

Poland

The Sixth National Congress of the Polish Red Cross was held in Warsaw from 10 to 15 May 1974. Such assemblies take place once in five years, and on those occasions the members of the Steering Committee are elected by the representatives of local committees.

At the opening meeting, Dr. Jan Rutkiewicz, President of the National Society, spoke about the numerous activities of the Polish Red Cross in the field of public health, international co-operation and the dissemination and development of international humanitarian law. He said that the Society had more than 4,800,000 members, and trained more than 500,000 a year in first aid and the preparation of medical teams. In 1973, 63,850 medical teams had rendered aid to approximately 1,700,000 persons.

Dr. Eric Martin, President of the ICRC, referred to the work which the International Committee was doing and expressed that institution's sincere good wishes to the Polish Red Cross. He dwelt on its successful activities in various spheres.

The following day saw the election of a new Steering Committee. Dr. Ryszard Brzozowski, Vice-Minister of Health, was elected Chairman.

At a ceremony held by the Polish Red Cross in honour of the President of the ICRC, on 14 May, Dr. Brzozowski presented the Society's medal of honour to Dr. Martin and also to Miss Françoise Perret, the delegate who accompanied him.

While in Warsaw, Dr. Martin was received by the Minister of Health, the Vice-Chairman of the Council of State and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, with whom he conferred about ICRC activities in Chile and the Middle East, the Diplomatic Conference scheduled to be held in Geneva next February, and the dissemination of the Geneva Conventions.

The ICRC President's visit to Warsaw took place in a cordial atmosphere. It should contribute to even closer links between the International Committee and the Polish Red Cross and Government authorities.