

## 'Preparedness to Respond to the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Accidents'

At the 18<sup>th</sup> General Assembly held in Geneva, November 23-25, 2011, the IFRC\* adopted a decision on "Preparedness to Respond to the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Accidents" which includes the roles to be played by the IFRC and each National Society during relief activities for affected populations of nuclear disasters.



Tadateru Konoe, President of the IFRC and the JRCS, speaking at the IFRC General Assembly.

\* International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

### International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies:

- gravely concerned about the hazard and the perceived risks that the 2011 Fukushima nuclear power plant accident posed to the health, safe and sustainable livelihood, and socio-economic status of the affected people of Japan;
- acknowledges the lasting challenges faced by the Japanese Red Cross Society and its untiring efforts in responding to the humanitarian consequences in Fukushima, as well as the extraordinary solidarity demonstrated by sister National Societies, their IFRC Secretariat and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC);
- recalls the widespread suffering caused by the Chernobyl disaster 25 years ago and its lingering impacts on individuals and communities in countries across Eastern Europe to this day;
- commends the efforts of National Red Cross Societies of Belarus, Russia and the Ukraine to provide life-saving medical screening, social and psychosocial support in the framework of the Chernobyl Humanitarian Assistance and Rehabilitation Programme, with continued support from the Irish Government, and the Japanese and Icelandic Red Cross Societies;
- considers the Fukushima and Chernobyl tragedies as serious reminders of the reality that accidents are possible wherever there are nuclear facilities such as nuclear power plant and therefore call not only for the most exacting precautionary measures but also thorough preparedness for disaster response;
- recalls resolution 21 of the 25th International Conference of the Red Cross in 1986 on the role of the components of the Movement in providing assistance in response to technical and other disasters and resolution 4 of the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in 1995, which took note of the "Guidelines on the role of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in response to technological disasters";
- reaffirms the commitment of the members of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to continue to develop and improve their response plans to assist affected populations in coping with the humanitarian consequences during and after a nuclear accident, as well as their procedures to protect staff and volunteers;
- affirms that the response to nuclear disasters is an important part of the IFRC's overall disaster management framework as derived from Strategy 2020 adopted by the General Assembly in 2009;
- welcomes the efforts of the ICRC to build competence and operational response capacity in relation to nuclear, radiological, biological and chemical events and acknowledges ICRC's preparedness to make this capacity available to National Societies and the IFRC Secretariat, as it could be a key supportive component during the first phase of a National Society response to a nuclear accident;
- considers that more international cooperation is needed in responding to nuclear emergencies and therefore expresses our willingness to work with the ICRC, other humanitarian organisations, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the other UN system to prepare for and respond to nuclear emergencies;
- commits to increase our knowledge of the potential humanitarian consequences of nuclear accidents, to further clarify the roles and responsibilities of National Societies, the IFRC Secretariat and ICRC as part of our contingency planning, to work with local communities in the proximity of nuclear facilities to ensure their awareness of and preparedness for possible accidents and to coordinate with other (non-Movement) stakeholders to ensure access to victims in the event of nuclear accidents;
- calls on the Secretary General to – in consultation with National Societies and the ICRC - establish appropriate ways for facilitating the sharing of such internal and external knowledge and evidenced based data and information and to consolidate those knowledge resources to assist National Societies to plan better for nuclear emergency preparedness;
- invites the IFRC Secretariat to extend its research, support and advocacy in the area of International Disaster Response Laws, Rules and Principles (IDRL) to include international law issues of particular relevance to work of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in nuclear accidents;
- invites the Secretary General to consult with National Societies and on how to most effectively extend our humanitarian diplomacy work to influence governments to implement safety mechanisms and commit resources to preparedness including at the community level and promotion of preparedness;
- invites the Secretary General to give a progress report on the implementation of this decision to the next General Assembly in 2013.