



**United Nations Human Rights Council  
18<sup>th</sup> session  
12– 30 September 2011  
Item 2/3 SG/HRC/OHCHR thematic reports**

Madam President,

Save the Children welcomes the High Commissioner's report on the situation of migrants and asylum seekers fleeing recent events in North Africa.

We would like to remind Governments to put child rights and child protection to the fore when responding.

We work closely with partners in this region, and it is clear that the situation of children arriving in Europe, in border camps in North Africa, or displaced within Libya is one of extreme vulnerability. There is emotional trauma from the conflict, followed by extreme hardship to cross the Mediterranean.

For children who are unaccompanied or separated from their families the risk of being subjected to violence, trafficking and exploitation increases. This requires immediate special protection and assistance measures, followed by a durable solution for each child.

Immediate responses include effective reception and support on arrival, appropriate living conditions, assessment of protection needs and the child's best interest, legal advice, cultural mediation, and access to health.

A durable solution for each child may include family tracing and assessment of family situations, integration in the host country, return to the country of origin or resettlement in a third country.

Unaccompanied children can experience prolonged stays in emergency reception centres. As limitation of personal liberty should always be a measure of last resort, further efforts should be devoted to secure the quick transfer of these children to open facilities where appropriate standards of reception and protection can be guaranteed.

All children on the move – regardless of their entry or immigration status - should have their rights as children respected and promoted, including their right to be heard, to be protected and to receive assistance.

We call on Governments to develop coordinated and durable child protection responses in countries of origin, transit and destination. This includes all actors - not only migration control authorities but also those responsible for respect of the rights, care and protection of children. It means taking the best interest of the child as a primary consideration and having regard to the individual circumstances of each child.

Thank you.