



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

Delegation to the United Nations

Check against delivery

**STATEMENT BY MR. BENJAMIN RUIZ RODAS
PRESIDENT OF THE EL SALVADOR RED CROSS
ON BEHALF OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION
OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES**

Thematic consultation on the Global Compact on Migration:
Addressing the drivers of migration, including adverse effects of climate change, natural disasters and human-made crises, through protection and assistance, sustainable development, poverty eradication, conflict prevention and resolution.
New York, 23 May 2017

Mr. Chairman,

It is my pleasure to take the floor on behalf of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, representing the world's 190 National Societies and their 17 million community-based volunteers.

As in the first consultation, the IFRC is making a strong call on countries of destination and of transit to act directly to reduce the extreme risks of death, abuse and privation to which many migrants are exposed across their journeys. Among the urgent steps that need to be taken on their own territories is to ensure secure access of all migrants, regardless of legal status, to humanitarian services, and that special provisions are in place to handle the special needs of unaccompanied minors. Many National Societies are scaling up their own services in this area and stand ready to support their authorities to meet this humanitarian challenge.

However, this second consultation also rightly highlights that migration begins at home, and that governments in countries of origin, and their partners, can act to reduce the negative drivers that force people to expose themselves to such danger in the first place. We must do so in a way that does not impinge upon the human right of all persons to freedom of movement, including to choose whether to stay or to leave their own countries, by increasing people's sense of security, well-being and opportunity at home. Reducing poverty, violence and disasters will go very far to achieve this.

When it comes to disasters and climate change, we lack precise data as to their contribution to cross-border migration. This is because people choose to move for a variety of interrelated factors, of which disasters and climate change are a part but may not be the whole story. However, we do know that one in four countries in the world has received people fleeing disasters in recent decades, that an average of 26 million people are displaced each year by disasters, and more than twice as many people are internally displaced by disasters as by conflicts.

Whether or not displacement spills over borders, it can have a devastating effect on the individuals, communities and societies involved, and this is reason enough to act. Increasingly, however, environmental degradation, slow onset events such as droughts, and other impacts associated with climate change, are leading to the permanent loss of land or livelihoods, with a much greater chance of forcing people to take their chances abroad.

There is a broad consensus in the international community that, to make a real dent in these trends, we must focus on disaster risk reduction, preparedness and strengthen community resilience at the local level. This requires intensive work to foster individual communities' knowledge, engagement, health and employment necessary to face up to crisis and quickly rebound from crisis.

In many countries, however, despite good intentions, resilience still figures more as an "add-on" to response-focused disaster legislation or policy rather than as a central focus. Local authorities carry the main responsibility for this type of local engagement and they often lack the resources or capacity to carry it out. For their part, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have quadrupled their investment in disaster risk reduction activities since 2009 – and stand ready to support the authorities to roll out more comprehensive resilience strategies.

As described in the IFRC's World Disasters Report last year, the international communities' investments remain far removed from its rhetoric on this issue. Of the total USD 3.3 trillion spent on international aid finance between 1991 and 2010, just 0.4 per cent was spent on risk reduction. Likewise, while there is an increasing amount of international financing available for climate change adaptation, hardly any of it is made available to community-service organizations for adaptation activities at the local level.

If today's migration debate helps us to connect the dots between our good intentions and our development investment, it will be a major step forward and an important contribution to the momentum that the Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction, currently underway in Cancun, is seeking to create.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.