



**Fourth Ministerial Conference of the Bali Process on People Smuggling,
Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime,
Bali, Indonesia, 29-30 March 2011**

Under agenda item
General discussion of the Ministerial Conference

Statement by

Ms Razmi Farook, Coordinator, External Relations

On behalf of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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Mr. Chairman,

We would like to share with you the perspective of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) that takes a strictly humanitarian based approach to addressing the vulnerability of migrants informed by their rights and in recognition of their individuality and aspirations.

Working with, and for vulnerable migrants is a long standing tradition of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Our work in this field was recognised by the state parties to the Geneva Conventions at the 30th International Conference of Red Cross and Red Crescent held in November 2007. The conference declaration "Together for Humanity" acknowledges the role of National Societies in providing humanitarian assistance to vulnerable migrants, irrespective of their legal status. With the next International Conference coming up in November in Geneva, Governments and National Societies have been preparing the reports in implementing the pledges they made and we take this opportunity to express our appreciation.

The IFRC's mandate on the humanitarian concerns of migrants living at the margins of conventional health, social and legal systems was further bolstered by the adoption of the Policy on Migration at the Council of Delegates in November 2009. The policy recognises the many difficulties vulnerable migrants face, and should not be restricted to asylum seekers and refugees through legal categorisation. The requirement of humanitarian access to migrant's remains a priority in a climate where increasingly restrictive administrative and legislative measures diminish migrant's access to basic protection and assistance.

The Red Cross Red Crescent with its mandate as a humanitarian auxiliary to public authorities can play a vital role in assisting governments to tackle the dilemmas they face in reducing migratory pressure by reducing the risk of injustice and inhumanity. In particular,

the global economic crisis, population growth, climate change and structural vulnerability have all contributed to an exponential increase in human trafficking. The prevalence of trafficking in the Asia-Pacific region has been estimated at the ratio of 3 for every 1,000 inhabitants and of these 80 per cent of transnational victims of human trafficking are women and girls.

Mr. Chairman,

A number of our National Societies of the Red Cross or Red Crescent carry out activities that humanize migrants rather than exclude them. In Asia Pacific and the Middle East we are providing protection and assistance to refugee and migrant communities in Iran and Pakistan where there are still more than 3 million Afghan refugees. Malaysia Red Crescent is providing assistance through a restoring family links programme in detention camps and the Philippines Red Cross undertakes HIV/Aids awareness, psychosocial support and other welfare programmes for overseas workers. In Nepal, Indonesia and many other countries, tracing services to link separated families, health services and support to families who are left behind by migrant workers, often in dire circumstances are being delivered. Many of our national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies are also using their unique position and influence to advocate for the provision of basic human rights for migrant populations.

There is also need for closer cooperation between regions given the large number of migrants that arrive in the Middle East and Europe from countries like Philippines, Thailand, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan. An example of our work in the last few weeks regarding this is the assistance being provided by the Maltese Red Cross Society to thousands of guest workers in Libya to be evacuated and transited through Malta to receive support. Important assistance with border crossing and other support required in the currently troubled Middle East is also being offered by the Egyptian, Tunisian and Yemen Red Crescent Societies. Other examples of services provided by the National Societies of the Red Cross and Red Crescent include humanitarian assistance through the provision of food, shelter and psycho-social support and other services such as legal advice, integration and re-integration support.

Evidence tells us that vulnerable groups, especially irregular migrants and victims of human trafficking prefer to seek assistance and support of local Red Cross and Red Crescent branches rather than approach public authorities. As locally based organizations with global outreach, our National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are well placed to inform potential migrants of the risks of irregular migration before they choose to undertake their journeys and to support them in countries of destination without regard to whether they are regular or irregular migrants or have been trafficked. It is their current condition and that of their families that counts, it is their needs that matter to us and it is our mission and the Fundamental Principle of Humanity that compel us to act.

Mr. Chairman,

The Red Cross and Red Crescent has been calling on governments to do more to ratify existing international conventions seeking to protect migrants and refugees, who are too often subjected to racism and discrimination. It calls on States to take measures to prevent, prosecute and punish the smuggling of migrants and to ensure the rights of those smuggled. We urge States to consider those measures in full awareness of the fact that sometimes

turning to smugglers is the only way available for people to exercise their right to seek asylum or the last, desperate, and, sadly, “voluntary” resort of people in need in order to escape the situations of imminent threat to their survival; situations, where their very human right to life is not fully assured.

Mr. Chairman,

As an international humanitarian network rooted in local communities and mandated to address the needs of all migrant, including those in an irregular situation, the IFRC will continue to cooperate with the ICRC, UNHCR, IOM and other partners including the Global Forum on Migration and Development. As an auxiliary to government our National Societies will continue to engage in dialogue with their respective governments on how to address the humanitarian concerns related to migration. This involves protecting their corresponding rights and supporting their empowerment to ultimately bring developmental benefits to migrants and host societies. We are honoured to be part of this effort and open to enhanced dialogue with all who share this approach.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.