary to recognize the financial support provided by certain National Societies, very especially the Spanish Red Cross and the Finnish Red Cross, which have not stinted in their efforts to bring the Study to a good conclusion, as well as the Red Cross Societies of Canada, Denmark, Sweden, and the United States.

In any case, the Study could not have been conducted had it not had from the first the full and decisive support of the Societies in Latin America and the Caribbean and of their Presidents, leaders, technical staff, and volunteers, who have made valiant efforts to help us in the work, often unrewarding for the National Societies, of bringing to light their problems and challenges. This willingness to collaborate, born in the spirit that inspires the Red Cross, of the awareness that they have of their problems and the need to respond to them, is without doubt one of the most important assets of the National Societies in Latin America and the Caribbean in redefining their role in coming years.



Celestino del Arenal
Study Director

Madrid, June 1993

SOURCES

1. Approved at the 29th Meeting of the Executive Council, held at Córdoba, Spain, in May 1992, by mandate of the VIII General Assembly of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, held at Budapest in 1991.
2. Approved by the Executive Council at its 26th Meeting, held at Geneva in October 1990.
3. International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. *Principios y normas para la cooperación de la Cruz Roja y la Media Luna Roja en materia de desarrollo*. Geneva, League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 1990, p. 3.
4. International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. *Plan Estratégico de Trabajo para el decenio de 1990. Versión actualizada 1992. (Aprobada por la 29a Reunión del Consejo Ejecutivo, Córdoba, 7 de mayo de 1992.)* Geneva, Federation, 1992, p. 9.
5. Federation 1992, p. 12.
6. Federation 1992, p. 12.
7. Federation 1992, p. 14.
8. International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. *Plan Estratégico de Trabajo de la Liga para el Decenio de 1990*. Geneva, League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 1989, p. 5.
9. Federation 1992, pp. 15-19.
10. VIII General Assembly, decisions 8, 18, 21, 22, 23, 26, 31, 32, and 33.
11. Final Report of the Expert Group on Human Rights, adopted by the Red Cross and Red Crescent Commission on Peace in August 1989.
12. Adopted by the VII General Assembly of the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in 1989.