



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

***Statement of Gabriela Poller-Hartig, Austrian Red Cross, on behalf of
the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies***

*Thematic consultation on the Global Compact on Migration:
Smuggling of migrants, trafficking in persons and contemporary forms of slavery, including
appropriate identification, protection and assistance to migrants and trafficking victims*

Vienna, September 5-6th 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 13 million community-based volunteers.

The Global Compact on Migration provides an important opportunity to solidify agreement on a few basic principles built on decades of work across the international community to assist persons affected or vulnerable to trafficking or other forms of exploitation.

As a first principle, when it comes to confronting trafficking, we should set out, as our primary goal, protecting and supporting those at risk. Their safety and well-being is the measure of our success, not the reduction of migration rates or the number of traffickers incarcerated.

How do we achieve this?

Let me offer a few examples within our network. Both the British and Australian Red Cross operate programmes whereby people who have experienced trafficking are provided with accommodation, material support and a caseworker. The aim is to provide assistance that addresses the unique vulnerabilities and risk factors for those who have been trafficked, and to offer information in order to understand the choices and options available, while providing enough time and support to decide what next steps they wish to take. For its part, the Nepal Red Cross cooperates with CSOs who provide direct assistance to persons who have experienced trafficking or exploitation. This includes the provision of legal support, livelihood/income generation, temporary shelter and psychosocial support, as well as sensitization activities for local stakeholders on risks and vulnerabilities of migrants to human trafficking and exploitation.

However, offering such services is worth little if the people we seek to help are too afraid to reach out to us. Supporting them means guaranteeing safe channels to access basic services and report abuses, irrespective of their legal status. In particular, we call for States to guarantee that vulnerable migrants have safe and confidential access to such support, with no obligation for service providers or migrants themselves to disclose legal status.

Second, we must have our eyes fully open to the signs that trafficking is taking place. All along any migratory trail, officials and organisations must be actively monitoring potential indicators of trafficking. States should also ensure that any person who has experienced trafficking or is at risk

of exploitation is safely identified and referred appropriately to humanitarian support and assistance.

Within our network, the Solomon Islands Red Cross Society (SIRC) received training from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) on indicators of human trafficking and how to safely identify and refer persons affected experiencing exploitation or vulnerable to trafficking. They also provide humanitarian assistance to vulnerable migrants upon referral from other stakeholders, including the government, law enforcement agencies and CSOs.

It is also of critical importance to recognise unaccompanied and separated children as amongst the most vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation. It is crucial that the best interest of the child – and particularly those needs of separated children - are the primary consideration in all mainstream responses and programmes, and that appropriate safeguards and protection mechanisms are in place to keep children safe wherever they are.

A third principle should be acting early and acting together.

To effectively reduce risks to trafficking and exploitation, it is critical that we raise awareness and reduce vulnerabilities before they occur. A significant number of our National Societies worldwide organise pre-departure briefings, sometimes in coordination with governments and recruitment agencies, provide first aid trainings and RFL awareness, as well as sometimes create a hotline for pre-departure orientation program for migrant workers to inform and prepare them for the new environment within the host country as in the case of the Philippines Red Cross.

Partnership is likewise critical both to provision of appropriate assistance to victims of human trafficking and for information-sharing among those who assist them. With the Rights of Migrants in Action Programme, the International Federation and its National Societies are supporting 43 Civil Society Organisations in 15 countries in their daily delivering of direct assistance and legal protection to victims of human trafficking. Activities range from shelter, legal and psychological support, vocational training and reintegration, training for enforcement agencies, advocacy towards authorities and awareness raising over the risks of falling into traffickers' networks.

It is only by working together, from cross border collaboration, to the provision of humanitarian support for those who have been trafficked, to addressing the systemic drivers of trafficking and labour exploitation, that we can bring an end to trafficking. Most importantly, we must work with those who have lived experience of trafficking to understand these drivers, how to protect the most vulnerable, and how we can assist those who have experienced trafficking or exploitation to rebuild their lives.
