




**19TH** GENERAL  
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A GLOBAL NGO NETWORK  
FOR PRINCIPLED AND EFFECTIVE  
HUMANITARIAN ACTION



## Reaffirmation of Principles and Standards

Expected adoption by consensus by General Assembly  
20 March 2024

## Reaffirmation of Principles and Standards

The General Assembly hereby reaffirms the commitment of its members to a set of principles and standards essential for principled and effective humanitarian response. The commitments, initially adopted individually upon joining ICVA, were collectively reaffirmed in 2021

The core documents encapsulate these principles and standards include:

- The [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief](#)
- [Principles of Partnership](#)
- The [ICVA GA 2018 Motion to Action on PSEA](#), and the [Statement of Commitment on Eliminating Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN and Non-UN Personnel](#)
- [ICVA Commitment and Motion to Action on Climate and Environment](#)
- [Sphere Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#) and the Core Humanitarian Standard.

The ICVA membership aspires to be a network of NGOs recognised for the quality and accountability of their work. Members are strongly encouraged to consistently demonstrate a profound commitment to:

- Upholding the Humanitarian Principles
- Cultivating agile and effective partnerships
- Preventing sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA)
- Addressing the impact of climate change on humanitarian action
- Ensuring Quality and Accountability in humanitarian action.

The principles and standards are essential for principled and effective humanitarian action as they:

- Emphasize the values of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence.
- Provide a framework for meeting the basic needs of crisis-affected populations.
- Encourage coordination and collaboration among humanitarian actors.

All ICVA members have committed to uphold these humanitarian principles and standards as part of the membership criteria. During the latest reaffirmation process in 2021, or upon joining ICVA network, members have attested to their commitment to these principles and standards, providing tangible examples of how they demonstrate this commitment

These principles reflect the commitment to enhancing the effectiveness of humanitarian action through partnerships and require a steadfast commitment to humanitarian principles, coupled with a demonstrated focus on quality and accountability in humanitarian action.

ICVA's role is not in monitoring or enforcing accountability to these principles or standards, but rather, in supporting members to develop their capacity to put these into practice. ICVA will support its members to uphold these humanitarian principles and standards by providing training and resources on humanitarian principles and standards; facilitating dialogue and collaboration among humanitarian actors; and advocating for the implementation of humanitarian principles and standards. Both ICVA and its members should continually strive for ways to improve the quality and accountability of their work. These humanitarian principles and standards serve as a basis for field practices and inform policy setting and advocacy efforts.

## **Why these commitments?**

### **1. Upholding Humanitarian Standards : [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief](#)**

Established in 1992 the Code of Conduct stands as a cornerstone for humanitarian organizations, providing a framework to ensure principled and effective disaster relief. This document outlines ten core principles and includes three annexes with recommendations to governments of affected states, donor governments and intergovernmental organizations.

At the heart of all humanitarian action lie the fundamental principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence- collectively known as the [Humanitarian Principles](#). Rooted in international humanitarian law, these principles have garnered endorsement from the UN and are further emphasized in both the Code of Conduct and in the Core humanitarian Standard.

While ICVA does not mandate for its members to sign the code, it strongly encourages them to showcase their commitment to these principles across all activities. By adhering to these standards, humanitarian organizations contribute to the shared goal of fostering principled and effective humanitarian action globally.

### **2. Commitment to Effective Humanitarian Partnerships: Embracing the [Principles of Partnership](#)**

ICVA has been at the forefront of fostering collaboration within the humanitarian community through its instrumental role in developing the Global Humanitarian Platform (GHP), a forum uniting NGOs, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and UN agencies. To solidify the concept of partnership ICVA championed the endorsement of the Principles of Partnership in 2007. These principles rooted in the values of equality, transparency, results orientation responsibility, and complementarity, aim to elevate the effectiveness of humanitarian action. Recognizing diversity as an asset these principles encourage the establishment and nurturing of robust partnership.

ICVA urges all its members to apply these Principles of Partnership within their organizations. The principles serve as a guiding framework as they foster equal, constructive, and transparent engagement among various stakeholders, including governments, academia, the private sector and affected populations.

As the humanitarian sector undergoes transformation with an increasing number of diverse range of actors, the Principles of Partnership remain pivotal. They play a crucial role in initiative, developing, implementing and reviewing partnerships, emphasizing the need for equity in all collaborative efforts. In essence, ICVA stands as a proponent for a more equitable and inclusive humanitarian landscape through the steadfast application of these Principles of Partnership.

### **3. A pledge to protect: ICVA's [Commitment and Motion to Action on Prevention of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation and Sexual Harassment](#) :**

The prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) by aid workers has long been a paramount concern for ICVA. In December 2006, various UN agencies and NGOs endorsed the [Statement of Commitment on Eliminating Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN and Non-UN personnel](#).

ICVA strongly urges its members to support this pivotal statement, which outlines the ten crucial steps organizations must take to prevent and address SEA perpetrated by their staff, in conjunction with the [IASC Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse](#)

Building on this commitment, at the ICVA 17<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in March 2018, ICVA members endorsed a commitment to safeguard the communities in which they operate and their employees from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment. This commitment necessitates that both the ICVA secretariat and ICVA members establish robust systems to prevent, detect, and respond to instances of abuse and misconduct. In reaffirming this commitment, ICVA and its members stand united in their resolve to create a safer and more respectful humanitarian landscape.

#### **4. ICVA's [Commitment and motion to action on climate and environment](#)**

In May 2021, at the 18<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, ICVA members formally adopted a commitment and motion to action on climate and the environment. Recognising the imminent threats these crises posed by these crises, ICVA has prioritised their inclusion in its 2030 strategy, underscoring its dedication to addressing these critical issues.

This commitment signifies ICVA's unwavering commitment to adopting a flexible and context-aware approach, acknowledging the pivotal role of humanitarian organisations in responding to climate change. As a pivotal step in this commitment, ICVA has officially endorsed the [Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organisations](#). By doing so ICVA establishes a clear vision and principles that guide humanitarian action in the face of the climate and environment crises.

ICVA encourages its members to individually consider signing the Charter, demonstrating a realistic commitment to measure its implementation. Through the adoption of this Commitment, ICVA and its members affirm their active role in addressing climate and environmental crises, not only in the programmes they implement but also in their operational practices. This initiative represents a collective effort within the ICVA network to contribute meaningfully to the global response to these urgent challenges.

#### **5. Ensuring Quality and Accountability in humanitarian action.**

Ensuring quality and accountability in humanitarian action is a paramount objective for ICVA, with a focus on utilizing key frameworks such as the [Core Humanitarian Standard \(CHS\)](#) and the [Sphere Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#).

The CHS delineates nine commitments that organizations can and should undertake to provide people affected by crises or vulnerability with quality, effective, and accountable support and assistance.

In parallel, the Sphere Handbook, Sphere's pivotal publication, outlines minimum standards across four vital areas of humanitarian response: WASH, Food security and nutrition, Shelter and settlement, and Health. Recognized internationally, this handbook stands as a widely known tool for delivering a high-quality humanitarian response.

ICVA holds the expectation that its members adhere to the highest ethical standards in their interactions with affected populations. Both the CHS and the Sphere Handbook emphasize a people-centered approach when addressing the urgent survival needs of individuals affected by disaster and conflict.