

Ms Louise Arbour
Special Representative
of the Secretary General for International Migration
United Nations Headquarters
UN Secretariat Building
S-2729 New York, NY 10017

12 September 2017

Re: Inputs to the UN Secretary-General's Report on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

Dear Ms Arbour,

We are writing on behalf of **the Initiative on Child Rights in the Global Compacts** and in relation to your office's request for inputs to the UN Secretary General's Report on the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. We would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide your office with our inputs to this very important report.

Today, nearly 50 million children have migrated across borders or been forcibly displaced. Every day and in every region, these children face a variety of rights violations, from exploitation and violence to being separated from their families, detained because of their migration status and deprived of essential protections and services. These abuses constitute a grave human rights crisis.

The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 19 September 2016 expresses the political will of world leaders to share responsibility on a global scale with regards to refugees and migrants and contains a number of important commitments to children. The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration provides the historical opportunity to reaffirm these commitments and to focus on how these principles are to be upheld and operationalised for migrant children.

The Initiative for Child Rights in the Global Compacts was formed at the end of 2016 with the objective of raising awareness and building a constituency of actors who would work together to ensure that the rights of children who are on the move or impacted by migration are at the very core of the Global Compacts, and their rights fully respected and fulfilled. This inter-agency initiative brings together **27 agencies**, and is led by a steering committee co-convened by Save the Children and Terre des Hommes. It comprises experts, multilateral institutions, UN agencies and non-governmental and philanthropic organisations and aims to ensure that both global compacts reflect a common approach to protecting children on the move.

As the Initiative's submission for your report, I am delighted to enclose the four-page **synthesis report** of our working document entitled '**Child Rights in the Global Compacts: Recommendations for protecting, promoting and implementing the human rights of children on the move in the proposed Global Compacts**'. This synthesis report lays out goals and targets – in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – that aim to operationalise – in the framework of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration – key commitments to child rights outlined in the New York Declaration and in international law. This report has been produced by key experts and is based on inputs and submissions provided by the Initiative's steering committee agencies, as well as on the inputs of over 300 participants consulted on the working document during the Global Conference on Children on the Move, organised by the Initiative in Berlin on 12-13 June 2017.

The working document sets out six priority issues for inclusion in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. These six issues, related to the protection of and inclusive measures for refugee and migrant children, include:

- 1) Ensuring non-discrimination and integration;
- 2) Ensuring best interests of the child;
- 3) Ensuring child protection systems;
- 4) Ensuring children's access to services;
- 5) Ending child immigration detention;
- 6) Promoting comprehensive, sustainable and durable solutions.

These issues have been selected because of their importance for refugee and migrant children, drawing on child-related commitments made in the New York Declaration as well as on other binding and soft law obligations in international law. In particular, these six issues reflect the principles enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including non-discrimination, best interests of the child, the right to life, survival and development, and the right of the child to express his or her views. It is crucial that the UNCRC be the overriding framework for guiding and reviewing national and international responses to migrant children. Migrant children should be treated as children first and foremost, regardless of their status, and their best interests should be the primary consideration in all matters concerning them, including in transit, at borders and when identifying sustainable and protective solutions for these children and their families.

By suggesting a framework in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – focused on goals, targets and indicators related to the rights of refugee and migrant children, the attached synthesis report and, in more detail, the full report (accessible at <http://www.childrenonthemove.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Working-document-29-June-2017.pdf>) propose actionable and measurable commitments for Member States and other duty bearers, for inclusion in both Global Compacts.

For these commitments to be fulfilled, it is crucial that the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration provide for appropriate means of implementation, in particular, adequate financial resources from national governments, donors, the international community and financial institutions. These resources ought to be used for developing national plans of action, implementing relevant legislation and policies, and strengthening cross-border coordination mechanisms and child protection systems that are responsive to the needs of refugee and migrant children.

Moreover, transparent, inclusive and responsive accountability mechanisms should be established, at the local, national and regional levels, to support the meaningful participation of all relevant stakeholders in all processes affecting refugee and migrant children.

Within the Initiative on Child Rights in the Global Compacts, our principal focus is on working closely with partners and mobilising key actors at the global, regional and national levels during the periods leading up to and following the adoption of the Global Compacts. As part of our work, we would be delighted to discuss with you and your office how we could best collaborate to ensure that the rights of migrant children are at the core of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

Sincerely,



Daniela Reale
Save the Children UK
Co-Chair of Initiative for Child Rights
in the Global Compacts



Amy Hong
Terre des Hommes
Co-Chair of Initiative for Child Rights
in the Global Compacts