

GFMD Side Event

Moving from detention to adequate reception and care
through peer learning and exchange

Interactive roundtable discussion under the umbrella of the

Cross-Regional Peer Learning Platform on Alternatives to Child Immigration Detention

Tuesday, 21 January 2020,
11h00 – 12h30, Panecillo 1 Room
Centro de Convenciones Metropolitano
Quito, Ecuador

The past decade has seen the emergence of global consensus on the need to end the practice of child immigration detention by developing alternatives – because detention is never in the best interests of the child; because it causes profound, long-lasting and well-documented damage to children’s physical and psychological health and wellbeing; and because it is an expensive and ineffective migration governance tool.

The negotiations of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) played a major role in consolidating this consensus. Under Objective 13 h) Member States reaffirmed existing human rights obligations and committed to *protect and respect the rights and best interests of the child at all times, regardless of migration status, by ensuring availability and accessibility of alternatives to detention in non-custodial contexts, favouring community-based care arrangements and by working to end this practice of in the context of international migration.*

This commitment illustrates the level of ambition of the international community on this issue. However, one year after the Marrakesh Summit, countless migrant and displaced children continue to be detained, both alone and with their families. This shows how challenging it is to phase out child immigration detention in practice – which is often linked to the weakness of child protection and alternative care systems, and to the fact that alternatives to detention are not so much physical places as processes and capacities that take decades to build.

The Cross-Regional Peer Learning Platform on Alternatives to Child Immigration Detention

Ongoing national and regional efforts show that succeeding in moving from child immigration detention to adequate reception and care entails addressing challenges while scaling up existing positive practices. International cooperation, collaborative work, targeted support and peer learning are critical to galvanize progress on the ground.

With this in mind, IDC and UNICEF are co-convening a global multi-stakeholder initiative to support States in addressing the practical challenges they face when putting in place alternatives to child immigration detention.

The Platform provides an umbrella for government experts to come together and engage in peer exchange and learning across regions, with the support of all relevant stakeholders. It provides an open space to discuss common challenges, share progress, exchange positive practices, explore opportunities for peer support, and build capacities through meetings and site visits.

Since the adoption of the GCM in Marrakech and the framing meeting of the Platform in Geneva in 2018, regional peer learning events co-hosted by different governments, IDC and UNICEF have taken place in Ecuador, Namibia, Tunisia and Thailand. These exchanges among States have helped develop the Platform, tailoring it to actual needs on the ground.

The GFMD Quito Summit: Taking Stock and Moving Forward

The theme of the Twelfth GFMD Summit – *Sustainable Approaches to Human Mobility: Upholding Rights, Strengthening State Agency and Advancing Development through Partnerships and Collective Action* – provides the perfect frame for the Platform to look back at the past year and discuss how to accelerate progress ahead of the first Global Peer Learning Meeting on Alternatives to Child Immigration Detention that IDC and UNICEF will convene in 2020 under the umbrella of the Platform and the UN Migration Network.

This interactive roundtable discussion will bring together States, local governments, UN agencies, civil society organisations and young people impacted by detention to continue cross-regional peer learning by assessing ongoing efforts, exchanging positive practices, discussing common challenges and setbacks, and identifying concrete opportunities for international cooperation and peer support in phasing out immigration detention of children and families through adequate reception and care.

Agenda

11:00 - 11:10 Opening

11:10 - 11:20 Back to basics: the human cost of detention

11:20 - 12:20 Interactive Roundtable Discussion

- Positive steps and setbacks: perspectives from the country level
- Whole-of-government solutions: the role of local authorities
- Whole-of-society approach: technical support by stakeholders
- Whole-of-UN roadmap: the UN Migration Network Working Group on Alternatives to Detention
- Consultation phase of the Platform: lessons learned from the 2019 regional peer learning meetings
- International cooperation among States: opportunities of the peer learning approach and next steps for the Platform

12:20 - 12:30 Closing

Interventions will include representatives from

- Government delegations
- Local governments
- UN entities
- Civil society organisations
- Academia
- Young people

Speakers will include
(further participants tbc)

- Mr Miguel Ángel Virgilio Aguilar Dorado, Deputy Director General at the Center for Migration Studies, Ministry of Interior, Mexico
- Ms Chompunut Phasuphan, First Secretary, Human Migration Section at the Department of International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand
- Lord Major Balimwezo, Nakawa, Uganda
- Mr Jonathan Prentice, Head of the Secretariat of the UN Network on Migration
- Mr Felipe González, Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants
- Mr José Luis Guerra Mayorga, Child Protection Officer, UNICEF Ecuador
- Ms Diana Martínez, Program Officer IDC Americas
- Mr Pablo Ceriani Cernadas, Consultant to UNICEF Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean and former Vice-Chair of the UN Committee on Migrant Workers
- Mr Hayat Akbari, Youth Delegate and Asia Pacific Focal Point at the UN Mayor Group on Children and Youth
- Ms Daniela Reale, Co-Lead of the Initiative for Child Rights in the Global Compacts

The side event will be moderated by Verena Knaus, Chief, Migration and Displacement, UNICEF and Silvia Gómez Moradillo, Global Advocacy Coordinator, IDC