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ENGLISH only

**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE HOLY SEE
TO THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY
AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE**

**STATEMENT OF THE HOLY SEE,
AS DELIVERED BY MSGR. MARINKO ANTOLOVIĆ
AT THE 982nd MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

30 JANUARY 2014

**RE: ADDRESS BY H.E. MR. PETER MAURER, PRESIDENT OF THE
INTERNATION COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS**

Mr. Chairman,

The Delegation of the Holy See joins others in warmly welcoming H.E. Mr. Peter Maurer, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and thanks him for his address to the Permanent Council.

The thought of victims, destruction and suffering caused by numerous armed conflicts, unfortunately still ongoing in various parts of the world, including some of the neighboring regions of the OSCE area, causes deep anxiety and great sorrow. Therefore, it is precisely when armed conflicts erupt that the need for regulations to curb the brutality of warfare becomes urgent. Even more pressing is the need of charity and solidarity in the form of assistance and service to those affected by violence and cruelty. Such undertakings also keep faith alive in the deeper sentiments of human compassion for others who are to be seen as in need of care and human warmth. In fact, we are all called to work together so that war, hatred, senseless devastation and negation of the inherent dignity of the human person, in the first place of those who are victims, but also of those who immerse themselves in a denial of everything that makes them human, may disappear from the horizon of humanity.

Precisely for these reasons 150 years ago a great movement aiming to assist the victims of war, a movement which later took the name of the Red Cross, was born. *Inter arma caritas* was the motto of the International Committee of the Red Cross in its early days, an eloquent symbol of the Christian motivation that inspired the Genevan, Henri Dunant, who founded this admirable organization, inspired and guided by ideals which should never be forgotten.

Soon after the foundation of the Red Cross, other people of different cultures and beliefs shared this ideal and these efforts, to respond to this immense humanitarian challenge.

Mr. Chairman

With the passage of over 150 years, the values of universality, neutrality and independence of service have attracted the support of millions of volunteers all over the world, creating a vital network of humanity and solidarity in numerous contexts of war and conflict, and in many emergency situations.

Mr. Maurer, I am sure that the interest and an active involvement of the Holy See and the Catholic Church in humanitarian issues, shoulder to shoulder with others and often in the front line of assistance to the defenseless victims of wars, natural disasters or other tragic developments, are well known to you. I would like to assure you that the Catholic Church through its vast network of charity organizations, relief services and numerous other institutions will spare no efforts in assisting those least fortunate among our brothers and sisters who need assistance in perhaps the most difficult moments or periods of their lives.

In conclusion, as I join others in congratulating you Mr. Maurer and the International Committee of the Red Cross, I wish to express appreciation for a century and a half of service to humanity, in particular to victims of violent conflicts and war atrocities. Let us not grow tired of offering care and hope to men, women and children in need of compassion, maintaining their dignity and integrity at the centre of the Red Cross's humanitarian efforts.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman!