

Wednesday, 8 June 2005

Ms Sophie Power  
Senate Legal and Constitutional  
Legislation Committee

**By Email**

Dear Sophie

**RE: QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Please find below the responses to questions on notice. As previously discussed, corrections to the original testimony clarified that no answers were required to some purported questions.

**Inquiries made to the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Project regarding their International Disaster Response Law**

The focus of the International Disaster Response Laws, Rules and Principles (IDRL) Programme, conducted by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, concerns the study of legal and regulatory instruments at all levels (national, regional and international) relevant to international disaster response operations.

The Project Coordinator, Ms Victoria Bannon has advised that studies have found "many problems concerning general information sharing between government and relief organisations during international operations, but so far has not explored specific types of information such as the identity and health status of people affected, and the impact of Privacy legislation on this process".

**Inquiries made to American Red Cross regarding the response to September 11 attacks**

Inquiries with the American Red Cross indicate that there was a degree of information sharing between some State and Federal Government Departments and American Red Cross however it would appear that this was done informally.

Coordination between American Red Cross and other charitable organizations under a loose coalition called the "*United Services Group*" was facilitated by the inclusion of an "opt-out" clause in American Red Cross client assistance registration forms. The exchange of information was required to coordinate the provision of assistance and prevent duplication - it also had the benefit of allowing agencies to verify that a client had been impacted without their having to tell their story again.

American Red Cross also advised that there was some hesitancy in sharing specific and extensive service delivery information with government, for a variety of reasons, in the absence of a specific provision allowing this. In order to partly address this and related issues, the American Red Cross is spearheading a project called the Coordinated Assistance Network. It succeeds the United Services

Group mentioned above and would appear to include relevant Government agencies (eg. FEMA). No further information was forthcoming regarding this initiative

**Re inquiries with the Spanish Red Cross**

Nil response

Yours sincerely

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