



Cross-regional Exchange

“Working together towards Ending Child Detention in the Context of International Migration. Sharing positive practices and experiences”

Monday, 4 June 2018, 13.15 – 14.30
Conference Room F
UNHQ, New York

*The Permanent Mission of Brazil, the Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Philippines and the
Permanent Mission of the Republic of Zambia
in collaboration with
the International Detention Coalition, UNICEF and the Initiative for Child Rights in the Global
Compacts*

Background

Every day, all around the world, millions of children are affected by immigration detention. Whether detained due to their status or impacted by the detention of their parents or guardians, children are particularly vulnerable to abuse and neglect when subject to detention.

There is now a growing international consensus – reinforced by international and regional jurisprudence – that immigration detention of children, even for a short period of time, is an extremely harmful practice, is not an appropriate protection mechanism, is always a violation of child rights and is never in their best interests.

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has provided authoritative guidance on this while calling on States to forbid the practice of child immigration detention by law and to fully implement this prohibition in practice by resorting to non-custodial community-based alternatives. Furthermore, in the New York Declaration States recognized the need to fully protect child migrants with full respect for their human rights and fundamental freedoms giving primary consideration at all times to the best interests of the child and attempted to directly address the specific practice of child immigration detention by committing to “pursuing alternatives” and “working towards the ending of this practice”.

In the context of international migration, States often detain children for a number of reasons which are completely avoidable, such as to conduct routine health and identity screening; to maintain family units; or to facilitate engagement with migration procedures. Protecting the rights of children and their best interests is not at odds with effective migration governance, but rather an essential element of it. Effective non-custodial, community-based alternative care arrangements do exist and are being used successfully in very different national contexts. These alternatives have proven to be not only child-sensitive but also more effective and more affordable.

Objective of the event

The aim of this cross regional exchange is to demonstrate that not only migration governance without resorting to child detention is a possibility, it is a reality in many States in the world and in another set of States governments are taking positive steps towards ending it, often with the support of international and civil society organizations. In order to end the practice of child immigration detention globally, these positive practices and successful pilots should be shared, scaled up and promoted.

The exchange will open a space for States to discuss their experiences implementing alternatives to the immigration detention of children and to explore how dialogue and experience-sharing could illuminate the implementation phase of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. It will also allow to reflect on the global or regional initiatives and multi-stakeholder partnerships and coalitions which need to be put in place to bring to practice the whole-government whole-society approach of the Global Compact in relation to child immigration detention by developing national action plans to phase out immigration detention of children in law, policy and practice and by focusing on making alternative care arrangements accessible and available.

Resource

[Roadmap to Ending Child Immigration Detention](#): To help foster the exchange in the lead up to the implementation phase of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, the Initiative for Child Rights in the Global Compacts and the International Detention Coalition have developed a model roadmap which outlines practical steps for States to effectively honor their commitments by developing national action plans with time-bound milestones to phase out immigration detention of children in law, policy and practice. Drawing upon IDC's research, the Roadmap includes examples of positive practices and successful experiences.

Agenda

Opening Statement

- Ms. Sarah Lou Arriola, Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs, Department of Foreign Affairs, Republic of the Philippines

Co-chairs Opening Remarks

- Ms. Verena Knaus, Senior Migration Advisor, UNICEF
- Ms. Melanie Teff, Senior Advocacy Advisor, IDC

State Panel

- Ms. Guadalupe Rudy, Director General of International Organizations and Conferences, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Panama
- Mr. Jeff Lishomwa, Deputy Director General of Immigration, Ministry of Home Affairs, Republic of Zambia

Cross-regional Exchange

- Open to all State delegations

Closing Remarks

- Ms. Melanie Teff, Senior Advocacy Advisor, IDC
- Mr. Gregory Maniatis, Program Director of the International Migration Initiative, Open Society Foundation
- Ms. Verena Knaus, Senior Migration Advisor, UNICEF