

Madam Chair,

I wish to start by saying how grateful I am to participate at this 32<sup>nd</sup> Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent at a crucial moment in the life of the movement of which the Luxembourg Red Cross, that I have the honor of presiding, is a motivated and active member.

The numerous personalities and delegates present provide an eloquent testimony to the vitality of our organization.

A vitality that in this troubled world, is more indispensable than ever.

Facing the multiple and dire challenges the world is confronted with, I am confident that the Red-Cross and Red Crescent movement will make a decisive contribution during this conference.

As the speaking time is short, allow me to concentrate on a subject that is of particular importance to me:

I read with great pleasure the engagements and pledges our Movement is making to further the protection of victims and the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence in all circumstances and especially in armed conflicts.

I do want to emphasize that if women are the first victims, they are also the first not to be considered when the process of reconstruction begins.

Clearly, women still lack direct influence when it comes to the identification of reconstruction priorities that are part of standard peace agreements.

Women need to be involved more actively in all our efforts as it is women who are the essential actors in rebuilding post-conflict and post-disaster societies, from the family unit all the way up to the reconstruction of a safe and economically prosperous environment at country level.

I want us to go beyond conventional images of women as victims of war and consider the important inputs a woman can contribute to translate individual grievances into legitimate social concerns.

Moreover, many of them play significant roles in building a new culture of peace at the local level, by reorganizing families and communities, relaunching economic activity, promoting peace education and community-based reconciliation and engaging in social reconstruction activities.

We cannot afford anymore to bypass women in the peacemaking processes, in the elaboration of peace treaties and in the policy making on prevention or prosecution of sexual and gender-based violence.

The National Society that I represent has a major impact on our national territory, yet it is important to me that we contribute as efficiently as possible to the global efforts of the Movement. As a small National Society, we believe that by focusing on one very specific task of the relief efforts in crisis situations, as we currently are facing at the borders of Europe through the migrant crisis, we are able to share the burden and help provide an important asset.

When entering this wonderful venue you probably noticed the Red Cross Shelter mounted at the entrance.

This shelter, conceived specifically for low temperatures, is the result of thorough studies by the Red Cross Shelter Research Unit, a collaboration between the Dutch, Belgian, Turkish and Luxembourg Red Cross.

I would like to invite you all to have a look and share your thoughts and comments with the research team and I would like to warmly thank our partners of the Shelter Research Unit for this successful cooperation! 😊

We have enormous capabilities within our Movement, but it is essential to develop our networking capacity in order to take advantage of everyone's skills.

We therefore support initiatives and resolutions that strengthen our joint ability to meet the enormous humanitarian challenges we face.

It is dear to my heart to draw the maximum attention to these initiatives whether they operate at the level of resource mobilization or concrete actions on the ground.

Let me conclude by expressing the hope that our conference will rise firmly to the challenges we face. I wish us all the greatest success.