



**Plan International, Inc.**

**WRITTEN SUBMISSION**

**Committee on the Rights of the Child**

**Day of General Discussion 2012 on children in the context of international migration**

**1- INTRODUCTION**

1. Today, the number of international migrants is estimated at 214 million people. Millions of children and adolescents are involved in international migration, whether accompanied by their families or unaccompanied. Globally, there are 33 million international migrants under the age of 20, accounting for 15 per cent of all international migrants<sup>1</sup>.
2. The Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants<sup>2</sup> highlighted the increased vulnerability of children and adolescents throughout the entire migration process, especially those who are undocumented or unaccompanied. Children and adolescents crossing international borders, particularly females, are vulnerable to trafficking, abuse, sexual violence and exploitation<sup>3</sup>.
3. Birth registration is the first legal acknowledgement of a child's existence; without proof of identity a child is invisible to authorities. Registration allows children to effectively access their rights and is crucial in building a protective environment against abuse, exploitation and violence<sup>4</sup>. Providing universal birth registration must be part of an effective civil registration system that legally acknowledges the existence of the person, enables the child to obtain a birth certificate, establishes the child's family ties, and tracks major life events, from live birth to marriage and death.
4. A child who is not registered or does not possess a birth certificate is at high risk of having their rights violated. In the context of international migration, this risk increases considerably.

**2- DEFINITION AND SCOPE OF THE PAPER**

5. Plan has developed this paper **to inform** the 2012 Day of General Discussion of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. It aims at placing birth registration as a protection tool for children in the context of international migration, on the international child rights agenda.
6. It presents examples of both good practices and existing challenges, as well as provides recommendations. The information contained in this submission comes from a variety of sources within Plan, and the proposed recommendations are grounded in the work of Plan on the ground, with children and their communities.

**3- INFORMATION ON PLAN INTERNATIONAL**

7. Plan's vision is of a world in which all children realize their full potential in societies that respect human rights and dignity. Founded 75 years ago, Plan is one of the world's largest child-

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<sup>1</sup> V. Abramovich, P. Ceriani Cernadas, A. Morlachetti, *The rights of children, youth and women in the context of migration. Conceptual Basis and Principles for Effective Policies with a Human Rights and Gender Based Approach*, UNICEF, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, Jorge Bustamante. A/HRC/11/7, 14 May 2009, para.23.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> UNICEF (2007), *Birth registration in armed conflict*. Florence, Italy, UNICEF.



centered community development organisations. Plan's staff and volunteers work with children, their families and communities in 50 countries, building the skills, structures and resources to give all children an equal voice and chance to develop into healthy, educated and responsible adults. We encourage children to express their own priorities alongside those of adults. No project is undertaken unless it will positively impact the children and there is a deep commitment to its success. Plan also works through 21 national partner organisations.<sup>5</sup>

#### 4- THE RIGHT TO BIRTH REGISTRATION: LEGAL FRAMEWORK

8. Registration is the State's first official acknowledgement of a child's existence. It is an essential element of national planning for children, providing the demographic base on which effective strategies can be built. Without registration, it is unlikely that countries can have accurate child-related data and rates, including key indicators for child survival strategies. Birth registration, therefore, is not only a fundamental right in itself but also key to realising additional rights. While providing universal birth registration (hereinafter UBR) carries some costs, particularly in countries with dispersed rural populations, its benefits are substantial, and include ensuring the efficient use of resources. In its work on birth registration, Plan has found that, in fact, birth registration is not an expensive exercise, and an investment in a country's development. States must fulfill their obligations to ensure the effective implementation of the right of every child to a name and an identity<sup>6</sup>, and the right to be registered immediately after birth.
9. The international community has recognized the importance of birth registration and the right to an identity in eight human rights and humanitarian treaties<sup>7</sup>. Moreover there is global consensus on the vital importance of birth registration.
10. Of all the human rights treaties, the CRC has the largest number of provisions related to birth registration. The fundamental importance of the right to birth registration and identity is acknowledged in Articles 7 and 8 of the Convention as well as in its preamble; The Committee on the Rights of the Child (hereinafter the Committee) has reiterated the right to birth registration in seven of its General Comments<sup>8</sup>. Over the last 20 years, the Committee has consistently addressed birth registration in its concluding observations to State parties and the resultant protection needs of specific groups of children and of people in particular situations i.e. minorities and indigenous peoples, refugees, asylum seekers, as well as migrants. To increase birth registration, it has urged State parties to implement appropriate measures, including procedural, administrative, informational, financial and technical<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Plan holds ECOSOC consultative status since 1981. For more information, please visit: [www.plan-international.org](http://www.plan-international.org).

<sup>6</sup> Plan International, *Count every child. The Right to Birth Registration*, (2009), p.17.

<sup>7</sup> Respectively: the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, the Inter-American Convention on Forced Disappearance of Persons, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

<sup>8</sup> General Comment no. 3 (2003), on *HIV/AIDS And The Rights Of The Child*, CRC/GC/2003/3, para.32; General Comment no. 6 (2005), on *Treatment Of Unaccompanied And Separated Children Outside Their Country Of Origin*, CRC/GC/2005/6; General Comment no. 7 (2005) on *implementing child rights in early childhood*, crc/gc/2005/7; general comment no. 9 (2006) on *The Rights of Children with Disabilities*, CRC/C/GC/9; General Comment n. 10 (2007), on *Children's Rights in Juvenile Justice*, CRC/C/GC/10; General Comment No 11 (2009), on *Indigenous children and their rights under the Convention*, CRC/C/GC/11; and General Comment No.13 (2011) on *The Right of the Child to Freedom from all forms of violence*, CRC/C/GC/13.

<sup>9</sup> Plan Liaison and Advocacy Office in Geneva, *Birth registration and right to identity in the monitoring and reporting cycles of the un convention on the rights of the child - an overview through the illustration of 15 countries (1990-2010)*, p.10.



11. Every year since 2001 at least one resolution at the UN General Assembly has concerned birth registration: in its 2002 resolution “A World Fit for Children”, the General Assembly reaffirmed governments’ commitment to ensure that all children are registered at birth, and to invest in, care for, educate and protect children from harm and exploitation.
12. Since 1999, every year a resolution stipulating the right to UBR has been systematically adopted, by either the former Commission on Human Rights or its successor the Human Rights Council (HRC). For the first time in March 2012, the HRC adopted a full resolution dedicated to birth registration<sup>10</sup>. The Human Rights Committee’s has reiterated the right to birth registration in its General Comment no.17 on *The Rights of the Child*<sup>11</sup>. At the regional level, the African Charter is the only regional human rights treaty covering birth registration.<sup>12</sup>
13. Despite the global commitment of the international community and the global attention to birth registration, providing birth registration of all children is still a major challenge for many countries and regions. Each year 51 million children (i.e. one in three across the world) are unregistered<sup>13</sup>.

## 5- BIRTH REGISTRATION, CHILD PROTECTION AND INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

14. Many children involved in international migration do not have birth certificates. Moreover, the lack of a birth certificate prevents a child from acquiring its identity documents and without a passport or an identity document, any international migration is illegal. . Any international migration involving an undocumented child is therefore likely to be irregular and have severe consequences on the enjoyment of their rights.
15. Children lacking documentation are likely to be unable to enroll in school, miss out on immunizations, be unable to **access** basic social services including healthcare and education, and hindered from claiming their inheritance rights. Registration is a child’s passport to their rights and ensures that a state cannot evade its responsibility to realize that child’s rights, throughout his or her life. As an adult without a birth certificate, a person may not have the rights to marry, vote, be employed in the formal sector, to access credit and loans, acquire a passport, or even to register their own children’s births<sup>14</sup>.
16. The benefits of having a birth certificate are particularly clear in the area of **child protection**, integrated into an effective child protection system, as a tool for prevention and response. This is of particular importance, *inter alia* where proof of a child’s age is a pre-condition to effective law

<sup>10</sup> Human rights council, resolution [A/HRC/19/L.24](#) on *Birth registration and the right of everyone to recognition everywhere as a person before the law*, adopted on 22 March 2012 [without vote].

<sup>11</sup> Human Rights Committee, General Comment no. 17 (1989): *Rights of the child (Art.24)*, HRI/GEN/1/Rev.8, para.7: “Under article 24, paragraph 2, every child has the right to be registered immediately after birth and to have a name. In the Committee’s opinion, this provision should be interpreted as being closely linked to the provision concerning the right to special measures of protection and it is designed to promote recognition of the child’s legal personality. Providing for the right to have a name is of special importance in the case of children born out of wedlock. The main purpose of the obligation to register children after birth is to reduce the danger of abduction, sale of or traffic in children, or of other types of treatment that are incompatible with the enjoyment of the rights provided for in the Covenant. Reports by States parties should indicate in detail the measures that ensure the immediate registration of children born in their territory”.

<sup>12</sup> UNICEF, *Implementation Handbook for the Convention on the Rights of the Child*, p.100. See also Plan Liaison and Advocacy Office in Geneva (2012), *Legal review on birth registration and the right to identity*, and Plan Liaison and Advocacy Office in Geneva, *Birth registration and right to identity in the monitoring and reporting cycles of the UN convention on the rights of the child ...* (cit.), p.10.

<sup>13</sup> Out of whom 23 million in South Asia alone. Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest percentage (66%) of unregistered under-five-year-olds.

<sup>14</sup> Plan International; *Count every child* (2009), p.9.



enforcement. Without birth registration, which legally establishes their age<sup>15</sup>, it is more difficult to safeguard children against child marriage, child trafficking, economic exploitation including child labour, the worst forms of child labour and slavery, sexual economic exploitation, illegal adoption, street situations and recruitment into armed forces. It also impedes their legal protection in courts of law and the prosecution of perpetrators of such crimes.

17. Poverty and marginalization are among the main push factors to the international migration of children. Those living on the edge of society such as children in street situations, migrant children, orphans, nomads and children belonging to ethnic minorities often go unregistered, even in countries that have close to 100 per cent registration. An effective birth registration mechanism – that clearly records the child's name, date and place of birth, gender and the parents' names – will help prevent violation of their rights<sup>16</sup>.
18. The Special Rapporteur on the rights of migrants has expressed deep concern over the criminalization of irregular migration arguing it jeopardises the effective protection of migrant children. The criminalization of irregular migration often further deters irregular or undocumented migrants from registering themselves and their children due to a **fear** of imprisonment and/or deportation. They thus frequently try to avoid all contact with local authorities<sup>17</sup>.
19. Barriers to birth registration including being denied the opportunity have serious consequences for the enjoyment of human rights, including the right to be recognized as a person before the law<sup>18</sup>. In many countries only the heads of households (mostly males) can register a child. As well as being discriminatory in itself, this significantly limits registration possibilities given that families are often separated in emergencies and left without a male representative.<sup>19</sup> Children born out of wedlock are often not registered at birth because of cultural discrimination. In addition, fear of ethnic, cultural or religious discrimination, particularly in civil conflicts, may prevent parents from registering their children<sup>20</sup>.
20. Children who enter a country without legal travel documents and/or a valid visa may be found guilty of being illegal immigrants and be fined or imprisoned.<sup>21</sup> If they cannot prove their age,

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p.21. Birth certificates can be a means of protecting children, particularly girls, from being drawn into sale, child prostitution and child pornography, as well as early marriage and commercial sexual exploitation, internally as well as transnationally.

<sup>16</sup> Plan International, *The role of birth registration and child trafficking*, Briefing paper, December 2011.

<sup>17</sup> Under the regime of Pol Pot, for example, many Cambodians destroyed their documents in an attempt to hide their identities and escape persecution. When Plan started working on birth registration in Cambodia, less than 5 per cent of the population were registered. More recently in Rwanda, during the genocide in 1994, birth certificates were used to identify the ethnic origin of children and adults in order to commit atrocities. In China, Human Rights Watch (HRW) has documented that many children of Chinese men married to North Korean women go unregistered because of the risk of exposing the mother, who could be arrested and repatriated to North Korea for her illegal migrant status. HRW found that these fears are not simply based on unfounded suspicions – real penalties await some who take the first step towards securing their child's rights. These penalties come in the form of arrest, prosecution, fines and possible deportation. Other fears over legal constraints can also be seen in cases in Sudan, for example, where uncertified traditional birth attendants who attend deliveries in rural settings are afraid to provide birth notifications because they are working as midwives illegally. Plan's good practice: overcoming fear → Fears can be overcome when the right strategies are put into place. In Cambodia, Plan worked in an holistic way with communities and the government to raise awareness of the importance of registration at local level, training officials and engaging the village chief. These strategies helped to build trust and confidence in order to overcome fears. Following the resulting mobile birth registration programme that took place over a period of ten months, more than seven million Cambodians, close to 56 per cent of the population, received their birth certificates. Plan International, *Count Every Child* (cit.).

<sup>18</sup> Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants (cit.) A/HRC/11/7, para.72.

<sup>19</sup> Plan International, *Mother to child. How discrimination prevents women registering the birth of their child* (2012).

<sup>20</sup> In Rwanda, during the 1994 genocide for example, birth certificates were used to identify the ethnic origins of children and to commit targeted atrocities. Source: Plan.

<sup>21</sup> Southern Africa: As a result of the child trafficking campaign embarked upon by Plan in Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique ahead of the 2010 World Cup, four of the major traffickers, responsible for 60% of human trafficking, were



they may be subject to prosecution as adults and receive adult penalties or punishments.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, proof of age can effectively protect children and adolescents from being prosecuted and sentenced as adults and ensure their access to the juvenile justice system, as and when appropriate.

21. In many transit and destination countries, children of migrant parents face difficulties in obtaining birth certificates. This restriction not only affects the right to a birth certificate<sup>23</sup>, but also several other human rights, such as the right to a name and to be recognized as a person before the law. In addition, this restriction hinders their right to a **nationality** (either of the country where the child was born or the country of his/her parents), which in turn can lead to statelessness. In some contexts, especially where birth registration is directly linked to nationality and citizenship, certain groups are excluded on purpose<sup>24</sup>.
22. Usually, the migration status and national origin of migrant parents are the causes of such restrictions even though international human rights standards have repeatedly stipulated that children should never be subjected to such constraints under any circumstance. A parent's condition cannot be used to deny or arbitrarily curb children's rights. By being denied birth registration, many children of migrant parents in particular are denied access to the acquisition of nationality<sup>25</sup>.
23. Plan believes that the lack of birth registration and/or of a functioning civil registration system strongly exacerbates the vulnerability of a child to being trafficked.<sup>26</sup> Reasons for this include: (a) a lack of effective registration system in a particular country or area leads local traffickers to knowing that children are likely to not be registered, and difficult to trace; (b) lack of registration makes it is easier for traffickers to falsify a child's identity and age, obtain travel documents or visas and smuggle them across borders; and (c) It is easier to add an unregistered child to their passport as their own child.
24. When trafficked children have no official proof of identity, police and immigration authorities can have more difficulties in proving that they have been trafficked from a foreign country or tracing

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apprehended. One of the traffickers in Malawi caught bringing children into Mozambique was sentenced for 12 years with hard labour. Another trafficker was caught on the Malawi/Zambia border trafficking children and is awaiting sentencing. Vietnamese children trafficked into the UK and Northern Ireland and discovered working in cannabis farms are placed in juvenile detention centres, receive a criminal record and are usually deported. While only seven people were convicted of labour trafficking offences in England and Wales between 2004 and 2009, at least 100 children were imprisoned for being involved in the cannabis trade. Source: Plan International, *The role of birth registration and trafficking* (cit.)

<sup>22</sup> Accounts from Bangladesh have reported cases where boys as young as 7 have found themselves in court on charges of murder, rape or arson, despite the age of criminal responsibility in the country being 13 years old.

<sup>23</sup> As enshrined in Art. 7 of the CRC and in art.29 of the CMW.

<sup>24</sup> Plan International, *Count Every Child*, (cit.)

<sup>25</sup> This is, for example, the case of children of irregular migrants of Haitian who are born and live in the Dominican Republic, who are being denied birth registration.

<sup>26</sup> Lack of a birth certificate or other proof of identity makes it easier for traffickers to transport children because: (a) they can smuggle children in and out of countries using different identification documents without being questioned by immigration authorities about the child's origins or identity; and (b) without official identification, trafficked children may be too scared to denounce the traffickers at the border or in the destination country by fear of being arrested for illegal immigration. In addition, an effective civil registration system and the issuing of birth certificates can help the police and border officials monitor and control national borders. Lack of a birth certificate or proper documentation makes it easier for traffickers once they have brought children into a country because: (a) children with no official proof of their identity are less likely to report their exploitative situation for fear of being imprisoned as illegal immigrants; and (b) it is difficult for authorities to investigate the true identity, age and origin of a child who has no documentation. Traffickers also take advantage of the fact that children who do not hold a birth certificate have no official proof of their age, and are therefore easier to exploit in activities such as child labour and early marriage where there is a legal minimum age. There is evidence that the more regular the residential status of children who are trafficked, the lower the degree of exploitation suffered. Source: Plan International, *The role of birth registration and trafficking* (cit.)



their parents. This is particularly so when children have been trafficked at an early age and have little recollection of their origins<sup>27</sup>.

25. When children are not registered immediately after birth it is difficult to prove their age, especially as they get older, and therefore ensure justice. It can be harder to prosecute those who abuse children if the age of the child is challenged by the courts and there is no proof available. This is particularly true when proof of age is a precondition to legal proceedings, such as when a child has been trafficked for marriage or for hazardous labour.<sup>28</sup>
26. Undocumented children who were registered at birth are more likely to be repatriated to their country of origin and community. Unregistered children, on the other hand, may not be recognised as official citizens of their country; therefore affecting their repatriation. If they do return home, they may be denied access to services that are essential to ensuring their smooth recovery and reintegration<sup>29</sup>.
27. Identity documentation is instrumental in the context of international migration of children, including in reuniting separated and unaccompanied children with their families. In emergency situations – armed conflicts, natural or manmade disasters and mass population displacements – children involved in international migration, may be separated from their families or care givers. Unregistered children are particularly at risk as there is no legal evidence of their existence, making them far harder to trace and perpetrators of violations of child rights, including trafficking, much more difficult to prosecute.
28. Population displacements within or across state borders can prevent parents from registering their children. In the immediate aftermath of an emergency, birth registration can, *inter alia*: help identify unaccompanied and separated children and facilitate their reunification with their family; help prevent the recruitment of children into, and to ensure their release from, armed forces and armed groups; facilitate access to entitlements and aid services in camps; and provide governments and aid agencies with accurate population data and statistics to focus emergency efforts efficiently.
29. **Plan's work on birth registration** started in 1998 in Asia before being extended to Africa and Latin America. Plan's global campaign 'Universal Birth Registration', now called *Count every child*, was launched in 2005, with the simple demand to ensure that every child is registered and has a birth certificate.<sup>30</sup> In five years (2005 – 2009), Plan has facilitated the registration of more than 40 million people, mostly children, in 32 countries<sup>31</sup>. Plan used innovative techniques, including new technology and mobile registration units to reach remote areas and hard-to-reach communities. By working with partner organisations, including UN agencies and governments, Plan helped to strengthen legislation on birth registration in ten countries.

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> In India, Plan has learned of cases where Nepalese and Bangladeshi girls, rescued from brothels, languish in institutions for months or even years, due to administrative processes to establish nationality and who takes responsibility for the child. In addition, Plan has learned of one prosecutor assigned to handle child rights cases in the Philippines who noted that about 50 per cent of child abuse cases, mostly those in the areas of child sexual abuse, child labour and prostitution, did not succeed due to the failure of concerned parties to show birth certificates during the investigation phase. Source: Plan International, *The role of birth registration and trafficking* (cit.), and Plan International, *Count every child* (cit.), p.22.

<sup>29</sup> Plan International, *The role of birth registration and trafficking* (cit.)

<sup>30</sup> Plan International, *Count Every Child* (cit.)

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*



30. In particular, Plan's work focuses on:

- a. **Increasing awareness** on the importance of birth registration to the population and communities<sup>32</sup>.
- b. **Mobile registration units** have proven to be very effective in addressing problems of accessibility to birth registration in remote areas<sup>33</sup>.
- c. **Protecting vital documents:** In countries where natural disasters are frequent, protecting vital documents such as birth certificates is crucial. Plan developed programmes to explain to communities the value of legal documents and the importance of keeping them somewhere safe and therefore retrievable in an emergency situation<sup>34</sup>.
- d. **Decentralization of the civil registration system** can prevent it from collapsing during emergencies. Plan has supported decentralization in nine countries.<sup>35</sup>
- e. **Integrating birth registration into social systems, including education and health,** and programming for maternal and child health as well as childhood development has led to great successes<sup>36</sup>.
- f. **Child participation in decision-making:** Plan works together with children to ensure their participation in decision making. In its work on birth registration, Plan, *inter alia*, conducted educational seminars and awareness-raising and information campaigns on the right to birth registration and identity. Many children participate in this work by raising concerns, lobbying governments and policy makers and making recommendations about the birth registration process in their country<sup>37</sup>.
- g. **Using new technology (ICT4D<sup>38</sup>)** – Plan helped deliver birth notifications electronically in remote rural areas<sup>39</sup>.

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<sup>32</sup> For example: in Uganda, Plan's information campaign, delivered mostly via radio programmes, helped increase the birth registration rate from 45% to 69% in just eight months. This included more than 550,000 children being registered; in Mali, Plan produced 11,600 printed copies of a citizens' guide to registration in five local languages and produced more than 1,600 audio and video copies for those who were unable to read.

<sup>33</sup> In Cambodia, where civil records were destroyed by the Khmer Rouge, Plan piloted a mobile registration project in 2004. Supported by the Ministry of Interior and the Asian Development Bank, the scheme was so successful that it was extended across the country. Plan provided technical assistance and after ten months more than seven million Cambodians, close to 50 per cent of the population, had received their birth certificates. In Ecuador, Plan supported a national campaign initiated by the government. Technical teams were trained and supplied with satellite kits, mobile phones and access to the internet. Between 2006 and 2008, more than 300,000 young people were registered.

<sup>34</sup> In Vietnam and Togo, Plan has facilitated the lamination of certificates to keep them dry. In Cambodia, Plan distributed one million plastic document covers to households. After the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, Plan not only provided new birth certificates but also distributed protective plastic covers in Sri Lanka and Indonesia.

<sup>35</sup> In Kenya, Plan is currently running a project to computerize local and district-level offices and reduce the time it takes to register births using mobile phones. In Liberia, a decentralized birth registration system was launched in July 2010. Led by the government, this new system aims to register all the estimated 1.6 million children in the country by the end of 2011. Plan is leading on awareness and social mobilization while Crisis Management Initiative is supporting the use of smart phones to notify births at local level, in partnership with private companies like Nokia. UNHCR is supporting the recording and documentation process, and UNICEF is investing in the supply of birth certificates, data base development and training of officials and volunteers. The whole registration process takes a maximum of two weeks.

<sup>36</sup> Plan has trained health workers, including midwives, nurses and traditional birth attendants, in 12 countries to facilitate the registration of newborn babies. In Zambia for instance, these professionals can now complete registration forms and pass them to the registration offices. In many Latin American countries, birth registration units have been integrated into hospitals allowing families to register newborn babies as soon as possible. In Colombia, these units have been developed in 200 hospitals.

<sup>37</sup> Plan involved many children from various organizations who took part in seminars on the right to an identity and made recommendations about the birth registration process in India. In Indonesia, children have been involved in lobbying local policy makers about their rights to and in Uganda, primary schoolchildren presented a petition to Parliament calling for birth registration to be made mandatory and for birth certificates to be free.

<sup>38</sup> ICT4D - Information and Communication Technologies for Development.

<sup>39</sup> In Ecuador, for example, Plan technical teams used satellite kits, mobile phones and internet to register children; in Kenya, text messaging (SMS) through mobile phones is used to announce birth notifications to authorities.



## **ANNEX 1**

### **5 Key recommendations for governments, CRC committee, UN bodies and other stakeholders**

- 1) States parties should strengthen their efforts to ensure universal birth registration, including by ensuring effective elimination of all laws and practices that limit access and enjoyment to universal birth registration. This could be done by:**
  - a. Raising awareness among parents, communities, health and education professionals and children themselves, in a regular and systematic manner, on the importance of birth registration;**
  - b. Ensuring that all professionals working with and for children, including police officers, teachers, healthcare professionals and social workers, are systematically trained on birth registration;**
  - c. Eliminating laws and practices that discriminate against children born of illegal migrants and unaccompanied migrant children, including those that allow social authorities to share migration data for immigration control purposes; and**
  - d. Integrating birth registration into national development plan of actions and/or poverty reduction and disaster risk management strategies;**
  - e. Allocating sufficient resources to ensure universal free birth registration and implement innovative registration systems, including mobile technology.**
  
- 2) States parties should ensure that all children who are not registered or who do not possess their birth certificates are ensured full access to protection services, including in the context of emergencies and disasters. In particular:**
  - a. When an emergency arises, authorities must identify, register and document both unaccompanied and separated children as quickly as possible in a child and user-friendly manner; in accordance with internationally accepted norms to protect human rights, ensuring confidentiality and respect for privacy.**
  - b. Ensure that all children have access to basic services including health and education, without discrimination based on the migration status of them or of their parents.**
  - c. Implement alternative and temporary measures to maintain birth records during emergencies.**



- 3) **The Committee should continue including the right to birth registration consistently in its concluding observations to states parties to the Convention and its Optional Protocols. In its recommendations addressed to States parties, the Committee should consider:**
  - a. **Stipulating the migration status of parents cannot hinder access to universal birth registration;**
  - b. **Requesting states parties to report on the situation and actions taken to ensure that all children, including children in the context of international migration, are guaranteed access to birth registration, without discrimination of any kind.**
  
- 4) **States parties should develop and effectively implement strategic partnerships at local, national, regional and international levels to ensure that all children, including, but not limited to: children in the context of international migration, migrant children or children of migrant parents, unregistered children and adolescents; are registered immediately after birth. Late registration should also be promoted and facilitated for all unregistered persons in the context of international migration. Strategies should allow for, among others: (a) resources mobilization; (b) exchange visits and sharing best practices; and (c) capacity-building and training of professionals.**
  
- 5) **In accordance with the provisions of article 45(a) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Committee should invite the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants and the Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography to jointly conduct a Global Study on the transnational cooperation measures necessary to ensure the protection of children on the move and to guarantee their rights independently of their immigration status. Such a study should be guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other relevant international standards and take full account of the recommendations adopted by the Committee at its September 2012 Day of General Discussion on *The Rights of All Children in the Context of International Migration*.**