

Oral Statement on the Global Issue of Unaccompanied Migrant Children and Human Rights



36th session on the United Nations Human Rights Council

Geneva, 11-29 September 2017

Item 5: Interactive Dialogue on the report of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee entitled “Global Issue of Unaccompanied Migrant Children and Human Rights”

*Joint oral statement delivered by Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG23), **International Catholic Child Bureau (BICE)**, Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice (IIMA), International Volunteerism Organization for Women, Education and Development (VIDES), International Movement of Apostolate in the Independent Social Milieus (MIAMSI), ADF International, Points Coeur, Passionists International, Pax Romana (ICMICA/MIIC), Teresian Association, International Mouvement of Catholic Students Pax Romana Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, and World Union of Catholic Women’s organizations (WUCWO).*

The comprehensive analysis of the situation of unaccompanied migrant children and adolescents provided with this final report shows how complex and extensive this phenomenon is today.

As the report states “While in transit, on reception and in destination countries, migrant children and child asylum seekers are exposed to the same risks and human rights violations.”¹

The report makes clear that we are talking about children. All of whom have universal rights, whether they are refugees or migrants.

In particular, “Unaccompanied migrant children separated from their families are the most vulnerable group among all migrants².” This situation of vulnerability is worsened by the lack of information about their situation.

Large numbers of children go missing from reception centres or disappear from the care of child protection facilities or immigration authorities in many countries. These children, being unaccompanied and undocumented, are at a very high risk of abuse and exploitation including trafficking and enslavement.

Beside protection, unaccompanied migrant children as all the other children, have the right to grow and develop in a family environment.

¹ A/HRC/36/51 p. 4;

² 2 A/HRC/36/51 p. 6.

In this regard, we commend and look forward to implementation of a new law in Italy (the act of law of 7 April 2017 n. 47/2017) to boost support and protection for unaccompanied and separated migrant children who arrive in the country. This law “for provision of protection measures” promotes, inter alia, volunteer guardianship for unaccompanied migrant children recommending foster care and host families. This law recognises the important role the family plays on the growth and well-being of children.

We think that this good practice could be replicated example around the world.