

28 September 2015

The need to protect children on the move

ChildFund Alliance, a worldwide alliance of 12 children's development organizations, is deeply concerned about the situation of children on the move in the large-scale refugee and migrant crisis across Europe.* Some of these children are unaccompanied, and others have lost their caregivers in the journey. All of them are in a vulnerable situation and at risk of different forms of violence, including child labour, sexual exploitation and trafficking.

For the past three years, ChildFund Alliance has actively advocated for governments, multilateral institutions, and civil society to prioritize a world where children are free from violence and exploitation. Over 680,000 people signed our petition in support of this call. As part of our global campaign, we have also consulted with over 16,000 children in 50 countries. Their message has been resounding: they want world leaders to ensure all children are protected from all forms of violence and exploitation, in development *and* humanitarian contexts.

Governments across the world, in particular Member States of the European Union (EU), must not forget their recently acquired commitments under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were adopted at the United Nations (UN) last week. They must strive to realize the vision of a world where children grow up free from violence and exploitation (para. 8), and where the human rights of persons on the move are fully respected (para. 29).**

ChildFund Alliance calls on governments to ensure that the rights of all children on the move are respected, regardless of their status as migrants or refugees, and in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees. We further call on all actors to prioritize the protection of children on the move from all forms of violence and exploitation, whether in the countries of origin, transit or destination.

As a member of CONCORD, the European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development, ChildFund Alliance strongly supports its call for a series of key measures to be adopted by European Justice and Home Affairs Ministers. To meet the needs of today and prepare for tomorrow, we urge EU Member States to improve the quality of reception conditions for persons on the move, particularly children, and implement efficient asylum procedures that meet EU standards.***

We strongly urge the international community to work toward negotiated solutions to the current crisis and its root causes. We also encourage EU Member States to continue to support the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), other UN entities and civil society organizations, and ensure their work in the countries of origin, transit and destination is appropriately funded.

Through its international programming in 58 countries, ChildFund Alliance will continue its work to improve the lives of vulnerable children and help them achieve their rights, strengthening communities in countries where migration originates.

END

ChildFund Alliance

www.childfundalliance.org

A worldwide alliance of children's development organisations, we work in 58 countries to improve the lives of vulnerable and excluded children, help them overcome poverty, and achieve their rights. Founded 75 years ago, our members are not-for-profit organisations which work directly with children, families and their communities. The Alliance seeks to speak with one global voice for, with and on behalf of children. Our vision is a world in which children realise their rights and achieve their potential.

* Children on the move is an umbrella definition used by some international NGOs for persons under the age of 18 who have left their place of habitual residence and are either on the way towards a new destination or have already reached such destination. More information at <http://www.gmfc.org>.

** United Nations General Assembly (2015), *Transforming our world: The 2030 agenda for sustainable development*. Available at <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org>.

*** CONCORD, EPAM, and Social Platform, 'The best and worst of Europe: Letter to European Justice & Home Affairs Ministers' (11 September 2015). Available at <http://www.concordeurope.org>.