

MEETING OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES IN ARAB COUNTRIES

This meeting took place from 15 to 20 February 1971 at the headquarters of the Lebanese Red Cross, in Beirut, and was attended by the delegates of twelve National Societies; the League was represented by its Secretary-General, Mr. Beer, assisted by Mr. Meurant and Mr. Kiamouche, while the ICRC was represented by Mr. Gaillard and Mr. Maunoir, Assistant Directors, and by Mr. Modoux, Head of Information.

Mrs. Issa-el-Khoury, President of the Lebanese Red Cross, was elected President of the Conference, and she delivered an address of welcome at the inaugural meeting. She was followed by Mr. Beer and Mr. Maunoir, who conveyed the good wishes of the two international Red Cross bodies. At the subsequent working meetings a number of statements were made, in particular by Mr. Beer on the future of the National Societies in the region, by Mr. Gaillard on the protection of the emblem, by Mr. Maunoir on the relations of the ICRC with the Red Crescent Societies in the occupied territories, and by Mr. Modoux on the principle of neutrality.

Mrs. Saab, of the Lebanese Red Cross, gave an account of the development of international humanitarian law; this gave rise to an interesting discussion in the course of which the representatives of the ICRC indicated the fundamental aspects of the problems on the agenda of the Conferences of Red Cross Experts (The Hague) and of Government Experts (Geneva).

The meeting ended with the adoption of several recommendations: two of these are related to the activities of the International Committee in the Middle East; one recalls the respect due to the emblem; and another one invites the National Societies to support the efforts of the ICRC in the field of international humanitarian law. A further recommendation takes note of the publication of an Arabic version of the school textbook "The Red Cross and My

Country ", prepared with the assistance of the Lebanese Red Cross, and invites the National Societies represented at Beirut to adopt it and to use their good offices so that their governments may contribute towards its financing.

Reference should also be made to other important questions that were raised: emergency assistance; preventive measures to obviate disasters; the activities of young people and the need to establish new youth sections and organize regional youth camps.

The next meeting of Societies in Arab countries will be opened in Baghdad on 5 February 1972, and a training seminar, similar to the one held recently in Dar-es-Salaam, is planned by the League and will take place, probably in Tunis, next year.

Japan

Last year an international seminar under the name " Konni-chiwa 70 " was organized by the junior section of the Japanese Red Cross. For a month delegates from eighteen National Societies of South-East Asia and the Pacific, as well as League and ICRC representatives, took part in the seminar. The programme was designed to afford opportunities to experience, think, question and compare, and the general theme was " What are the responsibilities and duties of youth to the country and to the world community? What can youth do through the Red Cross? "

The work proceeded in four phases: 1) four groups of the youthful participants examined the problems of communication, education, neutrality and personal values; 2) written questions were submitted on various subjects by the young people, and qualified persons replied in group discussions; 3) young people from each country drew up Red Cross action projects which they would put into effect on returning home; 4) six groups visited many local sections of the Japanese Red Cross. Finally, conclusions were drawn from their experience, a final report was issued and plans for action were devised.