The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world’s largest volunteer-based humanitarian network. Together with our 189 member National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies worldwide, we reach 97 million people annually through long-term services and development programmes as well as 85 million people through disaster response and early recovery programmes. We act before, during and after disasters and health emergencies to meet the needs and improve the lives of vulnerable people. We do so with impartiality as to nationality, race, gender, religious beliefs, class and political opinions.

Guided by Strategy 2020 – our collective plan of action to tackle the major humanitarian and development challenges of this decade – we are committed to ‘saving lives and changing minds’.

Our strength lies in our volunteer network, our community-based expertise and our independence and neutrality. We work to improve humanitarian standards, as partners in development and in response to disasters. We persuade decision-makers to act at all times in the interests of vulnerable people. The result: we enable healthy and safe communities, reduce vulnerabilities, strengthen resilience and foster a culture of peace around the world.
Introduction

The world is changing and so must we, the largest humanitarian organization in the world. With beneficiaries, volunteers and staff reaching every corner of the world, we are at the forefront of change, as we witness it and partake in it every day.

My own life has been a tapestry of changing circumstances and environments that taught me how to cope with change and respond to the opportunities it presented in the hope of contributing to a greater good. This is a perspective I carried with me into my role as Secretary General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). Having experienced a wide range of human existence, beginning as a child growing up in the poverty of a developing country to the privileged role as an executive leader for the IFRC, with stops along the way as a political prisoner, a refugee, a diplomat, a government worker and a humanitarian worker in the field, I can state with confidence that change is a condition that will challenge us at every twist and turn of our lives and we must be willing to accept the challenges it presents and do our very best to improve the collective condition.

After six years at the head of the world’s largest humanitarian organization, a global network that has a presence in nearly every country in the world and has a brand recognized by every age group around the world, I have had an exceptional vantage point to observe the world and how it is changing.

In this position, I have been privileged with the opportunity to initiate change, manage change, grow into change, predict change and inspire change. With this privilege came the responsibility to recognize when I as a leader, and we as an organization, were too slow in changing – when we missed opportunities to change and in some cases simply failed to change.

As I reach the end of my tenure I wish to reflect upon the most significant accomplishments, challenges, gaps, inspirations and future possibilities for this great organization. Through the lens of change and within the framework of our global strategy, I will present the highlights of what we do, how we are doing it and what it means for our future.
01

What we do
STRATEGY 2020 told us to continue to do what we do best – save lives while also changing minds. In other words, we must do all we can to modernize and grow while protecting the achievements of the past. Our new strategy laid the groundwork and set the tone for organizational change. It set us up to look at what we do and how we do it, and how we can behave differently in order to prepare us for a changing world. It was intended to help make us a ‘change ready’ organization, prepared to lead, respond more nimbly and flexibly, and develop a mind set for change.

In practical terms this meant pursuing the Red Cross and Red Crescent core mission of saving lives, protecting livelihoods and strengthening resilience and recovery, while also promoting healthy and safe living, and social inclusion in a culture of peace and non-violence.

To do that, Strategy 2020 laid out three key operational goals for the IFRC and for our secretariat:

• To reach beneficiaries better and faster by strengthening National Societies
• To enhance our impact and influence as the voice of vulnerable people through humanitarian diplomacy
• To improve our effectiveness as the IFRC.

We, as the IFRC, as National Societies, as humanitarians, are facing unprecedented challenges in the nature and scale of the disasters that call us to act, in the number of actors in the humanitarian field, in the turbulent dynamics between donor and recipient, and the relentless call to do more with less in ever more complex environments.

As a network of 189 dynamic, dedicated National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, every year we come to the aid of millions of people in times of crisis, and we work alongside millions more to reduce their level of vulnerability in times of peace. It is in the nature of this work that, even as we acknowledge our achievements, we are always painfully aware of where we need to do better and where we have fallen short.

What kind of environment have we been operating in?

The environment we are operating in is changing dramatically, demanding different services to meet changing needs in both our relief and our long-term development responses.

We acknowledge the enormous efforts that many governments and communities have made to better prepare themselves to respond to natural and man-made disasters, to mitigate their impact on the lives and property of people and communities, and to prevent them from happening if at all possible. This has resulted in a significant improvement in the resilience of many communities, and is starkly illustrated in the remarkable success of long-term community education in the case of the succession of disasters that struck Japan in March 2011. While there is little doubt that protective dikes and other mitigating efforts limited the onslaught of the tsunami that followed the Tohoku earthquake, it is clear that the reflex of the population to
immediately move to higher ground as soon as the alert was given saved as many
if not more lives than the protection offered by the far more costly protective infra-
structure.

We also acknowledge that the exponential growth of the world’s population means
that larger numbers of people are affected or threatened by disasters, because they
live in more concentrated urban settings where it is a constant challenge to provide
the basic services, infrastructure and economic opportunities vital to a life of dignity
for all. The laudable efforts of national and international actors to achieve the Mil-
lelennium Development Goals, as well as remarkable economic growth in some lower
and middle income countries, have resulted in better living conditions for many fam-
ilies, but have not reduced the sharp inequality between those who have and those
who have nothing at all. In even the highest income countries, significant numbers
of families live far below any theoretical poverty level or in abject poverty. Where
resources are constrained due to low economic growth, vulnerabilities increase. Un-
planned concentration, overpopulation and blatant inequality trigger additional or
new risks, of social tension, urban violence, epidemics and the appearance or reap-
ppearance of high-risk survival behaviour that has effects on the health and stability
of communities.

People are now moving in unprecedented numbers, often in search of better oppor-
tunities for themselves or their children. Migration has always existed and has long
given individuals and communities an opportunity to lift themselves up while trig-
gering an exchange of skills, cultures and values that also benefited receiving com-
munities. But the sheer scale of movement has become such that it is perceived as
a threat, not only by communities that face the challenge of covering the additional
needs of immigrants and facilitating their integration, but also by communities of
origin that struggle with brain-drain, loss of support for the elderly, and other eco-
nomic and social effects of losing the younger generation. The mixing of commu-
nities and exposure to different value sets, cultural patterns, social, economic and
political standards and systems counter the self-perpetuating force of tradition. That
can be good because it can challenge values and systems that are obstacles to prog-
ress and positive change, but it may also create intolerance, unrealistic expectations
and massive confusion. The potentially negative economic effects of migration on
both countries of departure and countries of arrival, as well as the associated vulner-
abilities that migrants experience during their journey, are hopefully overcome with
time. Migrants settle into their new communities, adapt, participate and flourish:
that is the hope. The economies of their former homes may be bolstered by remit-
tances that can be very large. Remittances to the Philippines have reached well over
20 billion US dollars, for example, and those to Ethiopia more than 1.5 billion US dol-
ars. Such sums help to change lives.

Today, vast numbers of people want change. Many of them have lost confidence in
traditional sources of wisdom and authority, such as government, religion, formal
education or family values. While rejecting the past they remain unclear about what
to expect from the future or how to get there. The so-called Arab spring shows how
whole generations can stand up, unexpectedly, ready to confront long established
and fierce forces. They often succeed in overthrowing regimes that seemed impos-
sible to move. At the same time, where they lack a clear and cohesive project for their future, new political strongmen or forces can hijack their efforts.

Beneficiaries have become far more vocal and demanding too. They consider that humanitarian or development support is no longer a gift but a given. Those involved in providing this support are expected to be professional; to deliver what is needed in a cost-effective manner that also meets longer term needs. Band-Aid is out; projects are too. Quick fixes are perceived to be dangerous and rightly so. Beneficiaries refuse to be mere recipients of our support; they want to be partners at all stages of the support cycle. Some 10 to 15 years ago the humanitarian world started to talk about a rights-based approach. Today that approach is a reality.

Host governments, donors, the public at large, and even the private sector, are also louder in their criticism of inefficiency, poor transparency and accountability, and the questionable results of much humanitarian and development work. Funding is regulated by results-based agreements rather than effort. Investment in humanitarian organizations is seen to be risky, requiring more and better monitoring and reporting, especially against the backdrop of economic crises and the growing needs of back-donor countries. The proliferation of humanitarian organizations, and the emergence of new actors and a stronger civil society in host countries, give decision makers the option to screen, assess and ultimately select the best value for money.

These evolutions combine with the formidable challenges of climate change, demographic ageing of populations in the West, significant shifts in the economic weight of different regions across the world, and a fierce global economic crisis that does not seem likely to end any time soon, to form the background against which the IFRC and its secretariat are challenged to examine and make changes to our approaches, priorities and activities. Over the past seven years we have had to come to terms with a fast changing reality while facing financial challenges that gave us very little space to radically reshape our work, our structures or our business models. Often we could build on initiatives and thinking that had started well before, but not always. Over the period, the IFRC has definitely changed. Below are just some of the major results: successes but also remaining challenges.

Disaster and crisis response – achievements and challenges

The IFRC continues to respond to more small, medium or large disasters and crises than any other humanitarian network. We are often the first responder, sometimes the only responder, and reliably the organization that remains with vulnerable communities throughout their recovery, helping them to reduce their risks and strengthen their development.

More than 90 per cent of the operations launched by National Societies in any given year are for small and medium scale disasters that do not attract the attention of the world’s media or adequate resources from the world’s donors. Raising awareness
of the world’s forgotten or neglected disasters remains a constant priority for our humanitarian diplomacy efforts. Our successful ‘Silent Disasters’ campaign must be extended and expanded to bring a louder voice to those affected by disasters and crisis. Against the trend of diminishing institutional donor budgets we have seen steady growth in the size and use of our Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) – showing what can be achieved by National Societies with the right balance of timely response and quality documentation.

We continue to lead the broader humanitarian sector through innovation in how we work directly with disaster-affected people. Our efforts to scale up the use of cash in emergencies are delivering dividends for National Societies and disaster-affected communities alike by providing more timely and cost-effective assistance, offering choice with greater dignity to people who receive our support, and helping to rebuild or strengthen local economies. Similarly, our ground-breaking work on beneficiary communications has saved lives and improved the scale and timeliness of community engagement in our operational planning and response.

We are successfully adapting mobile technology to carry out fast and high quality surveys and assessments for disaster response and longer-term health programming. A key challenge is to bring separate technologies together into one harmonious system that enables timely sharing and analysis.

In recent years many of the large-scale disasters to which we have collectively responded have occurred in high and middle income countries, including, to name a few, the devastating earthquakes in Sichuan, China; the great earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster in Japan; the powerful earthquakes in New Zealand; extensive fires and floods in Australia; and hurricanes Katrina and Sandy in the USA. While we have successfully responded to these disasters, we have largely done so outside our existing tools and systems, which are often perceived not to be appropriate for developed country contexts. In each of these disasters we have successfully found a way to channel international assistance between National Societies and people across the world to those directly affected. However, we are collectively challenged to develop new ways to work, recognising that, wherever a disaster or crisis occurs globally, the IFRC membership will want to express solidarity and provide assistance.

We continue to evolve and adapt our system of global surge capacity to reflect the changing humanitarian landscape and the growing capacities of National Societies. Collectively, we have continued to invest in finding the right balance of global surge capacity and strengthened local response capacity for a large networked organization. The immense value of our global disaster response system was demonstrated in the scale and sophistication of our response to the Haiti earthquake. Increasingly, we are deploying global surge tools not to replace local volunteers and staff but to work alongside them and build their capacity.
Long-term development achievements and challenges

Long-term and developmental programmes are another vital aspect of our work. All our National Societies engage in long-term programmes to address specific or structural vulnerabilities in one form or another.

Disaster-related long-term developmental programmes address risk reduction, resilience, water and sanitation, logistics, health, shelter and disaster law. Some are included in response programmes but equally belong to long-term programmes.

Other long-term programmes mitigate structural problems: poverty, health issues, migration, ageing and demographic change, population growth and food security, urbanization, HIV and AIDS, malaria and other health epidemics and pandemics, and institutional and community capacity building. Through its work at community level around the world, the Red Cross and the Red Crescent is helping to improve economic infrastructure at grassroots level. Our people-based agenda is empowering individuals to change their way of life, live healthier and more productive lives, and ultimately put themselves in a better position to contribute to the economic life of their communities.

While the Red Cross and the Red Crescent is known to be a leader in emergency response, we are unfortunately less known for our significant contributions to development efforts around the world. Every day, our National Societies are identifying and responding to development needs at community level, and every day our organization is involved in humanitarian diplomacy at the national and global levels, contributing to policy development and advocacy efforts. There is enormous potential for growth in these areas, and we will have to improve how we work together as the IFRC in order to better position and profile our capacities and contributions. We have a unique ability to respond effectively to the changing needs of our communities and it is our responsibility to make these needs known and make change happen.

In the past few years we have pushed ourselves to respond to the demands of our changing development environment and I would like to share some of the highlights with you below:

- The IFRC continues to be recognized as a global leader in community-based disaster risk reduction. The development and adaptation of appropriate tools and guidance has strengthened the capacity of National Societies to respond to changing vulnerabilities in the communities they serve. Training and e-learning have helped them with assessment, early warning, climate change mitigation and adaptation. The ‘Public Awareness and Education for Disaster Risk Reduction Guide’ has brought IFRC knowledge and practice into classrooms and to government authorities.

- In 2008 we launched a major longer-term food security initiative for Africa, piloted in 15 African countries, which has now been expanded to 29 National Societies in Africa and globally to 12 National Societies in Asia Pacific and seven in the Americas. Food insecurity will remain a leading cause of vulnerability in the de-
cades ahead and our longer-term work on food security, nutrition and livelihoods
must be expanded further to cope with the consequences of population growth, urbanization and climate change.

- Since the launch of Strategy 2020 we have collectively engaged in expanding our support to people suffering from non-communicable diseases. Through our community based health prevention, research, partnership and advocacy, we are now positioned as a global player in this field. Each year around one hundred National Societies implement community-based health and first aid programmes reaching more than 2.8 million people.

Our strength lies in our community volunteers’ work in tackling the underlying social, behavioural and environmental factors that determine good health, and bringing about the changes in behaviour and attitudes that are required to reduce the risk of non-communicable diseases.

At the national and community levels, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have a long history of disease prevention and health promotion programmes. In their role as auxiliaries to governments, they are in a unique position to pioneer the implementation of integrated work to prevent non-communicable diseases and to promote highly cost-effective programmes, for example to encourage physical activity, alcohol and tobacco control, and a healthy diet.

- In the past six years we successfully scaled up our response to avian influenza, creating a major global pandemic preparedness programme that channelled more than 20 million Swiss francs to 94 National Societies between 2007 and 2010. The programme helped to prepare vulnerable communities to mitigate the impact of an influenza pandemic.

- Our global water and sanitation initiative has helped to save lives and promote healthy and safe living for more than 10 million people through more than 300 projects with 65 National Societies.

- Our global alliance on HIV reached 68 million people between 2009 and 2012. In the same period, Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers reached more than 37 million children through information campaigns for immunization against measles and polio. Our work to combat malaria is equally unrelenting. In 2012 alone, some 19,000 Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers reached more than 8 million vulnerable people with malaria prevention and treatment information.

- As the convenor of the Global Shelter Cluster for disasters since 2006, we have deployed IFRC-led inter-agency Shelter Coordination Teams to undertake country-level leadership of the shelter cluster in response to 23 disasters in 14 countries. Our global and regional level shelter training materials and courses have benefited close to one hundred National Societies and we have become the partner of choice for leading academic networks on accredited humanitarian shelter course development.

- In 2009 we highlighted the plight of vulnerable migrants globally, and collectively endorsed a policy on migration that we shared with States at the 31st International Conference in 2011. While to date we have achieved much in profiling this issue on the global humanitarian agenda through our advocacy and representa-
tion, the challenge remains to scale up our response, enabling National Societies to meet the growth in migration-related humanitarian needs, an area where we can make a significant contribution.

- Between 2006 and 2010 our logistics regionalization strategy, and placement of contingency stocks in warehouses, achieved a significant reduction in the time and cost of delivering relief items to people affected by disasters. We hold sufficient stocks to meet the immediate needs of 450,000 people and can dispatch items to anywhere within 24 to 48 hours.

Through partnerships with donors and private sector logistics suppliers, we are developing an innovative end-to-end disaster management delivery system and further strengthening our global logistics service to operate on a full cost recovery basis, expanding services to non-Movement humanitarian partners and investing to enhance the logistics capacities of National Societies. These innovations are necessary if we are to remain cost effective and efficient in the changing humanitarian landscape.

Promoting social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace: how we have changed in response to the changing world

In addition to the vulnerabilities brought on by disasters, disease, food insecurity, climate change, migration and urbanization, we must contend with a world of increasing violence, extremism, inequality and social injustice. If the IFRC is to have the highest impact possible when dealing with these challenges, we realized that we must work together to promote positive approaches and change attitudes and mindsets. We responded to this change in our environment by developing our ‘Youth as Agents of Behavioural Change’ (YABC) – an extremely powerful example of how the next generation of peacemakers and peace builders can be created in every community around the world. Based on our humanitarian principles and values, which have inspired so many people over the past fifteen decades, young people are being trained as humanitarian diplomats. YABC empowers our young humanitarians to take up an ethical leadership role in inspiring a positive transformation of mindsets, attitudes and behaviours within themselves and in their community. It is built on three pillars: youth empowerment, operating from inner peace, and reaching out to the community. It is a participatory, interactive process for finding constructive and creative solutions to problems like discrimination, violence and exclusion. Participation of the whole community and dialogue are vital in the creation of a culture of non-violence and peace, which fundamentally is about nurturing humanitarian values such as equality, respect for diversity, mutual understanding and cooperation.
Movement coordination – achievements and challenges

The changing nature of disasters, crisis and conflict globally has resulted in greater demands on the IFRC to support National Societies when they respond to complex emergencies and civil unrest. In the context of the Arab Spring and now more specifically in Syria, the scale and complexity of the disasters, crises and conflicts of our time often require that all components of the Movement respond together. Doing so enables us to extend the reach and impact of our humanitarian efforts. This is an area that should be and is our strength, yet it also an increasing challenge, since we must find the right balance of interventions, power and place between all members. As the world changes so must our modalities of working together.

Lead agency roles and mandates in the Movement are not agreements of exclusivity and we must better use the valuable assistance provided by National Societies and the IFRC, as well as the ICRC, in situations of conflict, disaster and crisis.

Our coordination and cooperation arrangements must also recognize our capacity and ambition to develop a more holistic response, that is multi-disciplinary, links relief and recovery better to longer-term development, and strengthens National Society capacities.

In our international work, we often find ourselves competing with one another for funding, resources and visibility, sometimes to the detriment of the host National Society. Short-sighted individual business plans may undermine the long-term health of our Movement. We must also recognize that others may be able to deliver goods and services better than we can in certain contexts and that we should strive to complement rather than compete where appropriate.

When we work together as one Movement we offer a unique network with unparalleled access to vulnerable people and can negotiate partnerships on favourable terms. Individually we may be exploited by powerful partners through inequitable arrangements that differ from country to country. Developing and applying standardised agreements with key partners will benefit individual National Societies as well as the reputation of the Movement.

We must seek to tackle the humanitarian challenges of our time and effectively shape the debate between states and with non-state actors on key issues that concern vulnerable people. Through our network of volunteers we can bring evidence-based analysis to decision makers and convey compelling messages using real examples.

We have a collective ambition for strong rules and principles to guide our humanitarian endeavours, yet many of us have a weak appetite for the necessary compliance and accountability measures. In adopting revised Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Humanitarian Assistance we are updating our agreed ways of working together as the IFRC in a changing humanitarian landscape.

We have also commenced a process for reviewing coordination and cooperation within the Movement, based on an objective analysis of our collective experiences in recent operations, and understanding where we have succeeded, where we have failed...
and what gaps exist. To build confidence in the transformational change process and to deliver quick improvements to Movement coordination in response operations, over the next two years the IFRC and ICRC will: implement measures to strengthen leadership and coordination roles; scale up the Movement’s operational preparedness and response; promote coherent and well-coordinated internal and external communications; and explore new Movement-wide resource-mobilization approaches.

Conclusion

As vulnerabilities change, people’s needs change and so must our services. If we are doing our job properly, we are constantly evolving, preparing for change and adapting our services. I believe we have become better listeners during these past six years, and have prepared ourselves institutionally, structurally and intellectually to better serve vulnerable communities around the world.

By adhering to our Fundamental Principles in all that we do, and promoting social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace, we are contributing a new facet to service delivery that is highly attuned to the emerging needs of a world contending with increasing violence and injustice. I believe this is where the IFRC can assume a thought leadership role, bringing about significant changes in attitudes and mindsets, at every level from the community to policy, where decisions are made every day that affect our work, the services provided, and the way beneficiaries are served.
HOW WE WORK

LOOKING BACK AND BEYOND – REFLECTIONS OF A SECRETARY GENERAL

02

How we work
WITH a focus on the changing world and our role in adapting ourselves to be prepared for future changes, and in some cases anticipate them, I believed we needed to look from the inside out and change ourselves first. As part of our strategy, we agreed to focus our efforts on building strong National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, pursue humanitarian diplomacy to prevent and reduce vulnerability, and function effectively as the IFRC.

I believe we made huge strides in changing how we work as individual entities and as a collective force and that as a result we are now better positioned to meet the demands of the future. Allow me to share with you a snapshot of the three areas in which we have experienced the most growth in the past few years.

Building strong National Societies

*National Societies are the foundation of our organization and we must create a strong whole if we are to thrive. The diversity in the network is at times our strength, yet there are differences that weaken us. We believe that all National Societies can thrive and that what is needed is an environment that encourages self-empowerment, provides opportunity, embraces equality, and maintains standards, resulting in confidence and success.*

Today, as a result of creating that environment we have built a new team, in which National Societies from all over the world are experiencing a new role, as equal partners with an equal voice and an equal opportunity to succeed.

*How did we get there?* It is important to acknowledge the many efforts that all National Societies have made over the years to develop and improve the systems, capacities and resources that are needed to function and perform well. Those efforts have paid off in many cases, and quite a number of National Societies that were once considered ‘developing’ have now joined the ranks of modern and well-functioning Societies that stand ready to support the development of their peers. While we can be confident that all Societies have made progress over time, progress can vary significantly from one to another and is often due to external factors, such as an abundance of disasters or episodes of conflict, or internal management and organizational challenges. Most often, it is due to a combination of both.

This has led us to a flexible definition of a strong National Society as ‘one that is able to deliver country-wide, through a network of volunteer-based units, a relevant service to vulnerable people sustained for as long as needed’. This definition is at the core of the new National Society Development Framework 2013. This framework presents the conceptual basis for a radical shift in the way the IFRC, not just its secretariat, provides support to National Society development.

Under the new framework, a National Society’s leaders are the real guardians and drivers of the development of their Society. They are responsible for defining what they want their organization to be in the years to come. They need to critically assess the current status of their Society in terms of its mandate, relevance, commitment, image, partnerships, structures, skills, and resources, and thereby obtain an objective and in-depth understanding of what does and does not work. The IFRC secretariat has been helping in this, most notably through introduction of the Organizational Capacity Assessment and Certification (OCAC) process.
OCAC provides individual Societies with a balanced diagnosis of where they stand. The system was developed, tested and refined in consultation with 63 National Societies. The resulting set of indicators helps National Societies to plan and measure the progress of their own capacity building. The 120 check points reflect the characteristics of a well-functioning National Society. They bring clarity and definition to each society as it strives to be accountable to itself and to its peers in the IFRC.

To date, 59 National Societies have signed on to the OCAC process, a clear indication that their leaders are interested in an unbiased assessment of the organization and are serious about following recommendations up. They understand that it is for them to decide what needs to be corrected, overhauled, improved and strengthened, and for them to define what support they want from the IFRC. They thus take the lead, define the pace and set the direction of their own change process. The IFRC provides advice, guidance and support on request, combining the expertise and tools it has into a tailor-made, time-limited support effort guided by clear objectives. Use of the term ‘IFRC’ here is not limited to the secretariat but stands for the network at large, because it is ultimately up to each National Society’s leadership to decide what support to seek or accept from which partner. And in truth, when they look for support, they are not even limited to IFRC or Movement partners.

When this system is fully integrated into our entire network, we will take part in peer review processes that will authenticate the progress of each National Society against its own objectives, contributing to increased collaboration and accountability. Although we are not there yet, we hope to roll out a full certification process and that each National Society can participate in it as part of their growth and development process.

**National Societies together creating a learning organization**

We have learned a great deal through the ability to capture and analyse data about the strengths, weaknesses, capacities and ambition of our individual members, and as a result are able to better evaluate the services we provide to help them grow. With such a vast array of skills and expertise available in our National Societies, it might be time for us to modernize the way we provide organizational development services, and help to design a partnership-based model of peer-to-peer support or communities of practice.

In so doing, the secretariat would need to understand the challenges and opportunities of fully shifting the centre of National Society development work to the Societies themselves. What changes to the day-to-day functioning of the secretariat would be required if it were to focus more of its efforts on becoming a learning organization? How does such a secretariat invite and initiate research, capture and manage learning, and facilitate the exchange of best practices globally? With more than a century of humanitarian and development work experience in nearly every country of the world we have an unparalleled knowledge bank, rich with wisdom and insight. We have the potential to conceptualize, intellectualize and theorize our work, making it a valuable collection of evidence-based humanitarian learning.
Although we have made some good progress in this respect as illustrated by the success of the establishment of our learning network and platform as well as partnerships with several academic institutions, there is so much more that we can do and should do to achieve our potential in thought leadership.

Creating sustainable National Societies

Another key issue that we have uncovered through our organizational assessment work is the challenge of creating sustainable National Societies. While some National Societies have established solid and sophisticated fundraising and marketing teams, a majority are still struggling and some report having next to no capacity to develop their domestic resources.

While that turns out to be almost always a symptom of a much wider range of severe organizational deficits that may include poor definition of the National Society’s identity, weak internal and external communication, limited attention to relationship building, and inadequate governance structures, the result is a strong reliance on funding from a limited number of sources, even sometimes just one Red Cross or Red Crescent partner.

We know that a strong and independent National Society is one that has the flexibility to choose the terms under which it will accept donor funding for projects and contracts that fulfil its core mission. This happens when a National Society can mobilize and control the financing it needs to run its own organization and provide reliable services to its clients for as long as needed. Such financing comes largely from what its individual members and supporters are willing to give on a continuing basis, and from the income it can earn from its capital assets and services.

With the right image and reputation, earned through effective service delivery and marketed through appropriate communications, any National Society should be able to grow a significant membership base and maximize individual giving in its own context. The capacity to do this can be built, following the many good examples that exist across our network.

Successful growth

Capacity building cannot be imposed from outside, but it can and should be supported and encouraged, and ultimately, when true progress is made, it must be recognized. It will take place in its own way and at its own speed. But it manifests itself vividly when the situation demands.

It has been gratifying to see that many of our members have in fact already come a very long way. I would argue that some of them have made such strides that they have now come of age. They know their people, culture, motivations and aspirations and as a result can better serve their communities and change the world in a positive manner.
Pursuing humanitarian diplomacy

Humanitarian diplomacy has been part of how we operate since the beginnings of our organization with Henri Dunant, but, as with all forms of organizational change, we needed to reinvigorate, redefine and reignite our efforts. Today, I believe we have done so. Our humanitarian diplomacy efforts incorporate representation, advocacy, communications and resource mobilization.

Even as we have worked to strengthen the individual links in our chain, our National Societies, the secretariat has also worked tirelessly to consolidate and extend our influence in the domestic and international arenas, a reflection of the ‘changing minds’ theme of Strategy 2020. The way the Red Cross and the Red Crescent is known and recognized offers a tremendous opportunity to exert greater influence, grow our market share, and drive wider engagement and innovation capacities to the benefit of the collective. This has been one of my main objectives as secretary general.

In 2009 the Governing Board adopted our new humanitarian diplomacy policy, one that defines humanitarian diplomacy as persuading decision makers and opinion leaders to act, at all times, in the interests of vulnerable people, and with full respect for fundamental humanitarian principles. The new policy laid out clear definitions and a framework to guide the secretariat and National Societies in how, why and when we should be engaging on behalf of the world’s vulnerable populations.

The first policy makers within our network are the Red Cross and Red Crescent leaders themselves. Most of them have the experience, knowledge and connections to drive humanitarian diplomacy efforts in their country and contribute to our regional and global influence. At international level, we have established solid humanitarian diplomacy hubs in Geneva, New York, Brussels and Addis Ababa, with support from focal points in our Zone offices as well as regional and country representatives. This has led to robust policy dialogues and a stronger ability to have our voice heard in the international arena.

We have intensified our international representation, liaison and advocacy efforts during my tenure. While advancing our positions and calling for action at the UN and from governments, we also participated in key events such as the Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction, the Conference of Parties on Climate Change, and the World Health Assembly. We addressed world leaders in different forums such as the World Economic Forum/Davos, the Clinton Initiative, the African Union, regional conferences and the United Nations General Assembly, while organizing side events to share our views and engage key stakeholders on issues of collective interest, including, among many others, communicable diseases, disaster reduction and climate change adaptation, aid effectiveness, volunteer engagement, and youth.

We have also used our convening power to gather around the table key players, as we did at the partnership meeting on food security in Sahel, which brought together the World Food Program, The Food and Agricultural Organization, and other regional stakeholders. We capitalized on the release of the World Disaster Report to convene panel debates and develop collaboration around early warning/early action systems, food security, urban risks, and forced migration.
Our ability to exercise this influence derives in large part from our auxiliary status, something crucial and unique to the Red Cross and the Red Crescent. As codified in National Society laws, this role offers each National Society a unique opportunity to become the partner of choice of its government and serves as a bridge between decision-making bodies and communities, thereby enabling people to deal better with their problems.

This partnership carries obligations for governments, especially in terms of providing free and unimpeded access to people in need, allocation of sufficient resources to fulfil key missions, and space at the decision making table when humanitarian and development activities are addressed.

It is no secret that the potential of National Societies to use their auxiliary status and enhance their influence and leadership is unevenly realized. Reinvigorating the partnership between National Societies and their respective governments has been a constant concern and personal endeavour in my many visits to National Societies and in numerous discussions in Geneva with ambassadors from countries where this partnership needed further enhancement. With the President and other IFRC senior leaders, we have made extensive efforts to help National Societies in need to better capture their potential and clearly articulate their expertise in order to be given greater responsibilities, resources and access in a sustainable manner. Many of these efforts have paid off but a lot more needs to be done.

One area showing promise is our role in legislative advocacy. In recent years, we have developed our guidelines on international disaster response laws, which have been used by many National Societies to facilitate legislative measures to ease international coordination and improve response to disasters. In this area, the scope of legal advocacy has been extended to disaster risk reduction measures, land properties, and more, creating a more integrated corpus of tools to support the adoption of disaster laws by national governments. In partnership with the Australian Red Cross, the secretariat also published a guide for parliamentarians that offers practical guidance on shoring up National Society auxiliary status and engaging with national policy and lawmakers.

Through our humanitarian diplomacy efforts we have developed important partnerships with, among others, UNAIDS, the African Development Bank, IGAD, UN Volunteers, the WHO, and the European Union. We have also worked with individual National Societies, helping them to access key policy and decision makers and thereby advance their work and reach at national level.

In this way we have worked to carve out greater humanitarian space in government decision-making, and forged partnerships with business to generate more resources for the vulnerable and enhance the level of corporate social responsibility. We also engaged with the public through educational campaigns, literally changing one mind at a time.

But there is more to be done, especially in the area of developing evidence-based policy analysis to further substantiate our positions and our ability, through advocacy, to influence global policy agendas. We must invest in research and work to make better and more systematic use of our knowledge, experience, community perspectives, data and information collection systems, and analytical skills on emergency and development issues.
Enhancing our communication outreach

Today’s world has become, to a large extent, a world of communication, a world that is more interconnected and more social, but also saturated by unprecedented numbers of messages and increasing competition between a much wider range of operators involved in the humanitarian field.

Over the past years, the IFRC has actively developed its online communication channels. We have achieved a dramatic increase in visitors to our web site and our extranet site FedNet, while being an early adopter in managing seven social media properties.

Beyond emergency situations, the IFRC’s access to traditional media generated more limited coverage, especially in support to effective thought leadership, though a recent media monitoring report showing consistent and increasing coverage.

The IFRC has since nurtured deeper relations and partnerships with traditional media such as Euronews and Aljazeera, as well as media platforms such as Devex, Reuters, Facebook and iTunes.

We also put much more emphasis on engagement strategies through targeted campaigns. The ‘Find the volunteer inside you’ campaign, for instance, was designed to further recognize, protect and promote the spirit of volunteerism across and outside our IFRC network.

Other global initiatives have focused on: raising awareness of silent disasters and the need to invest in local capacities and preparedness; encouraging our members, volunteers and beneficiaries to speak out on the post-2015 development agenda; promoting first aid; and inviting people all over the world to tell their personal Red Cross or Red Crescent story. These global initiatives aimed not only to enhance our brand and the IFRC’s profile as a leading organization in disaster management and community development, nationally and globally. They also spoke directly to our constituencies, and especially our beneficiaries, encouraging them to voice their concerns so that their humanitarian needs would be met at all times, in every circumstance.

In the wake of the typhoon in the Philippines, in November 2013, we also initiated the first ever global fundraising campaign, through the American Red Cross, with Facebook and iTunes, using a newly adopted IFRC digital logo. More than 5 million Swiss francs were collected in a few days.

Finally, as part of our humanitarian diplomacy efforts we have developed a Federation-wide resource mobilization strategy, which establishes principles of cooperation and identifies key initiatives to raise funds from various sources. Its implementation remains a work in progress but robust achievements have already been made.

The most important driving factors for success in accessing resources are leadership, strong auxiliary relations, and a critical balance between National Society sovereignty and compliance with the collective. It is also essential to demonstrate strong management capacities and vision, that enable National Societies to engage in partnerships, negotiate contracts on equal and mutually beneficial terms, and shift, when needed, from a dependence to a self-sustaining model.
A model based on reciprocity and collaboration should also inspire new compacts and cooperation mechanisms between member National Societies to expand our reach in resource mobilization, drawing on complementarity of strengths, building capacities where needed, designing innovative proposals for fundraising purposes, and leveraging our brand and assets with partners and supporters. This approach helps to scale up our impact in developing countries and may also prove to be relevant in developed countries where the economic crisis has hit hard.

Functioning effectively as the IFRC

“... We know that we must maintain vigilance and dynamism in the context of the challenges and opportunities of a rapidly changing world. We do this by continuing to modernize our working methods, in the most appropriate and efficient ways, according to specific circumstances: either individually as the National Society in a country, or together through partnerships and alliances that share resources and capacities within the Movement.” (Strategy 2020)

Improving the functioning of a large membership organization can be approached in countless ways and actually should be an ongoing effort. In the past few years, we have made it a priority to place a central focus on our ability to work better together, recognizing that while we may have many strong and independent entities, our collective force and abilities are our greatest strength.

We have worked to improve our cooperation within the IFRC and with the ICRC, exploring the issue of ‘lead agency’ in various contexts. We have encouraged partnership development and alliance building. We have promoted the creation of standards and frameworks, pushed for the continued development of leadership and governance, established accountability standards and practices and developed common approaches to resource mobilization.

All of these efforts make a difference; they help change an organization for the better. I would like to share with you just a few examples that I believe stand out for their contribution to positive change.

Cooperation within the IFRC

When disaster strikes, when it matters most, the IFRC is the most powerful collective in the world. In the aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti, for example, more than one hundred National Societies responded, showing a coordinated capacity to deliver,
communicate, advocate and report as one IFRC. Our recent campaigns on silent disasters, although limited to 11 European National Societies, also demonstrated the tremendous outreach we can have when working together in raising awareness on unnoticed disasters and advocating for further investment in local capacities and resilience building. Traditional and social media outreach, through opinion pieces, film, advertisements and interviews, reached 76.9 million people in Europe and around the world.

National Society development

As more National Societies have come of age, the IFRC has benefited from their increasing strength. Some of our newly-strengthened National Societies are now in a position to offer their capacities to help vulnerable people in other countries.

These National Societies are stronger now and this means they have more demands. They want to grow in a sustainable way, and to be in control of that growth so that, when their partner agencies leave, they not only survive but thrive. To do this, they demand inclusive and respectful decision-making. Current disparities must be swept away and replaced with true and respectful collaboration, allowing the flow of wisdom, knowledge, skills and experience in both directions.

A well-functioning secretariat

Under my mandate the secretariat has opted for a leaner but stronger headquarters that focuses on policy, direction, standards, quality, and compliance. We built on a decentralization process started by my predecessor to refine a zonal structure that has decentralised authority, to get ever closer to the membership we serve. The goal is to improve operational roles, tailor support to National Societies, and play the role of change agent to help National Societies themselves make the changes they want.

One area where we have done a lot of work is in the development and promotion of standards and common strategic frameworks that provide guidance, coherence and improved approaches to further our work and relevance. A few examples deserve to be recorded here.

The secretariat guided a participatory process by 46 National Societies to create the IFRC Strategic Framework on Gender and Diversity Issues. The framework aims to improve our capacity to reach all vulnerable people effectively and in a fair, non-discriminatory and equitable manner, ensuring that we enable – and do not disadvantage - women, men, boys or girls from every background in society to contribute to building the resilience and potential of themselves, their families and their communities.

Our IFRC Strategy on Violence Prevention, Mitigation and Response also constitutes a key milestone and step forward in realizing our strategic aim on non-violence, social inclusion and peace. Following the decisions of the General Assembly, regional conferences, and our Red Cross and Red Crescent International Conference, the IFRC can now count on common tools and guiding documents on issues of critical importance, such as our auxiliary status, climate change, youth, volunteers, disaster laws, community resilience, and disaster risk reduction, to name a few.
We have also been active in the business of creating standards that are relevant within and outside the Movement. The Code of Good Partnerships, Sphere, Principles and Rules in Disaster Management, even our OCAC system and our position paper on Development, stand as practical standards for our network but also provide thought leadership across the humanitarian and development community.

**Leadership, governance and accountability**

Leadership and authority are challenged everywhere today, including in the humanitarian sector. This forces us to review our own practices and thinking, as we recently did through the Governance Review, an initiative that was taken by the board to look at such issues as structure, representation and participation and how to ensure the unity of the organization. At the same time, we realized that our existing guidance on leadership may not necessarily be consistent or applicable across different organizational cultures. Following a study of how leadership is defined today by various schools of thought, the secretariat believes new guidelines should be prepared on the basis of which future training and tools should be developed.

Integrity and accountability are major characteristics of good leadership in any culture. They underpin the credibility of an organization and its leaders. A study conducted almost two years ago by the One World Trust showed that the IFRC has many tools, mechanisms, procedures and structures that support our accountability, both internally within the network and externally. At the same time, it hinted at some gaps, for example the absence of an information disclosure policy; and some weaknesses, including some inconsistency in our communication with beneficiaries and, more importantly, the absence of a clear framework bringing all these elements of accountability into one cohesive body that would be easy to present to others and could serve as a good starting point for providing network-wide training. We have committed to work on these issues to ensure that we maintain our position as a trusted partner by our stakeholders.

**Conclusion**

Over the past few years, we have made great strides in the effort to strengthen our National Societies; we have expanded our reach, influence and impact through our humanitarian diplomacy, and we are constantly aiming to improve our ways of working together as the IFRC and as a Movement. We maintain a commitment to building on good practices and learning from the great wealth of experience our network provides, yet we are equally anxious to develop new ways of working to meet the demands of this changing world. •
03

The future, what we can and should do
The environment of our future

Much of the work we do as the IFRC is in response to the consequences of change. Today there is much we can predict about the world’s future with a certain degree of confidence. This allows us to focus our energies on developing capacities to respond where we know we will be needed.

We know that: more of the world’s poor people will live in politically stable countries or even rich countries; sanitation issues will remain while water scarcity may turn into a resource crisis; a democracy deficit might develop with possible new grassroots political uprisings; adaptation measures to address climate change may be much too slow, with the result that more than 500 million people may be affected by disasters by 2020 and weather-related disasters may increase by 400 per cent; small arms could proliferate, fuelling increased urban violence; the age spectrum will be characterized by more young and more old people; indicators of the empowerment of women may continue to lag; and migration from poorer to wealthier countries may accelerate.

We can also anticipate an increasingly interdependent global economy, featuring growing economies as well as growing inequalities. Developing countries will exert more and more influence, contributing to an eventual global power shift.

In our own humanitarian and development industry, our world will also change. We can be assured that competition will increase, new players will emerge, for-profit models will become more prevalent, private-public partnerships will expand, local and international organizations will share positions differently, beneficiary expectations will grow, new technologies will be applied, the traditional aid model will be challenged more and more, and essential resource flows will not only change but are likely to become less dependable.

All of this we expect. But there is more.

Transitional turmoil

Responding to the changing environment has always been our greatest responsibility since our inception, and we do it well; but I believe a new set of factors influencing change has resulted in what I refer to as transitional turmoil.

People want change. They want to take part in the decisions that affect their lives. Technology has facilitated the spread of information and knowledge to almost all corners of the world, and this has empowered people to strive for greater equality and demand not patronage but mutual partnership relations.

People have lost confidence in established governance. Power centres have eroded at political, economic and social levels. Transitional turmoil seems to have engulfed the whole world, in some parts silently, but elsewhere in an openly confrontational manner. This explains the Occupy Movement, the Arab Spring, Syria, and Yemen, among others.
Transitional turmoil has a goal – a world that is open, transparent and equitable in offering opportunity and justice to all. What it may lack is organization, leadership, and a platform of action that allows the people to participate in decisions about their future. This has bred a humanitarian disaster for millions, for example in Syria, leading to terrible loss of life and livelihoods, and internal and cross border displacement and migration. Extremists may add to the mix by attempting to create chaos for their own ends. I ask what role we can play to calm the turmoil.

The Red Cross and the Red Crescent has engaged in thought leadership since its inception by advocating for the causes of vulnerable people and for combating increases in vulnerability. In the changing world, phenomenal changes are occurring at the level of the individual in three very interdependent areas, which could potentially transform the whole world but which may also, in the process, create huge vulnerabilities. We learn from history that transformation comes at a huge cost to lives, property and ways of life and this may already be happening. The three areas are:

**People.** People’s motivations, expectations, attitudes and mindsets have all changed. They have lived the experiences of watching the failures of governance, the greed of the economic elite for nothing more than ostentation, the suffering of poor and vulnerable people in a world of plenty, the injustices levied by the powerful against the powerless, inequalities of opportunity that persist even where means are available to avoid them, the disempowerment of the rightful, and a world that cries for change, for transformation. People all over the world want and demand change but different parts of the world have lived and suffered different experiences and the changes they want and demand may be different. As yet, no forum has emerged to consolidate these demands for change into a platform for dialogue that might create a global consensus on the kinds of change that could unite the world rather than divide it. Could this be a role for the Red Cross and the Red Crescent of the future?

**Information and knowledge.** Today, modern technology allows information and knowledge to be easily and readily obtained and shared with anybody without much difficulty. In a world of prejudice, mistrust and hatred, the spread of such information and knowledge can contribute to, for example, armed conflict and increasing vulnerability. Changes and growth in the technical world have contributed to pulling the material world together mainly through global businesses, but it very much lags behind in developing and spreading higher ideals or a philosophy of life that could create global harmony and resolve differences without open conflict, and enable peoples of different culture and ways of life to live together in peace. Could this be a role for the Red Cross and the Red Crescent of the future?

**Erosion of power centres.** As the world changes, we increasingly observe a gradual erosion of political, economic and social power centres, including at community and family levels. On one hand, this may signal the growing confidence and self-assertion of individuals, communities and nations to manage their own affairs on the basis of equality. On the other, unless alternative systems of trust evolve to replace existing power relations, relational challenges may be created that could disrupt business, political and social structures. It goes without saying that any kind of disruption will worsen vulnerability. Does the Red Cross and the Red Crescent have a role to play?
Given these three not so well known factors that could worsen vulnerability, and the need to engage in the growing business of the known driving factors of vulnerability, where does the Red Cross and the Red Crescent stand? Aside from our primary role as the world’s leading actor in humanitarian response, I believe we as an organization have an increasingly valuable and necessary role to play as drivers of change – a role we are intended to play if we are truly able to anticipate the changing needs and vulnerabilities of communities around the world.

Although we have accomplished a great deal during these past six years, I recognize we were not able to do it all and in some instances we simply did not make enough progress. Allow me to share a few of my ideas on where the IFRC can do more and do better as stated in our strategy for the future. Where can we improve? Where can we make a difference by being a driving force of change for a better future?

Volunteers and young people

Our strength is our volunteers on the ground. Our ability to go the last mile. Today, we can count just over 17 million Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers working with communities around the globe. No other organization has this reach, but are we optimizing it?

Although our volunteer network is vast, it is unevenly distributed across the globe. We have tremendous youth representation in our volunteer ranks but are we overlooking the wisdom, benefits and capacities that an older generation of volunteers could offer? Are we culturally connecting with our volunteer base, providing them with opportunities to engage in the change they want to see and be part of?

We must invest in the growth and development of our volunteers by providing increased training opportunities and applying new methods and approaches to volunteering that communication technology has presented.

There is enormous potential for our young volunteers to truly change the world as Youth Agents of Behavioural Change. Through this programme, youth are learning the interpersonal skills of empathy, non-violent communication, and mediation, preparing them to help change minds in their communities by building platforms for dialogue and connection where tension and separation exist.

Development

Our work in development has not always been recognized by all, but the volume of our programmes and the nature of our network have proved over the past decades that we have a vast potential contribution to make, and our resources are unparalleled.

Our work in disaster risk reduction has been strengthened year-after-year as a fully recognized core business, to which our network has not only added value but contributed to two major global agendas: the Hyogo Framework for Action and negotiations on Climate Change.
On the health front, we have made widespread, community-rooted contributions to the Millennium Development Goals, through: our successful campaigns on malaria, HIV and tuberculosis and associated advocacy efforts to bridge the epidemic divide; our long-standing commitment on water sanitation and associated advocacy efforts to address the imbalance between sanitation and water; and our lasting involvement in the face of food crises and associated advocacy efforts to address its root causes and chronic dimensions.

Our approach to sustainable development is through strengthening community resilience, which we do by helping people to be as healthy as possible, to prevent or reduce risks where they can, and to enjoy better and safer living that also respects the environment and contributes to a community in which people are able to lead happy and productive lives.

This is perhaps where we can make the largest contribution to changing the future.

Auxiliary role

While our National Societies have made huge strides in assuring their own growth and development, particularly in the past few years, we have perhaps individually and collectively overlooked one area that is unique to our organization and that holds enormous potential – our auxiliary status.

One important way to use our humanitarian diplomacy to expand our reach and impact on people lives is to grow our auxiliary relations with governments.

This will include strengthening our legal base for freedom of access, for freedom of decision and freedom of movement in country to reach the most vulnerable people. It will include pressing for stronger disaster laws. It will include full participation in decision making on humanitarian and development decisions, and allocation of a percentage of the humanitarian/development related flow of resources from internal and external sources.

We can influence so much more positive change if we fully embrace this role.

Innovation and technology

To keep pace in a fast-changing environment, we must remain committed to innovation and embrace technology. The 2013 World Disaster Report considers how technologies are already influencing the future of our humanitarian business. There is no doubt that traditional humanitarian players such as the Red Cross and the Red Crescent are directly challenged by new actors, including the technology companies themselves who can directly connect a private donor to a family affected by a disaster, effectively bypassing the role taken so far by humanitarian organizations. Another noteworthy shift is that beneficiaries can comment positively or negatively in real time on how aid is being provided, through social media.

We have applied mobile phone technology to various models of community engagement, as part of the beneficiary communication approach as well as to support
surveys for health programmes. The cash transfer model powered by technologies and partnerships has also opened unprecedented opportunities for the way we carry out our humanitarian and development business.

Along the same lines, we could envision need-based transfers from diaspora groups, and revise our overall cross-border fundraising, promotional and advocacy patterns, mechanisms and channels, to reach directly people we want to reach.

The most important opportunity that technology presents is the chance to channel the growth in human compassion. Today, this is expressed not just in caring for family, friends and neighbours, but also through visualising the pain of someone’s misfortune at the furthest corners of the world. As a result of the revolution in communications, the suffering of others reaches our screens at the ever-increasing speed of our internet connection. As ordinary people become more and more aware of our globalized interdependence, they are moved to help.

Furthermore, they are no longer waiting for someone to tell them what to do. They are making their own causes and joining up with others to make common cause. Their solidarity is expressed at the click of a button across national and institutional borders. This is not just about electronic donations, but equally about the spread of ideas.

**The digital divide**

This is perhaps an area that requires some catching-up. We have not done enough to bridge the digital divide, which is critical for the scale and quality of future humanitarian action. Humanitarian organizations, governments and the private sector must invest in providing equal access to technology, information and knowledge.

The digital divide is most pronounced in the most disaster-prone countries. People with the least access to technology are also the most vulnerable to disasters. In many parts of the world, first responders have little or no access to life-saving information and technologies such as early warning systems and mobile phones. This unequal access compromises people’s ability to prepare for, survive, and recover from disasters.

We urge humanitarian organizations, governments, the private sector and technology companies to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable people and their communities through innovative partnerships, policies and investments in technology.

**Competition and partnerships**

*In a fast-changing and highly competitive world, to stand still is to go backwards, and this is evident in the emergency response business where there are thousands of additional and new actors. They include NGOs, the military, private sector companies, and government agencies themselves.*

Should we feel threatened by competition? In answering this, we must consider the perspective of those we seek to represent and help – that is, poor and vulnerable people. Seen from their viewpoint, the increased number of actors indicates greater
interest and capacity to help them. It gives them more options and greater choice. Surely that must be a good thing.

Furthermore, if competition among service providers also stimulates improvement, innovation and greater efficiency, that too must be a good thing. Therefore, we should approach with a positive mindset the challenge of competition in an increasingly crowded humanitarian marketplace. We need to work on optimizing our strategic advantage for greater efficiency and effectiveness – professionalize our volunteers, promote our humanitarian principles and values widely, strengthen our legal presence and acceptability, and ensure adherence to our systems of accountability.

Coordination – working together as the IFRC

Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers live in the heart of communities, large and small, almost everywhere in the world. No other humanitarian or development organization has this level of access, can mobilize so many people, commands such trust, or has such an influence on good behaviours and practices in health, disaster risk reduction, resilience-building and the promotion of a culture of non-violence and peace.

Yet we are still not able to capitalise on this access, trust and influence. I believe that our collective ability to take full control of our strengths and expand our business is being hindered by the ways in which we work today.

Instead of one strong international federation comprised of 189 equal partners who enjoy full sovereignty in their domestic context, we too often present ourselves to the world as individual and competing businesses, loosely affiliated to one another, and operating in a semi-coordinated manner.

We can be disparate and disjointed, missing opportunities to pool our resources and carry out joint assessments. We do not work together enough to help a host National Society negotiate a niche with its government to address vulnerability in the areas of its expertise, or share the responsibility for bilateral or consortia implementation across the IFRC network and secretariat structures in a closely-coordinated way that grows the business for that host National Society and its partners.

If we are serious about growing our business in a way that allows the global network to reach more vulnerable people, and helps individual National Societies to become stronger and more self-sufficient, we must improve our ways of working together and coordinating.

The success or failure of a much more effectively coordinated and holistic approach depends on the collective will of the membership to reject competition and protectionism in the interest of eliminating gaps, overlaps, and duplication of effort.
Working together as a Movement

It is also important to push ahead with an examination of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and how the ICRC and IFRC can work together better.

It is vital that the two halves of the Movement move forward with an agenda to study how best to reframe our structure. For example, I would have liked to see operational relations fully merged and governed by a Board whose membership comes from the two of us in equal numbers, adding a few co-opted members from the National Societies. The ICRC could then concentrate on the big issues of international humanitarian law and protection, and the IFRC could focus its energies on National Society capacity building, representation, and the promotion of National Society activities and achievements.

Governance

This is a membership organization where each member is sovereign, and Governing Board decisions are implemented through the good will and team spirit of the membership. The quality of governance is critical to the success of the collective.

The changing world may place heavy expectations on the Governing Board. Both the nature of vulnerability, and the way it is addressed, are changing fast. We need to understand the trends conceptually and address big global issues as they arise to position the IFRC network far enough into the future.

To influence government and corporate leadership and global opinion leaders, our Governing Board members’ professional competence and senior experience carry a lot of weight. The governance of our member National Societies may require closer support from the IFRC leadership to deal with global challenges that may affect vulnerabilities in their own countries.

We can lead by example in combating ‘establishment’ oriented decision-making in both governance and management, and developing more agile and collaborative operating models that focus on equitable representation and participation.

Resource mobilization – funding in the future

The Red Cross and the Red Crescent is universally acknowledged to be a public good but we know that this does not translate into being fully funded from the public purse.

While we must redouble efforts to get governments to remember our auxiliary role and contribute more, our independent strength lies in the diverse nature of the support we can attract. And while we seek to maximise funding from other donors, we must be wary of dependence on them. This is because most such funding is time-limited, conditioned on specific projects and activities, involves high transaction costs for administering and reporting, and is subject to changing donor priorities.
Some of the priority areas I believe hold the most financial promise are:

Development funding

Despite our organization’s significant contributions to development programming, our cumulative experience, and our volunteer and community capacities, we have been unable to acquire the funding necessary to match our global potential. We absolutely must develop a better understanding and clearer framing and positioning of our role in development to help us access key income streams from governments, multilaterals, corporations and major donors. We must also fully explore the options for developing income-generating projects and social entrepreneurship. In this area, we have underplayed our potential and must ramp up the effort.

Monetization of services

The monetization of our services, by which I mean persuading those customers who can afford it to pay for what we provide to them, may be a promising way forward for National Societies to generate revenue that can be used to sustain them and to bring in investment to further develop their services.

Many examples already exist, including the provision of hospital and ambulance services, and first aid training. The notion can be extended to other personalized health promotion, health care, and social service provision. Partnerships with insurance companies may be worth exploring. Under schemes for managing disaster risks, families that are in a position to afford insurance can co-share the costs of recovery from disasters and mitigating risk.

We need to develop well-tailored community-based models that can be scaled up as business propositions, which are not only viable from a business perspective but can catalyse more investment into risk and vulnerability reduction.

Of course, our priority concern is with the most poor and vulnerable people who are usually not able to pay for services. But the monetization of our services for those who can afford to pay can grow the overall assistance sector, both by bringing in investment and by promoting equity in access through subsidizing services for those in need.

In summary, the crucial challenge for the financing of Red Cross and Red Crescent services is how to do this in a way that moves us away from a one-sided charity dependency model to one that is about investing for an inclusive future. In such a scenario, the monetary contribution of the giver and the enterprise of the receiver combine to create added value. This would enable poor people to enter the real economy and help to create growth, while gaining dignity by reducing their dependence on handouts. Can we be a catalyst to make that happen?
Additional funding sources

The nature of competition from public and corporate giving is evolving. Today, though corporate social responsibility is growing, its application is haphazard, and in some cases questionable, in terms of who benefits and at what cost. The IFRC should help set standards and norms for corporate social responsibility partnerships, to achieve greater consistency and value for the humanitarian sector.

People in diaspora, other individuals, and corporate organizations have shown an interest in directly funding beneficiaries through civil society or even through individual intermediaries. Advances in technology will certainly facilitate the growth of such direct channels in the future.

Technology, through social media, also opens the doors to connecting openly and transparently to the public and in new ways with our future donors – today’s young people.

How will the IFRC fare as an organization in the changing world? Can it make a difference?

Of course there are many options for the future growth of this great organization. We have so much to carry us forward to continued success, to reach even greater heights and make even more of a difference. We are able to do this because we have a very good base and a big opportunity to expand our base. I think it is worth stating what makes us a special organization as we reflect on how to become a better one.

We are the origin of universally accepted and adhered to humanitarian principles.

The IFRC is a globally accepted, recognized and respected organization that can function under all circumstances, including with all conflicting parties in a country and internationally.

It is an organization that enjoys legal status nationally and internationally.

It has a national presence from the grassroots level up, and global connectivity as a worldwide network.

We have known and accepted systems, standards, norms and, most importantly, millions of committed volunteers and staff around the world.

However, we cannot sit on our laurels; we have to make improvements, changes and adjustments to grow into and with the changing world.

What I have shared with you in this section are my thoughts on what can make us better and more prepared for the challenges of a changing world.

To make changes and adjustments we need visionary leadership at all levels from National Society branches to our global governance. We need creative, innovative and flexible management that can trust and entrust; people with skills, com-
mitment and loyalty; shared technology; robust humanitarian diplomacy that includes information and communication capacity; and functioning systems of accountability.

I also believe that our future role, relevance and potential will be better realized if we make a considerable effort to:

- Better capture the interest and energy of our young people, giving them the chance to become agents of positive change.
- Grow our corps of volunteers in every country in the world.
- Promote and use our unique auxiliary status.
- Position, promote and increase our space in the development area.
- Make innovation the norm.
- Apply new technologies better and close the digital divide.
- Coordinate more, partner more, and collaborate.
- Update our governance and leadership models.
- Diversify, amplify and innovate our funding approach.

I believe that it is time for radical change in how we work and live together and how we address our world’s vulnerabilities and its aspirations, and I believe the IFRC is prepared to be this future.
From the beginning of my tenure as Secretary General, I was focused on the notion of change and on how we, as an established and immense multicultural and international organization, needed to make more room for change, make it a part of who we are, how we think, what we do and how we do it. I wanted us not only to be prepared to respond to the changing world and its growing demands but able to anticipate future changes. In other words, I did not want change to define us as an old, established, inflexible and heavy institution but as one that was able to take the great strengths and wisdom of our collective experience and weave a permanent element of innovation into the way we approach our daily work.

The strategy we developed to guide our organization until 2020 was infused with this concept of the process of change – embracing our past, adapting to current circumstances, and preparing for an unknown future. We continue to develop our core operational competencies in the daily work to ‘Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disasters and crises’. We ‘Enable healthy and safe living’ through our vast array of development services which hold tremendous opportunity for growth and impact but require enhanced profiling and access to increased funding streams. And finally, in terms of future service delivery, we have been building on the concept of ‘Promoting social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace’ – a modern adaptation of our Fundamental Principles to deal with societal challenges which have gained in force and prevalence over the past few years and will continue to grow as civilizational transformation evolves.

We recognized that, to meet the challenges of the future, those we anticipate as well as those of which we are still unaware, we needed to look at ourselves as an organization and critically examine how we work and how we need to change in order to transform ourselves. We began by focusing on ‘Building strong National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies’, providing the tools, resources and support systems necessary to ensure solid foundations for future growth, sustainability and accountability. The results have given life to a new power dynamic within our own IFRC, a healthier, more equitable power sharing between National Societies from the North accustomed to a more prominent leadership role and National Societies of the South, recently coming into their own through economic development and assuming an organizational confidence with an equal voice.

Perhaps the second most significant change we have instituted is our organizational commitment to ‘Pursue humanitarian diplomacy to prevent and reduce vulnerability in a globalized world’. By working closely with National Societies to revitalise their relationships with their governments, embrace their auxiliary status, and develop external partnerships, we are empowering individual members to become more independent and, at the same time, stronger partners in an organization that can wield tremendous influence on humanitarian and development issues at global level.
Finally, looking at how we work together as members of the IFRC – and asking ourselves if we are working as effectively as possible? This is perhaps one area of work that will never be completed. It is an ongoing pursuit of excellence in how we operate that should continue to challenge us each day.

While we have made great strides in improving coordination and cooperation with our Movement partners, there is room for improvement in better defining roles and responsibilities so that effort is not duplicated and precious resources are not lost in inefficiencies. We must push ourselves further to uncover the many opportunities we have to work together in partnerships and alliances, and create centres of excellence and resource centres that build on our individual strengths and capacities as National Societies and ultimately make us stronger as a whole.

Ensuring responsible and visionary leadership, good governance, and transparent accountability are essential elements of any well-functioning organization and must assume positions of critical importance in each of our member organizations and within its secretariat. We must dare to make the changes necessary to ensure that the services we provide, the people who provide them, and the manner in which they are provided not only comply with our own organizational values and principles but also set a standard for the future of an organization built to serve the most vulnerable people wherever they are. Being present in virtually every community in the world, an organization that, through our staff and volunteers, is on the frontlines of the changing world, we are uniquely capable of identifying the changing nature of vulnerabilities; and I believe that today we are better equipped to respond as a stronger, more diversified yet unified organization.
The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

**Humanity** The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

**Impartiality** It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

**Neutrality** In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

**Independence** The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

**Voluntary service** It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

**Unity** There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

**Universality** The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.