



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

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**STATEMENT BY ITALIAN RED CROSS PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT
OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES
MR FRANCESCO ROCCA**

High-level Meeting on “Strengthening Cooperation on Migration and Refugee Movements in the
Perspective of the New Development Agenda”
New York, 30 September 2015

Secretary-General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to address you at this meeting convened by the UN SG to mobilize a humane response to the migrants and refugees crisis. This meeting cannot come soon enough. Indeed, as I stand here talking to you, desperate families fleeing conflict, persecution, and insecurity are crossing the Mediterranean trying to recover for themselves and their children, the dearest thing they lost, namely their human dignity.

Some may make it, many will not. Aylan Kurdi was not the first child to die on our shores, and unless many policies change dramatically, I am sorry to say that Aylan will not be the last cold little body leaving blue spots on the soul of our humanity. At the Italian Red Cross, we have seen too many such young bodies. My young volunteers are often the ones who hold them and try to console the bereaved parents with words, at times when words have no meaning.

Some months ago, I came here to New York to warn of the tragic events that we are now seeing on the Balkan routes and in Eastern Europe. Everyone on the front lines knew this situation could come.

But instead of heeding our call for a humane response, walls were built, and borders closed. Instead of providing legal avenues of migration and adequate processing facilities and systems, so called border security was prioritized over the obligation to protect and support people in need.

I welcome the announcement that European Union member states have agreed to relocate 160,000 people. But this is not enough. The flow of migrants and refugees may slow as borders close and cold weather arrives, but we need to find a long term solution to this utterly preventable and unacceptable crisis.

On our part, the IFRC and its National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies will scale up our response to assist and protect vulnerable people on the move in 25 countries of origin, transit and destination. Further, we have also launched a campaign to urge everyone—governments, public, media, leaders—to “Protect Humanity and to Stop Indifference”.

Every migrant and refugee is first and foremost a human being and no human beings are illegal; their human rights must be respected and they must be offered the protection guaranteed to them by international law.

Not one more mother should lose her child in the Mediterranean in the dead of night.

Thank you.