

**Panel discussion on children in the context of international migration**  
**19th May 2016**

*Organised by the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh and Committee for the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families*  
*ILO Building*

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**Discussion notes<sup>1</sup>**

**What has been achieved?**

***8 points, 5-year Action Plan for Collaboration***

The “8 points, 5-year Action Plan for Collaboration” is Civil Society’s outcome and follow up to the UN High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development 2013.

8 points framed around 4 themes of which the rights of migrants.

The 8-points have been a key focus of civil society action since then a form the backbone of the GFMD civil society programmes.

In times like these we need co-action from governments and civil society to move and the measure the movement. We need and are working on the improvement of the indicators and benchmarks on the 5 year 8 point which also integrates the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

Civil society through its Migration and Development Civil Society Network (MADE) just published the “Movement report” on the progress and impact since 2013.

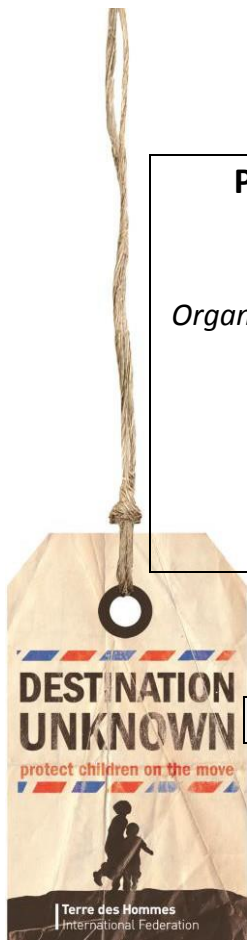
This introduction to tell you from what angle I am coming from today.

- A focus on the rights of migrants as one of the 4 themes of 5 year 8 point Action Plan for Collaboration
- Measurement of some of the movement since the HLD 2013 on rights of migrants
- Special focus on the rights of children in the context of international migration. Because this is the area of expertise of the organisation that pays my salary and not for some of you to think that I am sitting in the wrong panel.

What did we say we would work on with governments?

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<sup>1</sup> With extracts from the Movement report, MADE, February 2016



### **Goal 3 - Migrants stranded in distress and transit**

What progress?

Efforts of civil society organisations in this area have focused primarily on advocating for holistic approaches by governments. Some of these efforts are hampered by negative public discourses on migration. However, many of the actions being taken by governments are “crisis-minded” and lack attention to the complex interplay of factors that lead to these situations in the first place. We identify few policy changes that have positive implications for the achievement of the goal on Migrants stranded in distress and transit. In fact, in many instances, the policy environments are regressive making migrants more vulnerable in context of crisis.

One of the challenges facing civil society organisations is shifting the focus from the migrants in countries of crisis towards protecting migrants in crisis and transit.

Having said this, the MICIC Initiative is a very positive step in bringing states around the table to discuss the challenges regarding migrants in crisis. The guidelines being published in 2 weeks which will contribute to translate into policy changes on the ground.

Also to mention the “Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights at International Border’s” that was released by OHCHR.

### **Goal 8 – Labour right of migrants**

The indicators selected to monitor progress relate to the ratification of specific international conventions that promote the rights of migrant workers and their families. A fairly negative outlook with limited progression on the ratifications of the majority of migration instruments, with the exception of the Convention on Domestic Workers (C189). Beyond ratification, we are struggling with other measurements primarily due to data limitations (number of migrant workers that are unionized, number of occupational accidents...).

### **Goal 4 – Women and children in the context of migration**

#### **Goal 4b: Women**

While civil society organisations have called on governments to expand their framework of women and migration beyond trafficking and domestic work to include other issues encountered by women, these areas still dominate the discourse. Civil society organisations have organised around the issues faced by women in migration and specifically focused on providing direct services, either in the form of legal support or projects that promote their empowerment.

#### **Goal 4a - Children**

Addressing the rights of children and women are cross-cutting themes.

Discussion on children in the context of migration is relatively new. There is growing attention on the global policy arena (ref to GFMD 2015 and Ban Ki Moon’s report ahead of 19<sup>th</sup> September).

Civil society has focused beyond children moving to flee conflict or natural disaster, to broader the discussion to capture the multitude of challenges facing children on the move. Civil society has also focused efforts on addressing the challenges faced by the children of migrants, both those who accompany their parents to the country of destination, and those who remain in the country of origin.

We regret the disproportionate attention on the non accompany minors and to the context of Europe. The flashy announcement of 10'000 children disappearing in criminal networks in Europe – so again on containment and criminalisation - detracting the attention to the core issue: we are not offering the protection system these children have the right to.

The main contributions that focus on children can be categorised into three distinct yet interrelated areas: research, service provision and advocacy.

Several policy changes tracked are cases in Latin America and related to the recognition of status and access to services such as health and education.

One of the main policy change of relevance to children included policy statements which took a stand against the detention of children. Despite positive policy statements, however, there are still massive reporting challenges in the field in this regard. Significant indicators of progress include the Inter-America Court of Human Rights adopting standards against child migrant detention and deportation and on protecting the right to family life. Also, the Council of Europe's campaign against child immigration detention. The development of a Joint General Comment on the rights of children in the context of migration by the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on Migrant Workers.

Measuring progress in promoting mechanisms that consider the best interests of children in the context of migration is challenging not only because it cuts across all the other issues but also because of the limited evidence available on which changes have taken place.

While it is clear that the topic of children in the context of migration has received increased attention over time, there is still an urgent need for clear and transparent data to allow civil society actors to monitor progress in this area.

One of the most visible and comprehensive campaigns on children on the move initiated by civil society organisations has been the Destination Unknown campaign coordinated by Terre des Hommes. It articulates around 10 demands with corresponding actions... One of its strengths is its cross-country adaptability allowing civil society actors to develop context specific strategies.

### **Closing remarks**

Despite valiant efforts, we cannot be satisfied with the progress.

We are not offering the adequate protection system to children, though life-saving assistance is provided in many contexts, but there is an inability to plan for the longer-term displacement or to sufficiently support host communities.

One lesson : individual countries cannot solve these issues on their own. International cooperation and action must be strengthened. The reasons why people - and special concerns for children sometimes at very young age are leaving their homes- must be addressed with both national and collective responses.

We have key moments this year where we have the moral obligation for action: the WHS, the HLM on 19<sup>th</sup> September and the GFMD.

Guided by the 20130 Sustainable Development agenda but also by apparently small daily and individual actions, there are signs of hope. That is why we do what we do, don't we?