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|  | 🞂Report of the III Meeting of the Ad Hoc Group on Migrant Boys, Girls and Adolescents  San Salvador, August 18-19, 2015 |
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|  | **Technical Secretariat** 🞂Regional Conference on Migration 🞂 10/15/2015 |
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Abstract

The report addresses the specific objectives established for the III Meeting of the Ad Hoc Group on Migrant Boys, Girls and Adolescents and the activities implemented during the meeting, with a special focus on advances, challenges and proposed future actions.

In addition, the report includes conclusions and recommendations to be submitted to the Regional Consultation Group on Migration (RCGM) which, in turn, will submit them to the respective Vice-Ministers.

Report of the III Meeting of the Ad Hoc Group on Migrant Boys, Girls and Adolescents

San Salvador, August 18-19, 2015

**Participants:** Representatives from Directorates of Migration, Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Child Protection Institutions of Member States of the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM); civil society organizations that are members of the Regional Network for Civil Organizations on Migration (RNCOM); and international observer organizations UNHCR, ICRC and IOM.

The meeting was conducted to follow up on work of the II Meeting, held in Mexico City on April 15, 2015.

***The following specific objectives were achieved:***

* To review the achievements of Member States concerning the protection of migrant and refugee boys, girls and adolescents, and to identify the challenges that still remain and the necessary actions to address them.
* To make progress in drafting a regional handbook on comprehensive protection of migrant and refugee boys, girls and adolescents, with the objective of implementing the RCM document approved in 2014: “Towards a Regional Mechanism for the Comprehensive Protection of Migrant and Refugee Boys, Girls and Adolescents”.
* To promote a joint tool to exchange key information on migrant and refugee boys, girls and adolescents at a national and regional level, with the aim of fostering protection and avoiding revictimization.

The following activities were conducted in order to achieve the meeting’s objectives:

* A report by the outgoing Coordinator of the RCM Technical Secretariat on the background of the Ad Hoc Group and agreements from previous meetings.
* A discussion with young migrants on their own experience and that of other migrant and refugee boys, girls and adolescents during the different phases of migration (origin, transit, destination, return), to hear about their experiences and recommendations.



* A discussion on the current status, achievements and challenges as well as future prospects of Member States concerning the protection of migrant boys, girls and adolescents.
* Discussing the feasibility of establishing a permanent mechanism to address matters concerning migrant boys, girls and adolescents within the framework of RCM.
* Presenting protection actions to be included in the regional handbook for the comprehensive protection of migrant boys, girls and adolescents and collecting preliminary input to be incorporated into the handbook.
* Exchanging key information on migrant boys, girls and adolescents at a regional level. Presentation of the Integrated System for the Comprehensive Development of the Family (DIF), Mexico on the consular protocol for the protection of migrant boys, girls and adolescents.

*The Vice-Minister for Salvadorans Abroad and other officials of the Republic of El Salvador as well as the Ambassador of Mexico, representing the President pro tempore, were present at the opening sessions on both days.*

**Discussion with Young Migrants**

Three young migrants – an Iranian, a Nicaraguan and a Salvadoran national – with different vulnerability profiles joined us to talk about their experiences and the difficulties faced during the different phases of the migration process.

**Main national and regional advances and challenges concerning migrant boys, girls and adolescents**

* The majority of countries reported significant advances in regard to protection of migrant boys, girls and adolescents with a human rights approach.
* In addition, progress has been made concerning the adoption of comprehensive governance policies, the establishment of protocols, and coordination at an operational level between child institutions, Ministries of Foreign Affairs (consular area) and Directorates or Institutes of Migration. Some relevant developments can be highlighted, such as the establishment of centres for specialized psychosocial and prevention services for returned boys, girls and adolescents.
* We welcome the national communication campaigns to raise awareness among the general population about the risks associated to irregular migration, also recognizing the need for a regional approach.
* The following challenges have been identified: standardizing protection processes at a regional level, strengthening coordination at an operational level, and developing a regional handbook for this purpose.
* The need has been recognized to expedite document issuance processes in countries of origin and receiving countries.
* The need for a regional information campaign on migration of boys, girls and adolescents is being considered, taking into account the campaigns promoted at a national level as well as recommendations from civil society.
* Some countries have recognized the need to strengthen laws and policies on reintegration, linking them directly to their social and human development policies (less focused on security).
* Expanding employment programmes and vocational training opportunities for returned boys, girls and adolescents.
* Taking up again the initiative of the US for each country to submit a list of contact information of child protection institutions and experts/civil society organizations.
* Promoting actions to follow up on regional advances by continuing to address the topic within RCM and establishing a Liaison Officer Network for the Comprehensive Protection of Migrant Boys, Girls and Adolescents.
* Securing resources to ensure the permanent operation of the proposed network.

**Actions to follow up on the III Meeting of the Ad Hoc Group**

* To request that UNHCR, IOM and UNICEF develop a proposal on homologation of consular protection standards for migrant boys, girls and adolescents, incorporating the recommendations from all the members of the Ad Hoc Group.
* To convene a meeting between the RCM Technical Secretariat, IOM and UNICEF with the purpose of developing a proposal for a regional platform for consular registration.
* To ask IOM to submit a communication proposal for a regional information campaign about migration of boys, girls and adolescents, considering the campaigns that have been implemented at a national level and the recommendations from the members of the Ad Hoc Group.
* To designate coordinating focal points to collect, adapt and validate the information products.
* Member States will submit their input for the regional handbook on protection of migrant boys, girls and adolescents by Friday, September 4.
* The Technical Secretariat will disseminate a revised version of the handbook by the end of November 2015, for final review and approval by the Regional Consultation Group on Migration (RCGM) during the meeting scheduled for November 2015 in Mexico City.[[1]](#footnote-1)

**Conclusions from the Meeting of the Ad Hoc Group on Migrant Boys, Girls and Adolescents**

After identifying the advances and challenges concerning the situation of migrant boys, girls and adolescents and considering different scenarios to ensure the continuity of the work of the Regional Consultation Group on Migration, the following actions have been established, with the explicit request to submit the petitions to Vice-Ministers:

1. To establish a Permanent Liaison Officer Network for Migrant Boys, Girls and Adolescents.
2. To request that the RCM Technical Secretariat identify the best way to ensure effective operations.

1. Please note that the possibility of convening a regional workshop is being considered in order to receive direct input for and validation of the handbook. The workshop has still to be confirmed by Member States of RCM. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)