

THE MOVEMENT IN SEVILLE

(8 May 1992)

In adopting Resolution 10 at its session of 27 November 1987 in Rio de Janeiro, the Council of Delegates decided that the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement should take part in the Universal Exposition planned for the months of April to October 1992 in Seville, Spain. The decision was confirmed by the Council two years later. The Exposition is a world fair in which more than 100 countries, some 20 international organizations and a large number of multinational companies are represented. It is expected to attract about 18 million visitors. The Council saw that this would not only provide an exceptional opportunity to publicize the message and the humanitarian activities of the Movement over a six-month period, but would also be an ideal focal point for the celebration of World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day on 8 May 1992.

I. The Red Cross and Red Crescent Pavilion

The Movement's Pavilion stands in the Expo '92 grounds, on the island of Cartuja, alongside the pavilions of other international organizations. It was inaugurated on 19 April 1992, the Expositions's official opening day, by Mrs. Carmen Mestre Vergara, President of the Spanish Red Cross and General Commissioner of the pavilion. In her address, Mrs. Mestre noted that "the pavilion and its associated programmes will allow many visitors to find out what the Movement is doing around the world for human life and dignity".

A tall mast, in the red and white colours of the Movement, and visible from all parts of the Expo site, draws attention to the building, which is audacious in design, deliberately lopsided, with sloping walls, to symbolize a world destabilized by war and disasters. Inside, the pavilion is divided into four areas where advanced audiovisual technology, using inclined planes and screens, mirrors and lights, brings the visitors literally face to face with natural disasters and armed conflicts, before presenting the principles and the wide-range of activ-

ities carried out by the Movement's members both in time of war and in peacetime.

The emphasis is on the visitor's participation in the Movement's work. A space described as a "personalized information" area, equipped with computer terminals, enables the visitor to supply personal details, to indicate his or her intention to support the Red Cross or the Red Crescent, and to obtain information on how to become an active member. The data collected is sent by computer to the National Society in the visitor's home country. Using interactive video screens, the visitor can access extra information on ways in which he or she can work with the Movement.

The pavilion is staffed by four groups comprising a total of 450 young volunteers from 43 National Societies worldwide. They welcome visitors, act as guides with the pavilion, and illustrate the Movement's work through musical and theatrical performances on the Expo site — in short, they act as bearers of the Movement's message. This international volunteer programme is coordinated by the International Promotion Bureau (IPB), with the help of the Spanish Red Cross. It is sponsored by the Bayer Group of chemical and pharmaceutical companies.

In addition, first aid for the public at Expo '92 has been organized by the Spanish Red Cross, with five first-aid posts located at various points around the island, staffed by properly trained volunteers, and a river rescue service on the Guadalquivir.

II. World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day

On 8 May 1992, the leaders of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement called on the governments and peoples of all countries to "Unite against Disaster". Their appeal (*see below, p. 302*) was launched from the Palenque theatre, in the heart of the Expo '92 site, during a brief ceremony attended by the members of the Federation's Executive Council and by representatives of the ICRC, the Federation Secretariat and the Spanish Red Cross.

Following the opening address by Expo '92 General Commissioner Emilio Cassinello, the Chairman of the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, Dr. Ahmad Abu-Goura, pointed out that the context of the Universal Exposition was singularly appropriate for the celebration of the World Day of a Movement whose universality was one of its fundamental principles. Yet, he emphasized, the most important of these principles remained humanity, and he urged all

members of the Movement to “redouble their efforts so that the voice of humanity may be heard and heeded and lasting peace will finally prevail throughout the world”.

ICRC President Cornelio Sommaruga stated that, “with the help of governments and the support of the media, we must, in complete independence and neutrality, promote respect for the essential rules of humanity, in order to relieve the suffering of millions of victims”.

Mr. Mario Villarroel, President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, said that Expo '92 showed the way to the 21st century. But it would be an “empty” century without the spirit of humanity. “Progress will not bring peace unless men and women all over the world are able to lead decent lives.”

Both Presidents stressed the vital need to respect human life and dignity in wars and disasters, in order to save millions of lives and to prevent suffering in the years to come.

Mrs. Carmen Mestre, President of the Spanish Red Cross, declared: “Today, we must everywhere reaffirm that we intend to show solidarity with those in need”, and Mrs. Matilde Fernández, Spain's Minister of Social Welfare, paid tribute to the humanitarian work of the Movement.

This official ceremony, which formed the central link in a chain of events of the same kind organized all over the world, ended with a public performance of mime and music, entitled “The world of humanity”, presented by 100 Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers and by the 150-strong Bayer women's choir.
