

*11th October* 2010, *Barcelona* - 'No to criminalization of juvenile migrants' was the main message of the First International Conference on Children on the Move concluded last week in Barcelona. The experts gathered at the conference unanimously agreed that the best interest of the child should be the main criterion for policy responses to child migration. Defending the best interest of the child is a principle that improves the social cohesion of societies.

The conference chaired by Najat M'jid, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, gathered experts from various international institutions, governments, non-governmental organisations and academia as well as eight children affected by the challenges of forced or free-will migration. UNICEF, the Africa Union, Save the Children, Intervida, ILO or IOM were among organisations represented at the conference.

The three-day conference shed light on number of challenges faced by migrating children, demanding stronger political commitment to ensure greater protection and support for children from the countries of origin, transit and destination. The experts stressed that the problems associated with migration go beyond trafficking and/or exploitation. The approach needs to be broader and needs to be reflected in comprehensive policies and laws protecting the rights of all migrating children. Likewise, the experts pointed to lack of sufficient coordination between South and North and also among Southern countries. Improving coordination and cooperation are essential to more effective and efficient responses.

On the last day of the conference Miquel De Paladella, executive coordinator of the Global Movement for Children, said that "the objective of the conference was to throw a light on a situation of millions of children on the move and to emphasize the need for effective policy responses effective based on the best interest of the child and on social cohesion. This is also the most effective way to safe and secure societies. 'We are closing the conference very satisfied with our objectives accomplished and we feel ready for the upcoming Global Forum in Mexico' he added. The conference was officially closed by Juan Carlos Mato, Director General of the Spanish Ministry of Health and Social Policies and David Minoves, Director General for International Cooperation of the Catalan government.

The Global Movement for Children (GMC) was established in 2002 at the UN Special Session on Children. The GMC closely cooperates with a number of child-oriented international organisations including ENDA Tiers Monde, Plan, REDLAMYC, Save the Children, UNICEF and World Vision. The GMC Secretariat is located in Barcelona.

Note: A comprehensive report of the conference and a summary outcome document will be available in mid-November 2010 on the GMC web site.

Click [here](#) to see the [photos](#) from the conference.