5.5 Universal health coverage

The IFRC welcomes the DG’s two technical reports related to universal health coverage. The emphasis placed on adopting approaches to primary health care that are people-centred and delivered in a way that addresses the determinants of health across a person’s life course is important and welcome.

However, let us not forget that prevention and care do not start and stop at the doors of the health clinic or hospital. Effective public health reaches into people’s homes, our schools and our workplaces. Especially important and effective in linking the formal health system to the people they serve are volunteers, who provide valuable contributions in all countries across the world to improve the health and wellbeing of their wider community.

Whether it is responding to Ebola in the DRC, disasters in Indonesia and Mozambique, or serving socially distanced people in Europe, volunteers have an important part to play in this agenda. Therefore, the IFRC and 190 National Red Cross Red Crescent Societies wish to call for explicit acknowledgement of the vital work of community health workers - and volunteers - in the proposed Resolutions.

We are not alone in this request: the report - Primary health care towards universal health coverage – called for recognition of the role played by volunteers and informal caregivers. We heard from members of the Executive Board in January the importance of recognising volunteers and the value that they bring to their health systems. Let us not lose this opportunity to also acknowledge and support their vital work in supporting the most vulnerable and in achieving Universal Health Coverage.