

generation who founded the League in 1919 may have hoped that the First World War was the war to end all wars, and certainly those who adopted the League's motto in 1960, *per humanitatem ad pacem*, hoped that the Red Cross and Red Crescent, through its actions to promote health and social welfare and to assist the victims of all kinds of disaster, would bring peace to the world. To meet the continuing challenge arising from resort to force and damage to the environment, the Federation and its member National Societies will remain steadfast in carrying out our common mission, with the ICRC, to protect life and health, uphold human dignity and relieve suffering amongst the growing numbers of vulnerable people, in accordance with our fundamental principles".

The President of the ICRC, Mr Cornelio Sommaruga, and the President of the Federation, Mr Mario Villarroel Lander, then gave the addresses published below.

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL
COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS,
MR CORNELIO SOMMARUGA**

I should like to start by extending to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies the best wishes of the International Committee on this its 75th anniversary. I congratulate the Federation, as well as its Secretariat and all the member National Societies, on the tremendous amount of work achieved in all areas within its purview, especially in the development and promotion, at all times, of the National Societies' manifold humanitarian activities.

The Statutes of our Movement remind us that the mission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent is to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found, to protect life and health and ensure respect for human dignity. By so doing, in accordance with the principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence, the components of this universal Movement, to which we are so proud to belong, are helping in their own way to promote and maintain peace.

The Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols — all of which came into being at the ICRC's initiative — constitute an extraordinary expression of humane values, a heritage entrusted by the Red Cross to the international community. The International Federation and its member Societies well know the importance that the ICRC attaches to thorough and consistent work to promote knowledge of the principles and rules of the law of Geneva, laid down to preserve fundamental human rights during armed conflicts.

This happy occasion, which comes at a time when signs of a worldwide decline in respect for human dignity give serious cause for concern, is an opportunity for me to make an earnest, twofold appeal:

- *I call on the Federation and the 162 National Societies to engage, to the best of their abilities, in prevention by dissemination, firmly committing themselves to a culture of non-violence, tolerance and solidarity, and*
- *through these same National Societies I call upon the governments of the 185 States party to the Geneva Conventions to take seriously their pledge to respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law.*

The dedication evidenced today must constantly be renewed by the whole Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement; it must unite all of us in a fresh spirit of honesty, professionalism and creativity. It is tragically pointless to be united and universal if the Movement fails to be effective. But it cannot be effective unless we know what is expected of us, what specific task is assigned to each one of us. We must know the clear division of labour between the various partners involved in humanitarian endeavour.

To be sure, the Movement must grow more united and universal day by day, but it must also become more effective! The world needs us and it must be able to count on a Movement capable of meeting the great humanitarian challenges while respecting the fundamental principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

May each of us — the International Federation, the National Societies and the ICRC — rise to meet these challenges, each according to our calling and specific capacity.

Vive valeque!

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL
FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES,
MR MARIO VILLARROEL LANDER**

On the threshold of the year 2000, the solution to major present-day problems and respect for the universal values on which humanitarian action is founded are interlinked. No sustainable progress in protecting human life, alleviating suffering, combating hunger and disease and promoting détente and cooperation can be achieved unless such efforts are combined with measures to safeguard human dignity.

Clearly this new awareness and this new reality, this change of purpose and energy must be fostered. The interests and values of all humanity converge in