

34th Session of the HRC
Geneva, 10 March 2017
Item 3 – Enhanced Interactive Dialogue on Migrants

Oral statement submitted by
VIDES Internazionale

Thank you, Mr. President.

VIDES Internazionale, in collaboration with IIMA, are committed to the promotion and protection of children's and youth's rights in 94 countries. Through our work in the field, we have seen the increase of migrant children and youth in different regions of the world.

As the Convention on the Rights of the Child states, “a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years.”¹ However, once a young person reaches this age, they are often separated from the assistance they received under the designation of ‘child.’ This can be devastating, but is particularly dangerous for migrant youth. The programs that focus on offering housing, food, health, educational, and other assistance often neglect or refuse young people once they have reached the age of eighteen.

IIMA encourages Member States to work towards more accessible and inclusive educational policies for migrant youth over eighteen, taking into account the training of educators who can address and find solutions that help youth in their process of adaptation and development, without overlooking the multicultural approach of integration, and the fact that migrant youth are separated from their families and communities. We call on the international community to have a greater commitment to ensure the respect and development of migrant youth and to enable them to live their lives with dignity. We also urge origin countries to work on strengthening national projects to guarantee all its citizens satisfactory living conditions and the opportunity to live with dignity within their own land as well.

Migrant youth do not suddenly stop needing help when they reach eighteen and we should not suddenly stop assisting them. As Don Bosco said, “never shrink from any undertakings which [you] know are good and necessary, no matter the difficulties.” Changing policies for migrant youth may be difficult, but it is good and it is necessary.

Thank you, Mr. President.

¹ Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 1.