



Restoring Dignity, Inspiring Change.

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International Organization for Migration Council Meeting, November 2018, Geneva

**Prioritizing Migrant Healthcare: Making it Accessible, Affordable and High Quality**  
**IOM and Migrant Health**

Statement of the International Catholic Migration Commission  
Mantalin Kyrou, Policy Officer

Madame Deputy Director,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today and thank you to our panelists.

The International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) expresses its urgent concern regarding the many obstacles faced by people on the move to accessing available, affordable, and quality health care services. With our field experience in mind, we'd like to highlight the following observations that the WHO made in January 2017 at its 140<sup>th</sup> session:

- Worldwide, access to health services among vulnerable migrants and refugees within recipient countries remains highly variable and is not consistently addressed;
- The health needs of migrants and refugees may differ significantly from those of the populations of recipient countries;
- Delayed or deferred care and a lack of appropriate preventative services are associated with the progression of diseases and the subsequent need for more extensive and costly treatment; and
- Hunger, famine, and lack of access to potable water are both causes and effects of mass movements of people and obviously take a major toll on the health status of those affected.

ICMC urges Members States to prioritize health care access for people on the move. We know from assisting displaced women, men and children that their ability to remain healthy and adequately provide for their families can be compromised because many are marginalized and may face considerable barriers in accessing equitable social and health care services.

Thus, in order to achieve SDG Target 3.8, which calls for **Universal Health Coverage**, migrants, regardless of their status, should have access to high quality health care; nutritious foods and

clean water; safe, effective and affordable essential medicines and vaccines; cross-border continuity of health care; as well as financial risk protection schemes and relevant forms of health coverage.

We conclude with the following urgent appeal launched in January of this year by Pope Francis in observance of the World Day of Migrants and Refugees:

*“The situation of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees requires that they be guaranteed personal safety and access to basic services...Migratory status should not limit access to national healthcare...[S]olidarity must be concretely expressed at every stage of the migratory experience....”*

Thank you

The International Catholic Migration Commission is a Catholic Church-inspired, international non- governmental organization which protects and serves uprooted people, including refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced people, victims of human trafficking, and migrants, regardless of faith, race, ethnicity or nationality.

Since 2011, ICMC has served as international coordinator of civil society activities in the Global Forum on Migration and Development since 2011, and in similar functions towards the UN High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development in 2013 and the UN High-level Summit on Refugees and Migrants in 2016. ICMC initiated and is co-convenor of the civil society Action Committee, which brings together 24 leading refugee protection and migrant rights NGOs from around the world for joint follow-up to the 2016 Summit’s *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants*.