

# **Council of Delegates 2013**

## **REPORT ON WORKSHOP 3**

**Sunday, 17 November**

**and**

**Monday, 18 November 2013**

### **Addressing the humanitarian impact of “external shocks” on vulnerable migrants, host populations and National Societies.**

**Chair:** Werner Kerschbaum, Secretary General Austrian Red Cross.

**Rapporteur:** Budi A. Adiputro, Secretary General Indonesia Red Cross.

#### **(A) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

In consultations related to the Council of Delegates’ draft agenda, several National Societies brought up issues that might be collectively described as “external shocks” that affect them, by creating new or increased needs among vulnerable groups in their countries while at the same time affecting their ability to mobilize resources for the most vulnerable in their communities, including migrant populations seeking protection and humanitarian support. External shocks affecting National Societies’ ability to respond to increasing needs of both migrants and host populations include, for example, the global financial crisis and on-going economic, social and political pressures as a result of increasing urbanisation, climate change and environmental degradation. It is estimated that by 2030, five billion or two thirds of the world population - will be concentrated in urban areas with resulting pressures and increased levels of xenophobia and violence. The expectation of the workshop was to contribute to a better understanding of migration in the context of “external shocks” and the Movement wide response. The workshop identified in light of current and future challenges, whether the Movement requires further guidance on specific Migration issues and reviewed our framework for action including the IFRC Policy on Migration, 2011 International Conference Resolution and IFRC Migration Strategy.

#### **(B) GENERAL OBSERVATIONS**

##### **SUNDAY**

Presenter 1. Phil Glendenning, President of the Refugee Council of Australia Edmund Rice Centre.

Mr Glendenning presented a global perspective on the current dialogue on migration with a specific focus on the current situation in Australia and the region. He particularly noted his concern around the negative perception of asylum seekers. In particular, a policy platform based around the aim of deterrence, is a dangerous point in the history of Nation States.

The Australian government has initiated a campaign to deter people from moving, however the sad reality is that people have no choice but to move. We need to increase the burden sharing and not expect our neighbours to do more than we are prepared to do ourselves. Recently with regard to Lampedusa, a comparison of the Australian Government response to migrants with the Italian Government whereby the Italian Government made a national day of mourning.

Presenter 2. Jose Juan Castro, President of Honduras Red Cross National Society.

Mr Castro gave a broad presentation on the migration situation in the Americas region from a country of origin, transit and destination perspective. The movement of migrants across borders is changing over time but he noted the enormous challenges that Red Cross National Societies face especially in the Americas.

Although progress has been made with the approval of the Migration Policy in 2009 in Nairobi more needs to be done from both an assistance and human rights perspective Honduras has established migration as a human right. Migrants must be treated with respect and dignity. He highlighted the need for Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies to integrate our actions with all parts of the movement with a focus on implementation of the Policy.

## **MONDAY**

Presenter 1. Richard Towle, Regional Representative UNHCR Regional Office for Australia, NZ, PNG and Pacific.

Mr Towle opened his remarks by congratulating the RCRC Movement in identifying migration as a theme of enormous importance globally. He stated that the UNHCR are true partners of the Red Cross Movement.

Mr Towle highlighted the need to recognise that the forces of movement globally are being contained within developing countries. The industrialised world which has far greater assets and resources at its disposal is becoming more adept at deterring asylum seekers, which has resulted in uneven burden sharing between the developing world and industrialised states.

Recent external shocks including the financial crisis have effectively doubled the negative impact for those who are already vulnerable. The compounding nature of external shocks (i.e. environment, political and climate) has had a profound and corrosive effect on the ability for people to move forward with their lives.

We are seeing globally Nation States and Governments preferring stronger border controls, especially with regard to national security and wanting to deter irregular movements. Therefore we must encourage Governments to not only protect borders but also protect human rights and dignity of people crossing borders. This is particularly relevant for the Australian context where there is a predominant focus on deterrence and the use of language such as 'illegals'.

Mr Towle noted that migration is extremely complex and it is important to avoid clichés and simplistic explanations of what motivates migration. It is therefore important to have a nuanced, empirically based understanding of migration and how it intersects with sovereign borders. At the same time our joint solutions to all these issues must take a multidimensional and partnership approach.

To conclude his presentation Mr Towle listed six challenges including the importance of negotiating with Nation States, increased cooperation with other organisations, grassroots advocacy, the rule of law and the need to keep human rights at the heart of our responses, given that behind each statistic there is a human face, a human story.

Presenter 2. Ulrika Årehed Kågström, Secretary General of Swedish Red Cross

Migrants are typically vulnerable to situations and issues such as job loss, poverty, illness, lack of training or qualifications due to them being outside their own networks or communities. Migrants are subject to systematic discrimination and xenophobia.

The Swedish Secretary General noted that through their experience they have seen how advocacy can effect policies, as well as the ability to deliver services and support for migrants.

In the European context there is a growing trend of stricter asylum policies due to the financial crisis, such as stricter border control, more extensive use of detention, lack of legal aid, inhuman living conditions and limited possibilities to reunite with family members. This has further strengthened the need to continuously re-think our priorities in service delivery in order to address the needs of the most vulnerable. We must at all times act to prevent humanitarian consequences of asylum and refugee policy. The issue of migration is often highly politicised by different actors.

The logic of the Migration Policy is based on the global presence of Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies along the migratory trail. We must do more to coordinate our efforts to address vulnerabilities along the migratory trail through sharing experiences and identifying ways to collaborate.

In times of external shocks the condition of services may change due to cuts in funding. A worrying trend in the wake of the financial crisis is increasing discrimination and xenophobia, Swedish Red Cross has taken measures to address this in line with the principle of humanity. The Red Cross Red Crescent Movement guided by our principles of impartiality and humanity must stand up for humanitarian values as the driving force for our action.

## **(C) KEY POINTS RAISED ON GUIDING QUESTIONS**

### **Guiding question 1:**

What is the current situation regarding vulnerable migrants in your country both from the perspective of the RCRC National Society and from a Government perspective.

- National Societies are actively working to coordinate activities that strengthen links between source, transit and destination countries.
- “External shocks” have played out and impacted on National Societies in a variety of ways, whether is be conflict, climate change or economic upheaval. National Societies identified these drivers of migration as creating enormous challenges on their ability to respond. This was especially the case for small island developing states.
- The commitment of volunteers including youth engagement working with migrants creates a clear message to public authorities on the importance of this issue and is an effective awareness raising and advocacy tool.
- A number of National Societies discussed the inequality of burden sharing between destination and origin countries. It was clear that if not managed tensions can arise within host communities when migrants are perceived to receive services above and beyond those received by vulnerable community members.
- There were concerns raised regarding increasing xenophobia in host communities where there is a high level of vulnerability already present. It was proposed that better coordination of Red Cross Red Crescent response along migratory pathways could positively impact on the levels of xenophobia in receiving countries. Furthermore, greater coordination between various actors would also improve the situation of Xenophobia.

**Guiding question 2 :**

What actions are governments and RCNS undertaking in response to migration challenges? Identify examples of good practice.

- National Societies noted that although it was positive that we have a Policy Framework on Migration, there needs to be a better implementation of the Policy. There is a need for more consistent implementation of the Policy across the Movement.
- A great variety of experiences have been brought to the table in the discussion and amongst them were the following examples.
  - Several National Societies are successfully engaged in RFL programs including “Trace the Face” and country of origin research.
  - Vulnerability Capacity Analysis on Asylum Seekers.
  - Psychosocial support for refugee children.
  - Humanitarian Education Program to change attitudes.
  - Advocacy on shortening asylum procedures.
  - Working with host communities.
- Within the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement globally, there are significant programs responding to the needs of vulnerable migrants. These include support for asylum seekers, trafficked people, visits to detention centres, RFL services, food packages, housing, clothing, legal, psychosocial and medical support.
- National Societies recognised that specific regions carry the bulk of forced migration. As such it is important as a Movement to consider the global impact of migration in countries of origin, transit, destination and return.
- Countries of transit are faced with specific challenges and especially where they are also effected significantly by external shocks such as strict migration policies by Governments. This is being addressed through improved advocacy.
- National Societies stated that the efforts to support the plights of migrants could be stronger and that there should be encouragements to governments to improve rather than impede laws in a bid to control migration rather than prevent it. National Societies stated that migrants should have access to training and programs so that they may have meaningful engagement in communities and reduce the experiences of xenophobia and social exclusion in the community.

**Guiding question 3:**

What is required now and in the future to increase our impact on behalf of vulnerable migrants and host communities in crisis situations - both from a RCRC perspective and from a Government perspective.

- The Movement must advocate at all times for migrants to be seen not as a burden but how they contribute positively to society.
- There are many issues affecting migrants and no single organisation alone can address all needs which clearly exemplifies the added value of the world wide network of the Movement and our relationship with Governments.
- ICRC welcomed the Federation’s Strategic Action Plan on Migration and has confidence that it will enhance movement cooperation and therefore the response to the protection and humanitarian needs of vulnerable migrants.
- The Movement has a role in advocating for common regional approaches and policies on access to protection and asylum.

- The Movement must do more to enhance dialogue of National Societies along migratory trails as well as influence policy from a human rights perspective to include humanitarian concerns.
- Better IFRC resourcing is a critical element to improving our Movement wide response to addressing the issues and impacts of migration.
- The vital importance of coordination with IFRC and ICRC and UN Institutions was noted in order to meet the complex challenges of addressing the needs of mixed migration.
- Pacific Island National Societies highlighted the situation of rising sea levels around the world, where low lying islands will be seriously effected. It was noted that this should be a priority for the Movement to address as climate, environmental and urbanisation challenges will almost certainly result in increased displacement. There must be a human rights based approach to address climate change induced forced migration.

## **(D) CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **SUNDAY**

The workshop delivered the following conclusions and recommendations which have been formulated in line with the three strategic objectives of the Federation's three year migration strategy.

Migration is a global issue, no one organisation can address this independently without cooperation with other actors.

There was a consensus by the participants that the Movement must engage more proactively from both a humanitarian assistance and importantly a human rights perspective. In order to do this it was emphasised that we need to work collaboratively as a Red Cross Red Crescent global Movement along the migratory routes. In order to respond as a Movement more needs to be done to step up efforts to better ensure information sharing, capacity building and internal and external partnerships.

A key theme of the discussions related to the role of youth volunteers, migrants and host communities working together to raise awareness and proactively act as agents of change in the dialogue on migration. National Societies saw this as a valuable humanitarian diplomacy tool especially where platforms for migrant's voices were created. It is important to keep in mind that the language used by the Movement must always take into account the rights of migrants. Participants asserted that respectful culturally appropriate dialogue with Governments and the use of communication and education tools will aim to combat any negative attitudes about migrants and promote diversity and social inclusion.

Furthermore this links in with Strategy 2020 and our joint focus on saving lives and changing minds. As a global movement many National Societies are responding to the particular vulnerabilities of migrants in need as well as advocating for dignity, respect for diversity and social inclusion.

National Societies asserted that there was a need for appropriate resources in order to undertake this work. There was a clear consensus that further Federation resources is an integral element to supporting the work of National Societies. National Societies called for a strengthening of the IFRC migration unit in Geneva.

The Movement should work more closely with governments to address the root causes of migration appreciating the complex nature of "push / pull" factors driving migration.

Finally National Societies in their auxiliary role should engage in effective lobbying with an aim to strengthen positive government dialogue as well as policy and legislation change on migration.

## **MONDAY**

The workshop delivered the following conclusions and recommendations which have been formulated in line with the three strategic objectives of the Federation's three year migration strategy.

- The cross border approach of National Societies in countries of origin, transit and destination is key to the Movement's engagement on migration.
- The universal implementation of the Movement's Migration Policy requires more human and financial resources in Geneva and the zone level.
- Advocacy and humanitarian diplomacy based on empirical evidence, experience and cooperation is essential in partnership with other actors to ensure Government responsibility.
- It was noted that there was no single legal framework to protect migrants and recommended the need for a universal legal provision to protect migrants irrespective of their legal status. Furthermore all present National Societies and the ICRC were strongly supportive of the Federation Action Plan on Migration.
- Finally, as migration is a complex issue there are no quick fixes and it requires a consistent and sustained Movement response.