

# ***In the Red Cross and Red Crescent World***

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*THE RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT  
AT EXPO '92 IN SEVILLE*

## **MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF THE FUTURE**

To mark the participation of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in the events commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Meeting of Two Worlds at the Seville world fair, *Mrs. Carmen Mestre Vergara*, President of the Spanish Red Cross and General Commissioner of the Movement's Pavilion at Expo '92, has kindly agreed to write a few words on the significance of Expo '92 and of the Red Cross and Red Crescent pavilion for dissemination of knowledge of the Movement's principles and activities, and on how Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers can meet the present and future challenges facing the Movement.

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*I am very grateful to the International Review of the Red Cross for giving me the opportunity to address a message to all its readers on the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's participation in the events marking the 500th anniversary of the Meeting of Two Worlds, in particular Expo '92 in Seville.*

*This is a once-in-a-lifetime chance, not only for Spain and the Spanish Red Cross, but also for the Movement, whose pavilion in Seville will familiarize millions of visitors from all five continents with the full range of our humanitarian activities. It is also an ideal occasion for spreading knowledge of the Fundamental Principles.*

*The Movement's pavilion makes a clear statement: in a world in which injustice, abandonment and conflict are commonplace, there is still room for hope. The Age of Discovery we are commemorating heralded a period of unprecedented scientific progress; the effects on overall human development were positive, but many have since found themselves excluded from that process, the victims of poverty and neglect.*

*The pavilion is also an unequivocal symbol: it represents the world in which the Red Cross works and the Movement's compassion for the suffering*

of others. This is why the sound of a heartbeat can be heard on entering. The pavilion has two distinct sections. The visitor first walks in darkness through an area where he is brought face to face with war and disaster. State-of-the-art audiovisual technology is used to show devastating images of volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, floods and other natural disasters, and later scenes of war and the victims of conflict. The final images highlight the tragic plight of refugees, displaced populations and people forced to flee the fighting.

But all is not darkness and desolation. The visitor then proceeds into the second section, which is sun-filled and wide open. It focuses on the activities of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, giving a practical view of the Movement's principles and the people who work to achieve its ideal of solidarity. Volunteers from all over the world are there to greet the visitors and show them around; they embody the human warmth which is an integral part of each of the Movement's activities.

Our efforts to spread knowledge of the Movement's message are prompted by one paramount concern: to serve, to provide impartial assistance to those enduring misfortune or want, loneliness or hopelessness, the effects of accident or illness. We try to make up for the negative aspects of the human condition, standing by those in distress and supporting anyone who is engaged in the struggle for a more humane and just world.

The Movement can really be understood only through the work of its volunteers, the men and women who, guided by the Fundamental Principles and each in his or her own way, put our words into action. They are deterred by no considerations of ideology or class, financial status, religious or political beliefs. They do not ask who is suffering, they simply set out to solve the problem, working impartially for all those in need.

Seville is the best possible focal point for the dissemination of our ideals of fellowship and humanitarian action, both of which can be met thanks to the endeavours of all citizens, in particular those who so generously give of their time and efforts to help others.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the volunteers, the sponsors and the Movement's leaders, without whom this ambitious project — our response to the problems of today's world and, most importantly, to the challenges of the future — would not have been possible.

**Carmen Mestre Vergara**

*President of the Spanish Red Cross  
and General Commissioner of the International  
Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's Pavilion  
at Expo '92 in Seville*