

WELCOME SPEECH

12^a Conferenza Mediterranea della Croce Rossa e
Mezzaluna Rossa

- San Marino 25-28 Maggio 2015-

It is a pleasure to greet you on behalf of the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, and to wish you success in the efforts you make, here in San Marino, to advance the agenda of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

This is all the more important in light of the many and deeply serious humanitarian challenges before your National Societies – in the East, in the South, on the north shores and in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea.

In this turbulent period, it is more important than ever that we all honour and uphold the

Fundamental Principles of the Movement as the basis for our action and for our approach to those we serve.

I am glad to be able to tell you, National Societies of the Mediterranean Region, that the Fundamental Principles is the central theme for the 32nd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. We have selected that to underline their importance and modernity after fifty years from their adoption during the conference in Vienna and we believe that the Fundamental Principles is the essential glue that keeps us together as a Movement, and because they are the guarantee that we act in accordance with the highest ideals of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, at all times and in all locations.

At the *Mediterranean* Conference you have an important agenda before you, and to me as well as to the Standing Commission it is a source of

great satisfaction to see that you have set aside previous time to the subject of the next International Conference.

We in the Commission have made strenuous efforts, together with the ICRC and the International Federation, to “modernise” this event, and we believe we have succeeded. Of course all the traditional elements will be present: opening and closing, negotiation and adoption of resolutions and plenary debates. But there will be even more emphasis on workshops and space for side events, and by tweaking the programme, we have found space in it for a completely new element. This is called a “collaborative space”, and is meant to be a forum for directed discussion of some of the issues that challenge us as individual National Societies, as well as a Movement.

Meeting in the republic of San Marino is a special source of inspiration. Her ancient constitution and freedom, her constant guardianship of liberty and independence, and her contributions to the peaceful coexistence among nations is an example to follow. And much of the same can be said about the Red Cross Society of San Marino, which has had a disproportionate ability to influence the Movement and the institutions, especially through its dedication to International Humanitarian Law and other legal aspects of our work.

I want to remember that the President of the San Marino National Society, Judge Raimondo Fattori, has been for several years the Legal Advisor of the President of the Federation, participating in the most important statutory meetings of the Movement in the last thirty years. This conference would not have been possible without his immediate and enthusiastic acceptance of the

proposal which saw in frontline the unforgettable Professor Mamdouh Gabr, former Secretary General of the Egyptian Red Crescent, one of the most important member of our Movement recently deceased, man of wisdom and good sense, source of inspiration for all of us and in particular for the difficulties of collaboration and coexistence of the different souls of the Movement in the Mediterranean. Really a man of peace that the Standing Commission decided to honour with the Henry Dunant Medal, exceptionally awarded posthumously.

I can not conclude my welcome speech without underline the great work done by the Mediterranean Secretariat in Barcellona, not only for the preparation of this conference but also for all the activities that, from a conference to another, gives a sense and a follow up to our cooperation. Without the Spanish Red Cross that have supported the intuition of his Catalan

section, at that time chaired by Marta Corachan, now Vice President of the Mediterranean Cooperation Center, the Secretariat would not have existed during all these years, the Mediterranean youths would not have met during the last ten editions of Atlantis and we would not be here today.

Thanks to all the partners and organisers, thanks to all of you for participating and looking forward to sharing further thoughts about this in the coming two days.

Thank you for your attention.

Massimo Barra