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9 June 2017

**Panel Discussion on Unaccompanied  
Migrant Children and Adolescents**

**And Human Rights**

**Speaker: Katherine Webber**



Oral Statement submitted by  
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Co-sponsored by  
VIDES International

Thank you Mr. President,

IIMA and Vides international welcomes the Human Rights Council resolution 33/7 and thanks the council for its focus on the issue of unaccompanied migrant children.

We remain concerned by the fact that the numbers of unaccompanied migrant children in vulnerable situations has increased over last several years despite efforts to reduce this issue.

Recognizing that these children are not criminals, but rather victims of a system that has failed them and quoting the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants which states that “migration should be a choice, not a necessity”<sup>1</sup> we note that many unaccompanied migrant children feel that they are left with no choice but to migrate due to lack of opportunity in their countries of origin.

Access to quality education is the key that opens the doors to opportunity. Therefore, we believe that successful implementation of the SDGs along with an increased focus of the education of the poor and vulnerable, will both prevent the need to migrate and promote a fulfilling experience for the minors who in turn choose to migrate.

We make the following recommendations:

- Take concrete efforts to ensure quality education for children in countries of origin with high migration rates.
- Ensure timely access to quality education for unaccompanied migrant children in countries of destination.
- Strengthen special services in the educational systems in countries of transit and destination to better serve unaccompanied migrant children in their unique circumstances.

Thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> See New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants paragraph 43