

October 2015 – BRIDGING PAPER 1

Draft version for inputs at the Civil Society Days of the GFMD

Child rights Bridging Paper – the 5 year action plan for collaboration from a child rights perspective

# Migration and development in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:

## A child rights perspective

This paper is part of a series of bridging papers looking at different points of the 5-year Action Plan for Collaboration from a child rights perspective. The aim is to examine the specificities affecting children in the context of migration and inform more coherent approaches from a child rights standpoint. It has been prepared to provide input for the Civil Society Days of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (Istanbul, Turkey, 12 to 13 October 2015).



# POST 2015

## Key recommendations

- 1 No matter migration status, origin, ethnic background or nationality, all children should have their rights respected, fulfilled and implemented. They should not be denied being part of implementation of the 2030 Development Agenda.
- 2 Indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) must be disaggregated by migration status in a way that grants an explicit focus on equity.
- 3 Non-mainstream data and innovative approaches must be developed to count everyone. A special attention should be given to the more invisible groups of children as we find within the children in the context of migration.
- 4 Civil society representation – and specifically to voice the concerns for children in the context of migration – is urgently need to be considered as one of the key stakeholder groups both within the Global Partnership and within the Fund to End Violence Against Children. The Partnership and the Fund aim at delivering on the violence against children targets.
- 5 Adequate longer-term development and resilience-based funding, is needed to help ease the burden on neighbouring states in supporting refugees of which, in many contexts, 50 % are children. Increased solidarity and responsibility sharing by other countries is also needed to allow refugees to find protection beyond the immediate neighbouring region.
- 6 Economic evaluations of the care delivered to children in the context of migration should inform policies to implement the child focussed targets of the SDGs on the long term economic effects of not addressing the challenges adequately.

## Context

**Deprivation and unequal opportunity** prevent children from taking full part in the life of their communities. Children are denied a fair chance in life due to poverty, violence and abuse, lack of an education, sickness, armed conflict or natural disasters. With the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), nations have entered in a new phase of development underpinned by the 2030 development agenda. A historic opportunity to advance the rights and well-being of every child, especially the most disadvantaged. If they do not share in progress, there can be no sustainable development, prosperity or peace .

The SDGs, pledged to « **leave no one behind** ». Today, however, for many children in the context of migration, these laudable goals will sound hollow. Often the object of suspicion, neglect and abuse, children are locked up in immigration detention centers, denied access to essential services because of their or their parents' status and subjected to the same regimes of criminalization as adult migrants.

**The 25-27 September UN Summit on the Post 2015 Development Agenda** decided on a transformative agenda within which migrants and diaspora are clearly recognized as actors and subjects of sustainable human and economic development.

This recognition reflects wide evidence that, regardless of migratory status, migrants contribute to **economic growth and well-being** not only in countries of destination, but also in countries of origin, e.g. by sending money back home (remittances) or investing as social entrepreneurs in their home communities.<sup>[1]</sup> As access to basic human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants, regardless of status, greatly increases these contributions by migrants, to human as well as economic development.

The SDGs consist of 17 goals and 169 targets. Not all of them reference children, but **all are relevant to children's lives**. Taken together, the goals amount to a holistic approach to meeting children's needs, protecting them from harm and securing their environments.

<sup>[1]</sup> For further developments on the contribution of diaspora, we refer to the bridging paper n°2 Engagement of diaspora and migrant associations: A child rights perspective

**Migration-explicit targets** appear under the goals on economic growth, employment and decent work (SDG 8), inequality (SDG 10), and means of implementation (SDG 17). Violence against children **targets<sup>[2]</sup> which include the children in the context of migration** appear under the goals on inclusive and equitable quality education and lifeline learning opportunities for all (SDG 4), gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls (SDG 5), economic growth, employment and decent work (SDG 8), inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements (SDG 11), peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, access to justice for all and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels (SDG 16).

## Key issues and challenges

### Non-discrimination in the implementation of the 2030 Development Agenda

Children in the context of migration, including children left behind and children on the move, appear in the universal protected group of « children » for which the rights are framed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Access to rights and of being part of the 2030 Development Agenda should not be hampered by the way legislation and policy divides children into a number of different categories.

All SDGs are relevant to children's lives. They amount to a holistic approach to meeting children's needs and rights. The SDGs have to apply « for all » and that no one is to be left behind. Human rights of migrants, in particular of children, should be respected, protected and fulfilled without discrimination. Non-discrimination is one of the pillars of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

### Robust and disaggregated data to reach children on the margins of society

Progress towards achieving the sustainable development goals will be judged by whether interventions reduce inequality and reach the most vulnerable children and communities. Robust and disaggregated data play a crucial role in identifying and reaching children on the margins of society as too often are children in the context of migration. Indicators must be disaggregated in a way that grants an explicit focus on equity.

Mainstream surveys generally extracting data from households do not capture the reality of children, who are the most vulnerable and at risk. These children live in refugee camps, in institutions and other substandard forms of alternative care, in detention, in promiscuous working and living conditions... The Committee on the Rights of the Child has urged all States Parties to develop a system of data collection and indicators consistent with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

*« Not everything is statistics and numbers, but also dialogue, participation and perceptions. [...] We need to make sure that the eradication of poverty and inequality will be measured by how children live better with their families, without violence and with love. » – Rodrigo, 14, Chile*

Migration status should go beyond the information citizenship, place of birth, time spent in host country to include information about the child's or youth's administrative situation. In doing so, we should avoid creating « policy siloes ». The absence of comprehensive information about migrants' immigration status gives rise to major problems in public and policy debates and do enable to systematically assess the protection needs of the children.

<sup>[2]</sup> **Violence Against Children-related indicators:** **Target 4.a** Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all **Target 5.2** Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation **Target 5.3** Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation **Target 8.7** Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms **Target 11.7** By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities **Target 16.1** Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere **Target 16.2** End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children **Target 16.9** By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration

## Multi-stakeholder partnerships

The migration-related goals and targets concerning children in the context of migration have to be translated into national policies, and ensure their adequate resourcing and implementation. To support this translation multi-stakeholder partnerships present important opportunities for many countries.

Governments have called for multi-stakeholder partnerships to play a central role in mobilizing and sharing knowledge, expertise, technologies, and financial resources to support the delivery of the SDGs.

Discussions and consultations are underway for a Global Partnership to Prevent Violence Against Children and an associated Fund. A Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children offers an opportunity to help governments, international organizations, civil society, faith leaders, the private sector, philanthropists and foundations, researchers and academics work together to confront the unacceptable levels of violence that children suffer.

The Partnership and the Fund, announced in Addis Ababa during the Third Financing for Development conference in July 2015, will support the implementation of the targets on violence against children in the 2030 Development Agenda, especially target 16.2, which aims to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.

The partnership is to operate at global and national levels but also as a movement, changing the attitudes and social norms that tolerate violence, with children playing a central role.

The partnership is envisaged as a multi-stakeholder partnership and civil society organisations merit a significant role for its extensive role in child protection programming and service provision.

Civil Society involvement in the process so far has been limited. Recognition is needed for the representation of civil society organisations voicing, amongst others, the concern for children in the context of migration, as one of the key stakeholder groups, both within the Partnership and the Fund.

## Longer-term development and resilience-based funds

To deliver on the SDGs, all are relevant to children's lives, all relevant to children in the context of migration, the power of governments, the private sector, civil society, communities of faith and academia should be harnessed to combine and build on their efforts, provide leadership and demonstrate results for children and families in the context of migration.

This has to translate in allocating adequate longer-term development and resilience-based funds. Refugee children, accounting for 50 % of the total refugees in some geographical areas, are of high vulnerability and urgently need due attention. If not governed and resourced properly, adverse impacts, both for the countries and for migrants themselves will increase: e.g. irregular and dangerous migration with high levels of vulnerability for children, human trafficking, abusive migrant smuggling; discrimination and xenophobia; physical and mental health distress...

How we decide to invest in children in the context of migration and how we engage them in building the future will ultimately determine whether we are successful in creating a more peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world.

**Acknowledgment:** The bridging papers were drafted by Lisa Myers, Mirela Shuteriqi and Ignacio Packer for Terre des Hommes [www.terredeshommes.org](http://www.terredeshommes.org) and the Destination Unknown Campaign [www.destination-unknown.org](http://www.destination-unknown.org). Appreciation goes out to the representatives of a broad range of organisations who provided insightful comments and stimulating discussions to prepare these initial papers. Discussions will continue during the Civil Society Days (and beyond) to strengthen efforts to bridge the migration, development and child rights perspectives in the 5 year Action Plan for Collaboration.