

Thank you Chair,

distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I speak today on behalf of the IFRC, the biggest Humanitarian organization in the world present in 192 countries. Our priority is to alleviate human suffering, whatever is the cause, both in time of war or in time of peace.

We have no doubt that substance abuse is one of the main cause of suffering with million people affected who are not receiving adequate treatment.

Despite the declarations of good will and the very clear scientific evidence, it's a matter of fact that still the majority of people that we can call "sick for drugs" all over the world, million people!, are not treated, or receiving inappropriate treatment.

Still too many governments don't have a clear understanding of the essential role of care systems in addressing the drug pandemic.

Facing this dramatic scenario the RCRC intend to advocate for **what we call a humanitarian drug policy.**

A Humanitarian Drug Policy takes a realistic and non-judgmental approach to drug consumption: it takes care of people who use substances through treatment and public health measures. Moreover, alternative measures in the criminal justice field **like the pre-arrest deflection and diversion**, represents an effective solution for engaging police staff from one side and those who need help and care for their addiction on the other side. Prison and concentration camps won't work to solve people sickness. **Treatment and punishment can't work together.**

This is an evidence-based fact.

This high-level debate among Member States is a unique opportunity **to consider the humanitarian drug policy** as an effective strategy

to reduce human suffering and to tackle drug dependence in a health-centred approach.

With this aim, in order to establish a new commitment for a humane and effective drug policy based on evidence, reason and compassion, free from violence and stigmatization, the Red Cross and Red Crescent, together with NGOs and with the support of UNODC, WHO and the Italian Government, **will present the Humanitarian Manifesto called the Rome Consensus 2.0** on Wednesday morning.

This is an opportunity for Member States and CSOs to learn and to reflect together on how **a humanitarian based approach** could be considered as a concrete, valid alternative and viable strategy in the spirit of the Outcome Document of UNGASS 2016.

We need to address our efforts to those groups who live a miserable life because they are discriminated, tortured, deprived of any health and social support, deprived of their rights and dignity because of their drug disorder. The primary objective of humanitarian aid is to save lives, alleviate suffering, and maintain human dignity.

The Rome Consensus 2.0 statement is a call from professionals and beneficiaries to governments and world leaders to make clear and urgent moves towards public health and rights based approaches.

You are all welcome to sign on this Manifesto who's simply giving responses to a general demand coming from all the corners of the world: **to be more humane and condemn any form of violence!**