Human Rights Council
Twenty-ninth session
Agenda item 3


29/12. Unaccompanied migrant children and adolescents and human rights

The Human Rights Council,

Reaffirming the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which proclaims that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights, and that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set out therein, without distinction of any kind, in particular as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status,


Taking into account the attention paid by the treaty bodies, including the Committee on the Rights of the Child, to the treatment of unaccompanied and separated children outside their country of origin and their enjoyment of human rights, including in its general comment No. 6 (2005), as well as the general discussion of the Committee in 2012 on the rights of all children in the context of international migration,

Expressing serious concern about the situation of vulnerability and risk faced by migrants in transit and destination, in particular children, including adolescents, who are unaccompanied or separated from their families, who are forced to flee or decide to leave their homelands owing to multiple causes, and calling upon States of origin, transit and destination to work together to find effective and sustainable solutions within a framework of solidarity and regional and international cooperation,

Concerned by the fact that migrant children and adolescents who find themselves in a vulnerable situation by attempting to cross international borders without the required travel documents may be exposed to serious human rights violations and abuses that can threaten their physical, emotional and psychological well-being, and may also be exposed to crimes and human rights abuses committed by transnational criminal organizations or gangs, including crimes such as theft, kidnapping, extortion, physical abuse, sale of persons and trafficking in persons, including forced labour, and sexual abuse and exploitation,

Mindful of the fact that, in the fulfilment of their obligations to promote, protect and respect human rights, States of origin, transit and destination can benefit from schemes of international cooperation,

1. Calls upon countries of origin, transit and destination to facilitate family reunification, as appropriate, as an important objective in order to promote the welfare and the best interests of migrant children, including adolescents, as applicable under national law, due process and the relevant provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocols thereto, and to comply with the consular notification and access obligations set forth in the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations so that States may provide child-friendly consular assistance, as appropriate, including legal assistance;

2. Encourages States to continue to take into account the principle of the best interests of the child as a primary consideration, and to promote, protect and respect their human rights, bearing in mind their needs in the process of return to their countries of origin;

3. Encourages States of origin, transit and destination to continue to seek greater cooperation and technical assistance with all relevant stakeholders in different areas in order to identify jointly alternatives to reduce, mitigate and eliminate the causes and structural factors that lead to irregular migration so as to prevent minors from feeling compelled to migrate from their communities, while taking into account the need to promote capacity-building activities;

4. Requests the Advisory Committee to develop a research-based study on the global issue of unaccompanied migrant children and adolescents and human rights, in which it identifies areas, reasons and cases where this issue arises in the world, and the ways in which human rights are threatened and violated, and makes recommendations for the protection of the human rights of members of this population, and to submit it to the Human Rights Council at its thirty-third session for its consideration;

5. Calls upon all States to ensure that their immigration policies are consistent with their obligations under international human rights law, and to promote the enjoyment of human rights by all migrants without discrimination, including by taking steps to increase cooperation and coordination at all levels to detect and suppress the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons, in accordance with international law;
6. Requests the special procedures of the Human Rights Council, within their mandates, to continue to give due consideration to the situation of unaccompanied migrant children, including adolescents, and the impact of this issue on the full enjoyment of their human rights, and to continue to report thereon;

7. Decides to remain seized of the matter.

43rd meeting
2 July 2015

[Adopted without a vote.]