

## **High-Level Commission on Health Employment and Economic Growth**

### **Statement by the ICRC**

*(Check against delivery)*

Thank you Chair, for giving the floor to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). We would like in the following to speak on recommendation 6 of the report, pertaining to “*the protection and security of health workers and health facilities in all settings.*”

Threats and violence against medical and health personnel, their means of transport and equipment, as well as hospitals and other medical facilities, is a significant humanitarian problem, which also generates serious and long-term consequences for entire segments of affected populations. The ICRC is pleased to see that the international community is addressing these problems, as manifested notably in recent resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly, Security Council, and by the World Health Assembly. The ICRC intends to support States in this important endeavor.

The ICRC bases its work notably on its international humanitarian law mandate and on resolutions adopted by the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. As part of the Movement’s “Health Care in Danger” initiative, the ICRC has organized consultations among a wide range of stakeholders, such as legislators, military armed forces and health personnel. The findings have been published in a number of thematic reports, available on the ICRC’s Website. In short, we now largely know what to do to improve the situation, and how to do it.

As concerns the adoption of measures at the national level, it is generally acknowledged that a substantial improvement often requires the involvement of a range of stakeholders. Ministries of health could play a catalytic role with regard to the collection and analysis of national data, indispensable for an evidence-based analysis and for the formulation of preventive measures. As part of its ongoing dialogue with States, the ICRC, together with the relevant National Society, intends to approach relevant authorities to offer its support and technical advice.

Ministries of health could further convene a multi-stakeholder forum, comprised, for instance, of representatives of ministries of the interior, justice, defense, health and social affairs, national commissions on International Humanitarian Law, health practitioners, academics and other members of civil society. Such fora could help analyze the data collected, and formulate recommendations for preventive and remedial measures, such as the adoption of national legislation, instructions for military personnel, marking of ambulances, physical protection of hospitals, training of health-care personnel, and dissemination of ethical principles of health care. The ICRC stands ready to share its recommendations with States in these areas.

While each national context presents its own particularities, the ready availability of measures that other States have found useful to address the problems identified can significantly reduce the time needed to adopt appropriate measures. The ICRC stands ready to share its experience in this regard as well.

Thank you, Chair.