

Global Initiative to Galvanise Political Commitment to IHL: Workstream 2

Draft speaking points for the launch of the progress report

Timing: 3-5 minutes

Proposed structure:

- Introduction of co-chairs
- Motivation of co-chairs to lead WS2
- Objective of WS2
- Consultation process for WS2
- Findings from the consultations
- Next steps
- Expression of gratitude to those who have taken part in the consultations.

Draft speaking points

It is a great pleasure, and honour, to address you today on behalf of the co-chairs of the workstream on National IHL Committees — Germany, Peru, the Philippines and the United Kingdom.

As co-chairs we have are deeply committed to the role of National Committees in promoting respect for IHL. We believe that these important entities are, or can be, a vital bridge between international commitments and domestic action. There are now 121 National Committees across regions around the world. They comprise a wide variety of members - policy makers, government officials, legal experts, the armed forces, national societies, the judiciary and academia – and have a wide range of roles and responsibilities. Collectively they represent a diverse wealth of experience and expertise.

The proper implementation, understanding of and compliance with IHL is clearly an urgent global challenge. Robust domestic implementation, firmly embedded in national structures and across all areas of domestic practice, is key in ensuring full respect for IHL. National Committees, rooted in their respective national systems, have a key role to play in this regard – in promoting training and dissemination, full implementation in national legislation and procedures, necessary preparation measures and operational compliance.

To this end, this workstream has been exploring avenues for enhancing the role of National Committees drawing on the diverse experience and expertise of Committees around the world.

The co-chairs have spent the first year of this workstream facilitating a series of discussions on the role of National IHL Committees in promoting respect for IHL. We were privileged to have been joined by more than one hundred States for our initial global discussion in May and greatly benefited from the ideas and practices shared. We then examined these ideas through regional perspectives. To date we have completed regional consultations in Europe, the Americas, Asia Pacific and ECOWAS

regions. We look forward to completing all regional consultations by the end of this year.

It has been very clear that National IHL Committees are valued by governments. When functioning well, National Committees are an important and efficient tool for advancing respect for IHL obligations. At the same time, many Committees share similar challenges – lack of resources, turnover in membership, and, with so many demands on governments, prioritising work on IHL implementation. Many have suggested that they would welcome more support, tools, standards and guidance to overcome such challenges and maximise impact. The sharing of experience and expertise between committees has also been a recurring theme. And of course there are many States which have not yet decided to establish National Committees whose experiences and perspectives have also been important.

Our future work will therefore respond to these requests for further guidance, and exchanges of information, on the functioning and composition of National IHL Committees. This will include discussing some of the proposals made during the consultations on possible shared standards and the form that these could take. Critically, work on this will continue to reflect the importance of diverse, context-specific approaches. There is no ‘one’ common way that could, or indeed should, work for every committee.

Indeed, the value in the diversity in Committees’ composition, mandates and modalities came through strongly in all discussions. Learning from this diversity was universally appreciated. Capturing the wealth of experiences shared during the discussions is vital as is further facilitating exchanges and support between committees.

On behalf of the co-chairs, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all States and experts who have participated in these discussions, and whose advice has brought us to this stage in the process. We reaffirm our commitment to advancing this work. And we look forward to continuing the dialogue with you as part of the Global Initiative’s efforts to promote the full compliance with IHL.

Thank you.