This Policy Statement on Advocacy outlines the Australian Red Cross commitment to advocacy as a tool in advancing our mission to prevent and reduce vulnerability and to achieve our humanitarian goals.

Advocacy is a strategic method for achieving positive social change through persuasion and diplomacy, trust and relationship building, education and information, use of communication and media, and strategic partnership. Australian Red Cross advocacy is aimed at persuading and influencing decision makers and opinion leaders to act at all times in the interests of vulnerable people, and with full respect for fundamental humanitarian principles. Australian Red Cross is guided by the Federation Policy on Humanitarian Diplomacy (2009).

Persuading and influencing through humanitarian diplomacy is a responsibility that flows from: the fundamental principle of Humanity; our unique role in international humanitarian law and the dissemination of humanitarian principles; and the privileged access enjoyed by Australian Red Cross as auxiliary to the public authorities in the humanitarian field.

The core objectives that Australian Red Cross seeks to achieve in undertaking advocacy include:

- gaining public policy change and better outcomes for vulnerable people;
- achieving greater visibility and understanding of Red Cross humanitarian values and activities among decision makers and opinion leaders;
- increasing public support for the humanitarian mission of the Red Cross; and
- achieving a more tolerant society through espousing & defending humanitarian policies & positions.

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In persuading and influencing decision makers and opinion leaders, Australian Red Cross will:

- always focus on the needs and perspectives of vulnerable people;
- use a range of diplomatic tools and actions including engaging at times with partners outside the Movement;
- focus on our areas of expertise and draw on evidence and Australian Red Cross and Movement policies;
- leverage our auxiliary role.

Australian Red Cross advocacy will at all times be characterised by the following:

**Persuading decision makers and opinion leaders to act at all times in the interests of vulnerable people**

Advocacy by Australian Red Cross will primarily target decision makers and opinion leaders and focus on issues impacting on vulnerable people at the local, national and international levels.

**Employing appropriate diplomatic tools and actions**

Strong confidential humanitarian diplomacy includes trust building and confidential representations as well as advice to and liaison with decision makers. Public forms of advocacy, through information and education campaigns, will also be implemented where they complement our confidential diplomacy and are in the interests of vulnerable people.

Australian Red Cross will seek to avoid advocacy that brings the National Society into direct public conflict with the public authorities in order to avoid where possible, negative impact on our humanitarian work. Public advocacy will always focus on the humanitarian impact on vulnerable people and avoid partisan criticism of government positions.

**Ensuring that advocacy is based on evidence and Australian Red Cross and Movement policies**

Australian Red Cross advocacy will draw on organisational knowledge, experience and expertise, utilising rigorous research methodologies and processes. Advocacy will also draw on the policy knowledge and positions of Australian Red Cross and the Movement.

**Leveraging Red Cross status as auxiliary to the public authorities in the humanitarian field**

Australian Red Cross will leverage its auxiliary status to enhance its advocacy activities, influence policy decisions, direct resource allocation and generate positive social change for vulnerable people (Federation 2009d:1). The auxiliary role represents a distinctive partnership with public authorities in providing humanitarian services. While the role facilitates privileged access to decision makers, the principles of neutrality and independence provide guidance in ensuring that the relationship remains independent and non-partisan.

All Australian Red Cross people (staff, members, volunteers) have role to play in humanitarian diplomacy.

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