The Work of National Societies

National Societies often have different approaches to assisting and protecting migrants, depending on the needs in their community. Some National Societies may have special, targeted programmes or projects. Others include migrants in general humanitarian programmes and projects, which address the needs and vulnerabilities of the population in its full diversity. Some of these areas of work may include:

**Humanitarian Assistance** – National Societies provide food, shelter, clothing, health care, first aid, and psycho-social support to migrants throughout their journey (in countries of origin, transit and in receiving countries). Social and economic distress as well as the lack of services and opportunities for development are often major causes for migration. In order to alleviate this migratory pressure, National Societies may provide support to food security and income generation programmes, programmes for health and education, or humanitarian relief action at community level. Additionally, disaster risk reduction, together with disaster preparedness, is a key strategy for National Societies in order to reduce migratory pressure on disaster-prone communities.

**Protection** – National Societies work with the ICRC to restore family links between migrants and their families and to undertake protection work for migrants in detention, with a view to help improve detention conditions, when necessary. National Societies provide administrative advice, act against exploitation and raise awareness of the risks associated in particular with irregular migration.

**Advocacy** – National Societies help overcome barriers of exclusion and discrimination against migrants. They support the social inclusion of migrants, and reduce the potential for community tensions. Humanitarian advocacy on behalf of migrants can take the form of discreet interventions with authorities or private parties; or of public statements, messages, or campaigns. National Societies at times call upon public authorities to take action against racism, xenophobia and the exploitation of migrants. Humanitarian advocacy may also encourage governments to take measures to alleviate hardship and pressure to migrate, through improved services and economic development.

**Integration and Re-Integration** – National Societies help to establish new community links for migrants, as links with their families and communities at home are often weakened, and isolation can increase their vulnerability. As part of their overall engagement in promoting the potentials and perspectives of migrants, National Societies also provide reception services, and foster social participation and solidarity, for example, in engaging migrants as Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers.