INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY 2017 - 2020
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A STRATEGY TO PROVIDE GREATER ASSISTANCE TO THE MOST VULNERABLE POPULATIONS
GEOPOLITICAL CONTEXT: GROWING INSTABILITY AND RISKS

In a world of increasing instability, the frequency of current crises and the scale of humanitarian needs are likely to increase considerably due to the transformations that are taking place:

- Rising complexity of conflicts (religious/ethnic and political division).
- Growing incidence of intra-state conflicts and internal violence (in particular in fragile or failed States).
- Rising inequality.
- Rising radicalism, fanaticism and social withdrawal.
- Increasing migration (due both to economic and political reasons).
- Greater environmental issues and threats (climate change, rapid urbanization, increased disaster frequency, greater pandemic threats...).

FRENCH RED CROSS INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY

In a world where potential evolutions will make the mobilization of humanitarian organizations both more necessary and difficult, the strategy – taking into account the capacity of the French Red Cross and the limitations and challenges it has to face – hereby presents the priorities and the main focus areas of the international action of the organization by the end of 2020.

This strategy complies with the seven Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. This approach is aligned with the Strategy 2020 of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the United Nations.

It is consistent with the commitments made by the French Red Cross during the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in December 2015.

It takes into account the conclusions of the World Humanitarian Summit which took place in Istanbul (May 2016).

It is the translation of the strategy 2020 of the French Red Cross overseas.

FRENCH RED CROSS OVERSEAS VISION

FOR 2020, WE WANT THE FRENCH RED CROSS TO:

- act resolutely within the Movement, where it will be considered as a reliable and dynamic partner and a driver of innovation;
- put the development of the host national Societies at the center of its work;
- be capable of responding to emergencies while conducting long-term projects;
- be driven by an ongoing concern for the quality of the assistance delivered to vulnerable people, always in a way that respects their dignity;
- focus its activities on geographic areas where it has most impact and on interventions areas where its expertise is recognized;
- dedicate the rich and diverse expertise of its national network to its international operations;
- be rigorous in its management and efficient in its organization.
THREE STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS: EMERGENCY, RESILIENCE, MOVEMENT
One of the strengths of the French Red Cross lies in its capacity to act at various stages: emergency, recovery/rehabilitation and development. Health, as defined by the WHO*, remains the first intervention area of the French Red Cross.

**RESPONDING TO EMERGENCIES OR CRISSES**

Given its experience and its expertise in disaster response, the French Red Cross intervenes in three different kind of humanitarian emergencies:
- both natural and man-made disasters;
- epidemics;
- humanitarian crises due to the increase in forced displacements around the world.

For natural disasters and epidemics which take place in the scope covered by its Platforms of Regional Intervention in the Indian Ocean and the Caribbean, the French Red Cross gives priority to the intervention of these platforms. Wherever a crisis occurs, the French Red Cross mobilizes its Emergency Response Units as part of the response coordinated by the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, or if necessary to support French Red Cross delegations.

When considering the management of migration-related issues, the French Red Cross gives priority to crises directly affecting the major intervention areas of the French Red Cross and Europe. The French Red Cross can act at different stages of the migratory journey: country of origin, transit and destination.

The French Red Cross expertise in responding to emergencies includes the following topics:
- health;
- water and sanitation;
- distribution of essential goods through different methods: physical distribution, cash transfers, supporting populations in building safe emergency shelters;
- psychosocial support.

During any emergency intervention, particular attention is paid to the coordination and preparedness mechanisms for recovery (post-emergency).

**STRENGTHENING THE RESILIENCE OF VULNERABLE POPULATIONS**

*In 2014, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies established a “Framework for community resilience” in which resilience is defined as: “the ability of individuals, communities, organizations or countries exposed to disasters, crises and underlying vulnerabilities to anticipate, prepare for, reduce the impact of, cope with and recover from the effects of shocks and stresses without compromising their long-term prospects”.*

Within this context, the French Red Cross simultaneously ensures:
- access to basic services;
- effective insertion of the most vulnerable people in the community;
- social cohesion and preventing tensions between groups (between displaced/refugees and host communities for example).

* "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity".*
EMERGENCY

RESILIENCE

MOVEMENT
In order to achieve its resilience objective, the French Red Cross mobilizes, as and when appropriate, its recognized expertise in the following fields:

- strengthening of health systems, including access to health care, paramedical training, management of malnutrition, maternal and child health, fight against infectious diseases;
- psychosocial support;
- access to water and sanitation, as well as hygiene promotion;
- food security and livelihoods support;
- natural disaster risk reduction;
- emergency relief and recovery support.

The French Red Cross relies on the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies Reference Centers, in particular the Global First Aid Reference Center, located at headquarters of the French Red Cross.

**BEING AN EFFECTIVE ACTOR IN THE RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT**

The French Red Cross strengthens its commitment and its effort to be recognized as a national Society fully integrated within the Movement.

**Systematizing the capacity building of host national Societies**

Adhering to the principles of aid localization adopted at the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, the French Red Cross commits to put the capacity building of the host national Societies and the sharing of knowledge at the heart of its operations, wherever it is present, by committing to a partnership-based approach. This results in activities, depending on the modalities defined together with the host national Societies and if appropriate in coordination with other partners of the Movement present in the country. Capacity building is integrated throughout the operations carried out with the host national Societies, for instance in the form of an on-site technical training.

The French Red Cross takes both a pragmatic and a realistic approach to improve capacity building. Its actions and ambitions are aligned with the actual state of the strengths and weaknesses identified within the national Societies.

**Committing to strategic alliances with the Movement partners**

The French Red Cross adapts to the principles of rationalization of humanitarian support and to the trend observed today among the main donors which encourages the collaboration between humanitarian organizations. The French Red Cross is committed to the different components of the Movement within the framework of approved coordination processes. It also aims at developing strategic partnerships and works in collaboration with other national Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross or the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The French Red Cross takes on the operational management each time it is considered to be the most relevant actor of the Movement and when it believes management excellence is guaranteed.

**Promoting and contributing to communication and advocacy actions of the Movement**

Considering that the Movement has a duty to raise authorities’ and public awareness about the humanitarian issues and crises, the French Red Cross wants to play an active role in its advocacy initiatives, in particular about migration issues and in line with its principles. It participates to and promotes communication and advocacy campaigns launched by the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross or other national Societies. It can also initiate them, possibly with other components of the Movement. The French Red Cross remains involved in the dissemination and promotion of the International Humanitarian Law which is one of its statutory missions.

**Supporting and benefiting from sharing of technical expertise within the Movement**

The French Red Cross shares its expertise with the Movement and benefits from the know-how developed by other Red Cross and Red Crescent actors, in particular through its active participation in workshops, training sessions and conferences.
TWO COMPLEMENTARY GUIDING PRINCIPLES: GEOGRAPHIC CONCENTRATION OF THE ACTION AND FOCUS ON QUALITY
FOCUSBING OUR EFFORTS ON FOUR PRIORITY AREAS

Conscious of the need to avoid dissipation of efforts, the French Red Cross focuses its action on four geographic priority areas with the highest expected added value, due to the sustainability or the importance of its presence, their links with the host national Societies and the adaptation of its know-how to local humanitarian needs.

In these priority areas yet not exclusive, the French Red Cross focuses on deepening its presence to remain a relevant and an active actor as long as it can respond to the needs of the populations and the expectations of the host national Societies.

The French Red Cross is also able to operate elsewhere in the world, especially in case of major crisis. The French Red Cross priority intervention areas are:

**French-speaking Continental Africa**

In some regions, mainly in Central Africa and in the Sahel, considerable humanitarian needs are expected in the coming years, in particular because of the weakening and fragmentation processes faced by States already fragile, of the persistent tensions and political or ethnic conflicts, the rise of religious radicalism, the growing demographic pressure and the rise in natural disasters frequency caused by climate change.

In other areas (e.g. gulf of Guinea, Maghreb), some states support a strong development process. The aim of the French Red Cross is to support these processes, including in the health sector, and to help improving the lives of specific vulnerable groups and communities.

**The Middle East**

The chaotic situation caused by deadly and complex conflicts (Syria, Iraq and Yemen) in that part of the world is very likely to persist, according to most observers. This situation has led to humanitarian disasters mostly related to degradation/destroying of basic infrastructure and to massive population displacement.

A country such as Lebanon is bearing the brunt of these conflicts, in particular due to the significant number of refugees – mainly Syrians – entering its territory.

**The Caribbean and southern Indian Ocean**

These two areas have common features:
- they are exposed to high risk levels of geological (earthquakes, volcanic eruptions) or climate-related disasters (cyclones, flooding), which are likely to soar with climate change;
- they are mainly composed of islands, which is an additional factor contributing to their isolation and vulnerability;
- they include vulnerable states which are particularly affected by poverty and social difficulties (Haiti, Comoros, Madagascar);
- they are, to some extent, deeply affected by the migration phenomenon;
- they both benefit from the presence of the French Red Cross Platforms of Regional Intervention, located in the French overseas departments.
ENSURING QUALITY

RESOURCES OPTIMIZATION
ENSURING QUALITY

The creation and implementation of operations, human, material and financial resources management, as well as the assessment of humanitarian actions of the French Red Cross are driven by its requirement for quality.

QUALITY OF HUMANITARIAN ACTIONS

The concern of the French Red Cross for operational and technical quality of its humanitarian actions includes:

- ensuring its response addresses the needs of vulnerable people/populations;
- strengthening the resilience of these groups;
- complying effectively with Movement principles;
- abiding by the saying “primum non nocere” (do no harm), which aims to prevent possible negative impacts of humanitarian action;
- ensuring accountability to beneficiaries and donors;
- systematically assessing its activities.

Emphasis is put on innovation research and the use of new approaches.

MANAGEMENT QUALITY

The French Red Cross commits to a general assessment of its operations, both at headquarters or field level, to enhance its efficiency, increase its performance level and strengthen internal control mechanisms.

RESOURCES OPTIMIZATION

Human resources

To achieve its objectives of operational and organizational quality, the French Red Cross aims at improving the management of its international human resources.

Financial resources

While serving the French Red Cross operational goals, its focus on resources quality aims at developing more sustainable resources raised from donors complying with ethical and humanitarian principles. The French Red Cross is making efforts to support the development and the diversification of its financial resources.

Technical resources

Necessary expertise and equipment will be used by the French Red Cross for the operations management, such as establishing networks and developing partnerships, participating in technical and thematic discussion groups, etc.

Concerning emergency response, the French Red Cross has established means to respond quickly and to provide an appropriate response in its intervention areas.
RESPONSE MODALITIES: STRENGTHENING SYNERGIES AND PARTNERSHIPS
STRENGTHENING SYNERGIES INTERNALLY

MAINTAINING AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

For its operations, the French Red Cross focuses on an integrated response which consists in developing a multi-sectoral understanding of the needs generally interrelated to identify the synergies between thematic areas to provide an appropriate and coordinated response.

According to this approach, it systematically takes into account four cross-cutting topics: gender and diversity, risk reduction, climate change, environment.

MOBILIZING THE FRENCH RED CROSS INTERNAL NETWORK FOR ITS INTERNATIONAL ACTION

The French Red Cross is characterized by the richness and the diversity of its national network:

- human richness: volunteers, employees, students;
- diversity of activities and professions in various areas such as health, first aid, social, medico-social and psychosocial action, etc.

Such a network represents a unique pool which the French Red Cross seeks to better mobilize during the implementation of its international strategy.

For this purpose, the French Red Cross promotes, facilitates and supports those who are committed and who are willing to lend their expertise to serve its international action within this network.

This mobilization includes all three components of its national network:

- its territorial delegations and local units;
- its health, social and medico-social facilities;
- its schools and training institutes, including its nursing training institutes.

The decentralized international action of the French Red Cross is reconsidered and increased. It consists in taking part in:

- emergency and disaster risk management operations;
- projects concerning sustainable humanitarian relief or development assistance;
- capacity building activities for the host national Societies (on-site trainings or in France, etc.).

STRENGTHENING AND DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS

With the rise of southern civil societies and the enhancement of their capacities, as well as the emergence of new funders and new ways of allocating funds (World Humanitarian Summit), NGOs and the Movement - and with it the French Red Cross - had to redefine their roles in the implementation of their interventions.

In designing, preparing, implementing and assessing its operations, the French Red Cross is resolutely opened to partnerships.

The French Red Cross has chosen to give priority to partnerships within the Movement; however, it still develops and diversifies its partnerships with organizations external to the Movement both in the south and in the north. These partnerships are developed in a spirit of reciprocity between partners. They are based on shared values and vision.

The French Red Cross builds these partnerships by adding its added value to its partners’ while seeking complementarity and recognizing their expertise.
PARTNERSHIPS WITHIN THE MOVEMENT

PARTNERSHIPS OUTSIDE THE MOVEMENT
PARTNERSHIPS WITHIN THE MOVEMENT

The French Red Cross seeks a necessary coherence with all actions undertaken by the other components of the Movement present in its countries of intervention.

Beyond this condition, the French Red Cross is actively seeking to develop partnerships with the national Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies based on complementarity and active solidarity principles. The host national Societies are its privileged and key partners. Partnership programs between the French Red Cross and the host national Societies may be created and implemented according to various modalities which have to include a capacity building dimension.

These partnerships must be based on a peer-to-peer relationship, rely on a shared evaluation and be developed in full cooperation.

Alliances with the participating national Societies, based on the complementarity of thematic expertise or geographic specializations, are actively sought.

Partnerships with the International Committee of the Red Cross are privileged in zones of conflict or great tensions. In such contexts, the French Red Cross could benefit from the International Committee of the Red Cross support in its team security management; the French Red Cross could, for example, operate in “grey zones” or in peripheral zones close to the epicenter of the conflicts, where affected populations live (displaced, victims of economic impoverishment, etc.).

Partnerships with the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies cover common sectors of intervention, emergency response and pooling of specific HR skills (security, logistics, and technical fields).

Finally, cooperation is strengthened through the French Red Cross fund**, whose purpose is to support research and ethical reflection, to promote a sustainable humanitarian action and explore field issues. The French Red Cross aims at better leveraging the expertise of this fund for its forward thinking about humanitarian issues and capitalization of its operational experiences.

PARTNERSHIPS OUTSIDE THE MOVEMENT

With its institutional donors and funders, the French Red Cross aims to develop genuine partnerships characterized by mutual trust and effective and regular dialog. The French Red Cross seeks to further strengthen its credibility by improving its transparency, the quality of its operations and its managerial standards.

As an auxiliary to the Government in the humanitarian sector, the French Red Cross attaches great importance to its relationships with the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs. It also aims to strengthen and enhance this cooperation by renewing its multi-annual convention.

Finally, to achieve its innovation goals, the French Red Cross puts the emphasis on its cooperation with scientific and technical organizations. With them, the French Red Cross maintains and develops partnerships related to all its fields of expertise. These partnerships are crucial to improve actions developed, using the latest technical evolutions and best practices.

The French Red Cross commits to an approach promoting research actions by fostering specific scientific and academic partnerships (Institutes Pasteur, etc.). This approach allows a continuous reflection about the actions implemented.

** Misions will be integrated, as from January 2018, within the future foundation recognized to be of the French Red Cross’ public interest.