

GRAND BARGAIN ANNUAL MEETING 2019: ICRC STATEMENT

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) participated actively in the negotiations leading up to the Grand Bargain (GB) agreement in May 2016. Since then, we have continued to play different active roles in the process. The ICRC remains committed to the process and believes it presents the best opportunity to date to bring change to the humanitarian funding ecosystem. We stand behind the initial premise that, through negotiation and political commitment from all sides, we can all bring improvements to the way operations are funded and, ultimately, deliver more effective programs for the affected communities.

Most of the areas that the GB addresses are part of our institutional monitoring framework. We have taken steps to progress on key issues, like enhancing the way we interact with the affected communities or within the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, like supporting our sister organisations, the National Societies operating as front-line responders through the setting up of a National Society Investment Alliance. (The NSIA, which became operational in in 2018)

We believe the Grand Bargain adds value by prompting broader discussions on such issues and by enabling all partners (donor states and humanitarian actors) to sit at the table and steer change in a strategic manner. We are now ending year three and the process will now have a new Eminent Person, so it is a good moment to take stock.

SUCCESSSES THUS FAR:

In line with what we said above, the overall policy discussion on humanitarian funding has increased its focus and effectiveness with this compact. We also now have better defined the rules and procedures in a process which is not only incredibly ambitious, but which also sensibly aims to avoid burdening its members with additional bureaucracy. We have taken pragmatic steps towards better aligning information-flows, decision-making and monitoring.

The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has also improved its coordination internally, for example in relation to the Strengthening Movement Cooperation and Coordination initiative and the launch of the NSIA with the ultimate goal to strengthen the complementary role National Societies play as local responders.

Lastly, the ICRC as an organisation has made significant advances in how it delivers its programs, namely on its approach to affected communities and on the delivery of cash. We have also put a lot of time and energy on improving our transparency, not only towards donors, but to the whole ecosystem (including the communities we serve) through the publication of all our financial data on IATI. We have also made important progress regarding accountability to our donors, our staff and the communities we support by reinforcing our global compliance office, which contributes to strengthening the ICRC's management capacities in terms of risk management, internal control, and Code of Conduct compliance.

MAIN CHALLENGES AHEAD.

All elements of this compact are intertwined, so we need to be strategic in determining where connections should be established and in sequencing the implementation of different undertakings. We would thus encourage all signatories to work towards creating synergies between workstreams. In addition, the negotiation of the *quid pro quo* at the political level needs to be revived. We believe that, as humanitarian actors need to improve their transparency and accountability (see above) donor partners should better streamline their reporting requirements, their field assessments and, in exchange for better quality assurances, provide better quality funding. The ICRC is very thankful to have seen a slight increase in the percentage of our flexible funding in 2018. However, we know that we need to continue working together with our partners bilaterally and within the Grand Bargain multilaterally to ensure that this is indeed a reversal of a negative trend.