

**COUNCIL OF DELEGATES  
OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS  
AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT**

**Towards a Movement Strategy on Migration**

**Draft elements of resolution**

**Document prepared by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross in cooperation with the other members of the Migration Leadership Group (23 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies) and in consultation with the Global Migration Task Force (including 43 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies)**

Geneva, March 2021

## Background

The draft elements of the proposed resolution “Towards a Movement Strategy on Migration” seek to provide an outline of the possible substance of individual paragraphs, without providing a definitive draft text.

Each paragraph is followed by a rationale explaining why it would be useful to include such a paragraph in the resolution.

This document is being shared for consultation with the members of the Council of Delegates of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in order to gather a first round of comments and feedback and to gain an initial understanding of whether the proposed approach would be acceptable and garner consensus.

When providing comments and feedback on this document, please consider the following questions:

- Do you agree with the proposed elements for the preambular and operative paragraphs of the proposed resolution?
- Are there any elements that are missing or should be included in the resolution?

Detailed comments on the wording of the draft elements of this resolution are not expected at this stage. There will be an opportunity to comment on specific wording at a later stage, once the draft zero of the resolution is available.

## Introduction

Migration is a complex global phenomenon, a challenging reality that is neither new nor confined to certain parts of the world. For many individuals, households and communities, migration brings considerable and wide-reaching benefits. However, all too often, we also witness the human costs of migration and the humanitarian impacts of certain migration policies. In addition to a growing stigmatization of migrants, often driven by political rhetoric and misinformation, the increased securitization of migration results in restrictive policies exposing migrants, including refugees and asylum seekers, to greater risks and hardship. For many migrants – whether they left their countries due to armed conflicts, other situations of violence, persecution, human rights violations, poverty or the effects of climate change – the journey is paved with insecurity. Thousands of people are compelled to resort to irregular pathways and die along the way or go missing, creating enormous distress for their families who are left waiting for answers. Many migrants are subjected to trafficking and extortion or make easy targets for abuse and exploitation. They suffer discrimination and face obstacles in accessing essential services. Some are detained or end up in camps in crowded and precarious conditions. Those who transit through or become stranded in areas affected by armed conflict or other situations of violence face countless threats.

Present in 192 countries and embedded in local communities through its global network of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (National Societies) and volunteers, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement) has long been active in responding to the humanitarian needs of migrants in vulnerable circumstances. The Movement’s approach to migration, which has evolved throughout the years and was consolidated in the 2009 IFRC Policy on Migration, is purely humanitarian. In line with our Fundamental Principles, we deliberately use a broad description of “migrants” that includes all people who leave or flee their home to seek safety or better prospects, usually abroad,<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Policy on Migration also mentions the efforts of the Movement to address needs connected to migration within a country. Specifically, the Introduction mentions that in certain situations – for example, where such

irrespective of legal status, and who may be in distress and need protection or humanitarian assistance. This inclusive description (including refugees, asylum seekers and irregular migrants) reflects our operational focus on people's needs and vulnerabilities. It recognizes that vulnerabilities may not just be determined by the reasons for migrating but evolve during the journey, according to the circumstances in which migrants find themselves in transit or destination countries or upon their return. This description allows the Movement to emphasize that all migrants are protected under different bodies of international, regional and domestic law and to counter a potentially damaging external narrative in which vulnerabilities and rights are pitted against each other in political arguments over legal status.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, the Movement's response to internally displaced people (IDPs) is guided by a separate policy, adopted by the Council of Delegates also in 2009. Together, the Policy on Migration and the Policy on Internal Displacement ensure the necessary conceptual and strategic clarity for the Movement to deal with the challenges that are specific to internal displacement and migration (including cross-border displacement) respectively and also with possible connections between them.<sup>3</sup>

Thanks to our vulnerability-based and principled approach and our global presence along migratory routes, the Movement is uniquely positioned to bridge protection and assistance gaps and reduce the suffering of vulnerable migrants at all stages of their journey. We work to ensure that all migrants receive the protection they are entitled to under different legal frameworks – in particular human rights law and, where relevant, refugee law and international humanitarian law – and have effective access to essential services irrespective of legal status, without seeking to encourage, discourage or prevent migration. The Movement's commitment and added value in the field of migration has been repeatedly affirmed through resolutions and high-level dialogues at past Statutory Meetings, including the Movement Call for Action on the Humanitarian Needs of Vulnerable Migrants (2017), the Movement statement on migration: Ensuring Collective Action to Protect and Respond to the Needs and Vulnerabilities of Migrants (2015) and the Movement Statement on Migration and our Common Humanity (2019).

Our concerns about the importance of treating all migrants with dignity and promoting a climate of tolerance were brought to the attention of States at the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in 2011, with Resolution 3 "[Migration: Ensuring Access, Dignity, Respect for Diversity and Social Inclusion](#)". Since its adoption, the Movement has called for its implementation but also noted limited progress and a hardening of laws, policies and attitudes affecting migrants and humanitarian organizations. Coming together under a Movement strategy on migration would reinforce our position and ability to support States' efforts to fulfil their responsibility to provide assistance and protection to migrants. While recognizing the commitments from previous Statutory Meetings, there is still much more to be done. While implementation of these commitments continues in various ways, we must also ensure the issue of global migration remains on the agenda of the Statutory Meetings as

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migrants are subject to discrimination – the Policy can provide useful guidance. In other circumstances, where migration within a country is part of general labour mobility, the Movement's efforts fall under general humanitarian action.

<sup>2</sup> The Movement does, however, recognize and promote the special protection afforded by international, regional and domestic law to specific categories of individuals, such as refugees, asylum seekers and stateless persons.

<sup>3</sup> The Movement's choice, back in 2009, to adopt two separate but complementary policies, i.e. one for internal displacement and one for migration, was visionary in many ways. It acknowledges the different legal regimes translating into different sets of responsibilities for the States concerned as well as the specific concerns affecting IDPs and migrants respectively. It makes it possible to counter external narratives that refer to IDPs as "tomorrow's refugees" or "tomorrow's migrants" – resulting in them being considered exclusively through the prism of migration – and that aim to further containment agendas. At the same time, both policies acknowledge that there are situations where a continuum exists between internal displacement and migration, for which a holistic and coordinated response is required.

a critical area of the Movement's work, with a view to stepping up our dedication to addressing it and strengthening and adapting our response as needed.

To be able to continue preventing and responding to humanitarian needs in the context of migration – including those of the migrants themselves, host communities and the people and families who stay behind – it is essential to ensure effective leadership, commitment and coordinated engagement informed by a solid analysis of evolving trends and risks related to migration from the local to the global level. In 2020, a system to facilitate these objectives was established in the form of a new migration leadership model, consisting of a Migration Leadership Group, the existing Global Migration Task Force and a Migration Lab. As part of the process, a survey was conducted to capture National Societies' views on emerging migration trends, significant challenges and areas where the Movement should invest moving forward. The results of the survey revealed that the development of a Movement strategy on migration was the most important priority in which to invest. The development of such a strategy, which will build on the IFRC Global Strategy on Migration 2018–2022, is now a central piece of the Migration Leadership Group's workplan. The future strategy will aim to ensure a shared commitment and a clear focus across the Movement to address pressing priorities in the field of migration, capitalizing on the complementarity between the different Movement components.

The proposed resolution therefore seeks endorsement of the initiative to develop a Movement strategy on migration and of the role played in this regard by the Migration Leadership Group, with a view to bringing the strategy to the Council of Delegates in 2023 for adoption.

## **Preambular paragraphs (PP)**

### **PP1**

The introductory preambular paragraph could acknowledge the benefits of migration and the positive contributions of migrants to countries of origin, transit and destination but also express deep concern about the suffering of migrants along migratory routes across the world and the threats to which migrants are increasingly exposed during their journey, on land or at sea, in countries of transit and destination, particularly as a consequence of strict migration and containment policies.

### **Rationale**

This preambular paragraph seeks to stress pressing humanitarian concerns about migration. Whatever reasons migrants may have for leaving their country, they can become vulnerable at different stages of their journey. Many face life-threatening situations and endure hardship that can affect their physical and mental well-being.

### **PP2**

This preambular paragraph could recall that all migrants – including those in an irregular situation – enjoy protection under international human rights law and other bodies of international law as well as under domestic law, that in armed conflict they are also protected under international humanitarian law and that, beyond this, refugees, asylum seekers and stateless persons are also entitled to special protection under international and regional law. It could also recall other commitments made by States, including in the Global Compacts. The paragraph could then stress that the vulnerabilities of migrants can be reduced when States uphold their legal obligations and adopt and implement policies that take into account the protection and assistance needs of migrants.

### **Rationale**

The purpose of this preambular paragraph would be to recall that migrants are protected under different legal frameworks and to underline that the primary responsibility for addressing the protection and assistance needs of migrants lies with States.

**PP3**

This preambular paragraph could bear in mind that there are situations where a continuum exists between internal displacement and cross-border movements and that such situations require comprehensive and coordinated responses to maximize protection and assistance for all those in need.

**Rationale**

The purpose is to recall the possible connection between internal displacement and migration (including cross-border displacement). Displacement within a country may precede the displacement of refugees, others in need of international protection and/or people fleeing disasters and climate-related hazards across international borders, or IDPs may take the path of migration to rebuild their lives in another country. In other cases, migrants are returned to their country of origin only to become internally displaced. In such situations, cross-border coordination and a comprehensive approach are needed to address the interrelated challenges of internal displacement and migration.

**PP4**

This preambular paragraph could acknowledge the important work that is currently carried out by the Movement to address the protection and assistance needs of vulnerable migrants along migratory routes; underline the Movement's unique position and added value in carrying out this work; recall, in particular, the respective mandates of the components of the Movement, based notably on the Statutes of the Movement and resolutions of the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, including the auxiliary role of National Societies in providing support to their respective governments in the humanitarian field; and highlight the recognized role of the Movement in contributing to the implementation of the humanitarian objectives of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

**Rationale**

The purpose is to highlight the Movement's long-standing engagement in the field of migration and the work already being carried out by the National Societies, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to address the needs of vulnerable migrants. It also aims to underline the added value of the Movement's action and that of its components. The Movement's proximity to vulnerable migrants through its solid and experienced network of responders along migratory routes is one of its specific advantages, together with its principled and strictly humanitarian approach. Paragraph 44 of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration recognizes that the Movement plays a key role in supporting States in translating their commitments into action.

**PP5**

This preambular paragraph could recognize the new challenges faced in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, in terms of ensuring protection and respect for the rights of migrants while dealing with public health concerns, and acknowledge the important role of local actors, such as National Societies, in responding to the pandemic.

**Rationale**

The purpose is to highlight that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought new challenges to ensuring protection and assistance for migrants in vulnerable circumstances. Migrants have been among the most affected by the direct and indirect impacts of COVID-19 as it has exacerbated pre-existing vulnerabilities and created additional needs and protection concerns, including barriers to accessing essential services. At the same time, the pandemic has offered new opportunities for National Societies, as key local actors, to work with governments in providing access to essential services and information and addressing formal and informal barriers.

**PP6**

This preambular paragraph could recall and reaffirm past resolutions on topics relating to migration adopted by the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (including Resolution 21, 24th International Conference, Manila, 1981; Resolution 17, 25th International Conference, Geneva, 1986; Resolution 4, 26th International Conference, Geneva, 1995; Resolution 1, Annex, Declaration “Together for Humanity”, 30th International Conference, Geneva, 2007; and Resolution 3, 31st International Conference, Geneva, 2011) and by the Council of Delegates (including Resolution 9, Budapest, 1991; Resolution 7, Birmingham, 1993; Resolution 4, Geneva, 2001; Resolution 10, Geneva, 2003; Resolution 5, Geneva, 2007; Resolution 4, Nairobi, 2009; and, in particular, the “Movement Call for Action on the Humanitarian Needs of Vulnerable Migrants”, adopted by Resolution 3, Antalya, 2017, and the “Movement Statement on Migrants and our Common Humanity” adopted by Resolution 8, Geneva, 2019) as well as the Policy on Migration adopted by the IFRC in 2009 (which was also welcomed by the whole Movement in Resolution 4 of the Council of Delegates, Nairobi, 2009) and the IFRC’s current Global Strategy on Migration 2018–2022.

**Rationale**

The purpose is to stress that migration is a priority topic for the Movement and, as such, has been addressed in previous resolutions of the Council of Delegates and the International Conference, thereby emphasizing the need to continue reiterating its importance at Statutory Meetings. It also seeks to highlight the Movement’s existing key policy and strategy documents in the field of migration.

**PP7**

This preambular paragraph could recognize the establishment of the new migration leadership model, consisting of the Migration Leadership Group, the pre-existing Global Migration Task Force and the Migration Lab. It could emphasize the critical role of this model in ensuring effective leadership, engagement, commitment and ongoing analysis of evolving trends and risks related to migration from the local to the global level.

**Rationale**

The purpose is to highlight ongoing commitments and efforts to strengthen the Movement’s coordinated engagement and action in support of vulnerable migrants. The Migration Leadership Group consists of the IFRC, the ICRC and 23 National Societies, representing a variety of geographical and migration contexts. It provides leadership and ensures that the Movement’s work and advocacy on migration are “fit for purpose” and ready to take on future challenges, while fostering partnerships and cooperation. The Migration Lab, through partnerships and research, will develop insights into migration trends, policies and good practices at the local, regional and global level to inform the Movement’s evidence-based positioning and programming. The Global Migration Task Force is represented by National Societies across all regions and acts as the leading technical reference group on migration. The Task Force focuses on evolving risks and threats faced by migrants and on best practices, lessons learned and technical support needed within the Movement to continuously strengthen and scale up our capacity and support. The Task Force supports implementation of the IFRC Global Strategy on Migration 2018–2022 and will play a key role in supporting the development of a Movement strategy on migration.

**PP8**

This preambular paragraph could take note of the results of the 2020 survey to capture National Societies’ views on emerging migration-related trends, significant challenges and areas where the Movement should invest moving forward, recognizing a Movement strategy on migration as the most important priority in which to invest.

**Rationale**

The purpose is to highlight the momentum for a Movement strategy on migration.

## **Operative paragraphs (OP)**

### **OP1**

The first operative paragraph could agree on the need for and importance of a Movement strategy on migration to ensure a strong and coherent positioning for the Movement and coordinated action in support of vulnerable migrants, capitalizing on the complementarity between the different Movement components.

### **Rationale**

The purpose is to endorse the decision taken by the Migration Leadership Group to develop a Movement strategy on migration as a matter of priority.

### **OP2**

The second operative paragraph could formally endorse the Migration Leadership Group's role in developing a Movement strategy on migration, as a central piece of their workplan, and welcome the work undertaken so far by the Group. This paragraph could also welcome the supporting role and work of the Global Migration Task Force and the Migration Lab and the involvement of regional migration networks in supporting the development of the future strategy.

### **Rationale**

The purpose is to acknowledge, express support for and endorse the role played and the work done by the Migration Leadership Group in developing a Movement strategy on migration.

### **OP3**

The third operative paragraph could mandate the Migration Leadership Group to continue its work and to submit the finalized Movement strategy on migration for adoption at the 2023 Council of Delegates.

### **Rationale**

The purpose is to grant a formal mandate to the Migration Leadership Group to develop a Movement strategy on migration, with a view to ensuring shared commitment and ownership of the process across the Movement.

### **OP4**

The fourth operative paragraph could call upon all components of the Movement to continue and strengthen implementation of existing commitments in the interest of vulnerable migrants, including the current IFRC Global Strategy on Migration, while the Movement strategy is being developed.

### **Rationale**

The purpose is to compel the Movement to continue its leadership in the area of migration, to reiterate its commitment and to recognize that work will continue while the strategy is being developed.