



## **Statement by participants of Malawi Policy Roundtable on Alternatives to Immigration Detention 8 May 2017, Lilongwe**

Recognising that Malawi is committed to ensuring that migrants both at, and within our borders, are accorded the right conditions and treatment in line with international and regional standards, whilst promoting their human rights,

Recognising the need for regional responsibility sharing in managing migration, particularly consistency of systems which address and inform migrants pre-departure, during transit and in any temporary or permanent migration destination,

Reaffirming that migrants, asylum seekers and refugees may find themselves in Malawi in a vulnerable condition, increasing the need for them to be screened away from detention and into alternatives where they can access the necessary services more easily and acknowledging there may also be community strengths which will reduce the burden on government and overcrowded detention,

Noting the commitment of the Malawi government to work towards ending and limiting immigration detention, particularly for children as committed to in the New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants of 2016.

We the participants of Malawi Policy Roundtable on Alternatives to Immigration Detention:

1. Endorse the principle that there are alternatives to immigration detention and commit to increasing their use in managing migration in Malawi.
2. Commit to involving all relevant stakeholders to approach these issues in the spirit of collaboration going forward to ensure Malawi can remain on track with its international commitments
3. Agree to improve individualised screening, assessment and registration of migrants in Malawi, at entry points, in prisons and through community policing. We acknowledge that civil society groups can play a role in such processes, working with the government and relevant agencies, through a case management approach.
4. Aim to improve data collection related to migrants moving through Malawi so that it can feed into informed policy and decision-making, including finalisation of the National Referral Mechanism by end of 2017
5. Furthermore, we propose the formation of a National Level Taskforce to follow up these agreements in order to: give input to the revision of the National Migration Policy and NRM; coordinate efforts moving forward to bring about alternatives, including the alignment of budgets; and to support the development of a pilot alternative for migrant children (possibly: foster care, shelter or rehabilitation centres).