

Intergovernmental Conference on the Global Compact for Migration

*Marrakech, Morocco, 10 – 11 December 2018*

*Plenary Statement by Gilles Carbonnier, Vice President, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)*

Thank you Mr Chairman / Madam Chair,

The International Committee of the Red Cross welcomes the Global Compact on Migration. This is an important step towards improving protection and assistance for migrants.

During the development of the Compact, we called on States to make three key commitments. First, to respect existing obligations under international law. Second, to address the assistance and protection needs of migrants. And third, to prevent forced displacement in armed conflict and other situations of violence, which is often caused by violations of international humanitarian law and human rights.

We made specific recommendations on limiting the use of immigration detention, on respecting the principle of *non-refoulement*, and on preventing and addressing cases of missing migrants.

We are pleased to see many of our humanitarian concerns reflected in the Compact. Yet, this is just the start of the journey. The hard work of implementing the Compact lies ahead of us.

We appreciate that States have recognised what the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement can offer in this regard. The ICRC – together with other components of the Movement – stands ready to support States in translating the Compact into reality within our fields of expertise.

One such field relates to the tens of thousands of migrants who die or go missing every year. Through our worldwide Family Links Network, we have in-depth experience in preserving and restoring family links. We help States to ensure the proper and dignified management of the dead, and to search for and clarify the fate of missing persons. We are thus well placed, and determined, to support States in meeting their commitments under Objective 8, which focuses on saving lives.

Another area where the ICRC can support States relates to immigration detention. In many places, we visit detained migrants in both criminal and dedicated immigration detention facilities. During these visits, we do not only provide them with humanitarian assistance. We also assess whether detained migrants are being afforded the due process of law, whether they are being treated humanely and held in conditions that preserve their dignity.

We are ready to work with States to help them achieve Objective 13 of the Compact, which requires them to use detention only as a measure of last resort. This includes limiting the use of immigration detention, working to end the immigration detention of children, and favouring non-custodial measures.

More broadly, we are ready to work with States to help ensure that migration policies are respectful of international law – that they protect the rights and dignity of migrants, and that they alleviate rather than cause human suffering.

We look forward to continued cooperation with you to achieve these objectives.

Thank you.