



ICVA Statement at Ministerial Conference on Afghanistan, 13 September 2021.

Delivered by Mr. Ignacio Packer, Executive Director, ICVA

ICVA members and their local Afghan partners have been working with and in support of the people of Afghanistan for many years.

As the current situation unfolds, we as the international community must step up our coordination and increase our efforts to ensure we can meet the challenges we face in this new operating environment.

The current situation is complex. To continue delivering, we might need to adjust and negotiate, but we must strive to do this without compromising our values and principles. Since 2013, the IASC System has formally committed to place protection at the centre of humanitarian action. The response in Afghanistan must remain protection centred. We ask all IASC organisations and Member States to work together that this commitment is upheld in principle and in practice.

From States that are already in discussions with the Authorities in Afghanistan, we ask support by highlighting the importance of independent NGO service delivery, including on protection and without discrimination for all in Afghanistan.

As a humanitarian community, we must redouble our efforts to ensure that women and girls, men and boys receive the assistance they urgently need. To succeed on this, we need the full participation of all humanitarians, particularly our Afghan women colleagues, without whom we will be unable to reach the most vulnerable and ensure no-one is left behind.

We encourage all States to work in solidarity to ensure the rights and protection of Afghans displaced across their borders and to uphold the principle of non-refoulement. As NGOs, we stand ready to support States in implementing these policies.

In Afghanistan, as in all humanitarian settings, local communities, civil society, national and international NGOs will be the foundation of any humanitarian effort. We call on donors to support their efforts fully and to provide flexible, timely and adequate funding to meet urgent needs.

Humanitarian interventions should be safeguarded from sanctions, counter-terrorism measures, and any other potential restrictions that would impede principled action. To this end we call for specific support and clarity by States and other members of the international community, so that we can deliver safely and manage risk appropriately.

Maintaining a common approach and messaging across the humanitarian community is the only way to achieve principled humanitarian action in Afghanistan and as we deliver today, we must remain accountable to the people of Afghanistan and their future.