

Past and future events

IFRC President visits the British and Italian Red Cross Societies

At the end of May 2012 the President of the IFRC, Tadateru Konoé, accompanied by the Director of the IFRC Europe Zone, Anitta Underlin, paid an official visit to two Red Cross Societies in the Europe Zone, the British Red Cross and the Italian Red Cross.

Cash from **British Red Cross** donors kick-started work to rebuild lives devastated by last year's Japanese tsunami, President Konoé said. Speaking during his visit to London, he said the generosity of international donors had brought forward Japanese Red Cross programmes that are helping people recover after the disaster.

During his visit to British Red Cross headquarters on 30 May, Mr Konoé also paid tribute to murdered Red Cross worker Khalil Dale who was kidnapped and killed in Pakistan earlier this year. Mr Konoé said he was very sad to hear of the Briton's death – but added “we must be prepared for this kind of eventuality”.

To read more:

[Blog](#) / Global goodwill boosted recovery for tsunami victims

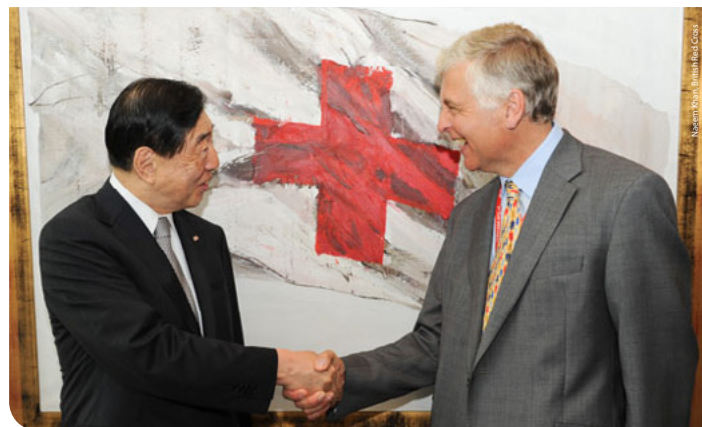
[Web story](#) / President Konoé visits the Italian Red Cross as the country shows its resilience following second earthquake

Mr Konoé, who has been Federation president since 2009, said the Red Cross has to adapt to a changing world with more natural disasters caused by climate change and more complex political situations. He said distinctions between conflicts, peacetime and natural disasters were becoming blurred

– which would challenge the way the Red Cross movement helped people in crisis. He also predicted global financial problems would make things more difficult for the Red Cross, in Europe and elsewhere.

Just a few days later, President Konoé was in Rome, Italy, to meet the **Italian Red Cross** leadership. The visit came only two days after a 5.8-magnitude earthquake – the second in 10 days – struck the region of Emilia Romagna, north-eastern Italy leaving 19 people dead, 350 injured and rendering more than 15,000 residents homeless. While visiting the site of another major earthquake – the one that jolted the town of L'Aquila in April 2009 – with the Extraordinary Commissioner of the Italian Red Cross, Francesco Rocca, and Ms Underlin, Mr Konoé mentioned the crucial role of National Societies in keeping affected communities together after a traumatic event such as an earthquake. During his mission to Italy, Mr Konoé also had the opportunity to visit the Villa Maraini Foundation, one of Italy's most advanced centres for drug users and people living with HIV, which last month signed a memorandum of understanding with the Italian Red Cross and the IFRC on a Red Cross Red Crescent training and research partnership on substance abuse.

The mission of the IFRC President to the British and Italian Red Cross proved important in reaffirming a strong and constant dialogue between the IFRC and these two National Societies, and marked a milestone in the spirit of togetherness that binds them in their shared humanitarian mission.



Tadateru Konoé, IFRC President, and Sir Nicholas Young, British Red Cross Chief Executive, during President Konoé's visit to the British Red Cross at the end of May 2012.



Tadateru Konoé, IFRC President, Francesco Rocca, Extraordinary Commissioner of the Italian Red Cross, Massimo Barra, member of the Standing Commission of the Red Cross Red Crescent, and Gabriele Mori, President of Villa Maraini Foundation.