

Statement of SOS Children's Villages International on occasion of being granted the observer status at the 107th session of the Council of International Organization for Migration, held in Geneva from December 5 – 8, 2016

Director General Swing,
Distinguished Council Members,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

SOS Children's Villages is honored by your decision to accord us Observer status. We operate in over 130 countries

- by supporting children and their caregivers in the best interest of the child;
- by lending our expertise in child care to governmental and non-governmental agencies;
- by providing alternative care in line with the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children

In the context of migration and humanitarian disasters, amongst others we make every effort:

- that unaccompanied children are protected and fully cared for;
- and to reunite unaccompanied or separated children with families;

Our commitment is clear. It accompanies us also as observer in IOM:

All children have the right to be treated as children, regardless of their migration status or that of their parents. A child is a child – the CRC cannot be cut into half, either can the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

With respect to the Global Compact for safe migration, where we propose and hope for thematic consultations, we would like to highlight the following 6 points:

1. **All children - including refugee and migrant children - have the right to quality care.**
Children who have temporarily or permanently lost parental care should be provided with quality care.
2. **Prevent unnecessary family separation.**
Keep migrant and refugee children in the care of their family, trace a child's family as soon as an unaccompanied child is identified and re-establish family ties in the shortest possible time.
3. **Children should be protected across borders.** It is essential to prevent children from going missing, be at risk of exploitation and trafficking, and to support children to move safely.
4. **Migration detention is never in the best interest of the child.**
It exposes children to abuse, denies their access to good education and relevant services, undermines children's well-being, etc.
SOS Children's Villages and other partners are ready to share information and proposals on practiced alternatives respecting children's rights.
5. **Ensuring quality data on** refugee and migrant children including special vulnerabilities, such as the loss of parental care.
6. **Children's and youth' participation** can play a vital role in finding and implementing solutions in migration matters.
Their views shall in a participatory process be included in the global compact.

Ladies and Gentlemen, **Many of us here in this room have children. Wishing that it never happens, but imagine them on such a migration path. The protection we want for our children we shall want for all children.**

We look forward to further strengthening our relationship with IOM for the benefit of children and young people on the move.

Rest assured of our commitment.

Thank you for your attention