

**STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK**  
**2017-2021**

**A Vision and a Roadmap**

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**DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL**

## **A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2017-2021**

### ***A Vision and a Roadmap***

Methodological note for the IGA: *This draft presents a new strategic approach for the work of DCI for 2017-2021. In the past, the Strategic Plan focused primarily on the work of DCI-International Secretariat. That approach had many advantages: It highlighted the work planned and achieved with the international and regional organizations, the United Nations Treaty Bodies and the international NGO community as well the coordination among and capacity building of the members of the DCI Movement. The experience gained during the 2012-2016 period has demonstrated that it would be opportune to take a broader approach to defining a strategy for the movement as a whole.*

*This new approach takes into account endogenous aspects of the DCI Movement: the particular priorities of different National Sections expressed in the questionnaires, the synergies and cross-fertilization among the National Sections and between them and the International Secretariat, and the establishment of the DCI World Service Foundation. At the same time, this approach is especially timely today because of evolutions outside the DCI movement which will mark the next four years: among them, after several years of advocacy, the Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty is just starting and the UN Sustainable Development Goals are beginning to underpin real efforts to assess progress on key issues affecting child rights, including justice for children.*

*This new approach has taken into account the consultations held in 2016, undertaken through questionnaires issued to all national sections and through some training sessions.*

*The strategy presented below maintains the vision of the DCI as defined in past IGAs. The novelty lies in presenting a framework applicable to the entire movement as opposed to a plan of work for the Secretariat. While the framework is an agile instrument, it does highlight key target objectives, priorities and means of action for the movement as a whole. However, it also provides space for the different regions and national sections to identify their priorities, to explore possibilities for cross-fertilization and to develop their own strategic plans of actions, bearing in mind that all members of the DCI movement are committed to work towards achieving justice for children as one priority in their strategic plan.*

*As a major innovation, the Strategic Framework will remain a dynamic instrument. The National Sections are invited to submit their individual action plans for the 2017-2021 period to DCI-IS by end of June 2017 for discussion at the next session of the IEC. DCI-IS will prepare a common format so that the data is comparable and exploitable. These separate action plans should be informed by the key priorities and objectives listed in the Framework and ensure that coordination and synergies between the individual plans and the overall Framework are addressed. DCI-IS, in addition to developing its own action plan, will prepare a consolidated document by September 2017 to be discussed at a future meeting of the IEC. The approved version will be shared with all members of the DCI movement.*

# **A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2017-2021**

## **A Vision and a Roadmap**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

#### *Who we are*

*Defence for Children International (DCI) is a leading child-rights focused and membership-based grassroots Movement, founded in 1979, the first International Year of the Child. We promote and protect children's rights at the local, national, regional and international levels. DCI was one of the drafters of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the most widely ratified human rights treaty in history. DCI is widely recognized as a leading NGO on issues related to justice for children. DCI has consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), UNICEF, UNESCO, the Council of Europe, the African Union, the Inter-American Court on Human Rights, the League for Arab States and maintains close relations with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and the different UN Special Procedures mandate holders.*

*With over 35 National Sections in 5 continents, 4 Regional Desks, and an International Secretariat in Geneva and a newly established World Service Foundation in Brussels, the International General Assembly (IGA), composed of representatives of every National Section is DCI's highest governing Body. The IGA meets every 4 years, approves the strategies and priorities for the planning period and elects the President and the members of the International Executive Council.*

#### *Our Vision*

*Children, as fully fledged human beings, must enjoy and exercise their human rights – with dignity- in a just and responsible society.*

**1.1 From 2017 to 2021: Towards the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of DCI: Taking stock of achievements and challenges.** The current planning period will be particularly challenging for the movement as a whole. In preparation for the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of DCI during the next two years, considerable effort will be devoted to tracking, documenting and systematically classifying the many achievements. This will involve all members of the movement and will provide a unique opportunity to assess the strategies taken, the lessons learned and, insofar as possible, the impact attained. In addition to providing valuable benchmark information for eventual future evaluations, this exercise should also provide insights into the effective relationships among the national sections and between them and the International Secretariat.

**1.2** The present and upcoming issues during the next four years present equally numerous **challenges**. While not attempting to be exhaustive, critical issues include: The state of child protection in law and juvenile justice, including continued scarcity and weakness of child friendly justice systems. While states adopted at the UN level the Sustainable Development Goals and specific objectives for children for the horizon 2030, financial crises and conflicts have dramatically increased the number of children living in vulnerable or precarious

situation, such as migrants and children on the move, be it internally displaced or seeking refuge outside their country. Political, economic and social problems are widely manifest: persistent violence against children in all settings, poverty, weak social and government institutions, all of which affect children and their rights, with little recognition of the impact on children, limited financial and human resources devoted to children, and a scarcity of reliable data on access of children to justice and remedial or restorative measures as well as good practices.

1.3 At the same time there are a **number of opportunities and entry points** for DCI as a whole to strengthen its ability to promote and defend child rights. These entry points include the work on the Sustainable Development Goals, the Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty, the formation of new international and regional networks among NGOs and new initiatives to end violence against children and working groups on immigration detention to name a few. And within the movement itself, the increased number and the enhanced effectiveness of Socio-Legal Defence Centres (SLDCs) are proving to be critical tools for advancing DCI's agenda in relation to some of the major challenges above.

1.4 **A holistic approach and a common mandate.** Guided by our common vision and being a child rights focused movement based on grass roots membership, which places all members and structures on an equal footing, DCI has adopted a holistic approach to achieve its vision and meet the challenges cited above. This approach encompasses a common mandate:

#### ***Our Mandate***

*Our aim is to ensure ongoing, practical, systematic and concerted action directed towards effective implementation of the human rights enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.*

We engage in various child rights domains which have often radically changed since the creation of DCI in 1979 on the basis mainly of two criteria:

1. Where needs are not sufficiently covered by other actors and stakeholders
2. Where the DCI Movement has an added value and expertise to be an actor for change

- **Four thematic priorities:**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Justice for children</li><li>○ Violence against children</li><li>○ Children on the move</li><li>○ Children affected by conflict</li></ul> |
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- **Three cross-cutting issues:**

- Children Deprived of Liberty
- Child participation
- Gender

1.5 A **holistic approach** recognizes that an overarching goal is to ensure globally comprehensive child protection systems, which include preventative measures. The DCI

movement cannot achieve this goal alone, nor aims at replacing responsibilities of States in this concern. DCI must work jointly with other actors in civil society and in national and international institutions to achieve the best synergies possible. The DCI's key role in working towards this goal is to bring its experience, expertise and networks to focus strategically on the different components of the mandate cited above. A cornerstone of the mandate, and at the heart of its mandate, is a focus on **justice for children**. This focus is the DCI's value added to the broad partnerships in the child rights' movement. In this sense DCI is a unique organisation.

1.6 All members of the movement are committed to contributing, to the best of their capacities, to **promoting and defending justice for children**. This is the cohesive glue of the movement. At the same time, a holistic approach recognizes that different national sections and/or regions, in accordance with regional, national and local circumstances, may place specific emphasis on other priorities and issues within the common mandate. In some instances, other child rights issues are also addressed or will be addressed, such as education and health or child labour, depending on the national conditions. All of these issues can be considered as part of a comprehensive child protection system.

1.7 **Designing a roadmap with the Movement.** The purpose of the Strategic Framework is to set out the objectives, priorities and means of action, together with time frames, if possible, for the movement as a whole for the 2017-2021 period. This is a broad consensual canvas that will be complemented by the action plans of the national sections, the regions, the International Secretariat and the World Service Foundation. These documents, taken together, will constitute the overall strategic plan for the movement. The individual action plans will necessarily be more detailed in terms of specific objectives, outcomes/results with indicators, outputs, activities, estimated resources, risk analyses and plans for monitoring and evaluation. These strategic plans will be shared among the regions and the national sections so that areas of coordination and optimum use of resources can be identified. The shared documents will also facilitate the work of DCI-IS in its advocacy and lobbying activities, both with the UN Treaty Bodies and international organisations as well as with individual governmental missions in Geneva and New York, and with the various NGO coalitions/working groups involved in common work. These plans will also enable the DCI-IS to determine priorities for capacity building within the Movement. Finally, the plans will also assist the World Service Foundation in its resource mobilization initiatives.

1.8 In order to implement this process, the DCI-IS will take the lead to develop a roadmap, in consultation with the IEC. A first draft of the roadmap is planned for September 2017. The goal is to complete a first round of consultations and exchange of plans before the end of 2017. In keeping with the dynamic nature of the strategic framework, the adjustments and exchange of strategic plans will continue throughout the 2017-2021 period.

## II. PRIORITIES

The **priority themes** that will be addressed in 2017-2021 are consistent with those in the mandate:

- A. Justice for children
- B. Violence against children
- C. Children on the move
- D. Children affected by conflicts

### **Three cross-cutting issues:**

- Children Deprived of Liberty (GSCDL)
- Child participation
- Gender

### **A. JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN - No rights without Justice, no Justice without a rule of law and accessible, child-friendly justice systems**

**2.1** Through its persistent work on justice for children over the past three decades- from the drafting of the UN Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (1985), to the follow-up to the UNCRC's General Comment No. 10 on Juvenile Justice, and up the leading and coordination of the campaign for the UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty (GSCDL), DCI became the “go-to” NGO for leadership, experience and technical expertise on Justice for Children. Despite the national and international attention on this issue, the level of political will to ensure compliance with international standards remains low. Ensuring the protection and respect of human rights of children confronted to the law remains a huge challenge today. Even if laws have been passed, it is not clear how effectively they are implemented.<sup>1</sup>

**2.2** Justice for children remains a core priority for DCI. The overall, long-term objective remains:

The situation of children confronted to the law is internationally known; children and justice are placed as a priority item on international, regional and national agendas; and national child-friendly justice systems are established, guided by the principles enshrined in the UNCRC and all other international, regional and national norms and standards.

However, DCI’s definition of “Justice for Children” goes well beyond Juvenile Justice: from developing child protection systems, to preventative, rehabilitation and empowerment projects for children victims of violence, as well as fighting against gender discrimination, empowering children as actors and advocates of their rights ...

**2.3** Against the backdrop of this overall objective, there are a number of issues that need to

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<sup>1</sup> *UNICEF has estimated that as many as one million children around the world are behind bars. A recent report issued by CRIN in 2016 noted that access to justice for children around the world is very uneven and far from satisfactory in many countries. A 2016 report by Human Rights Watch has noted a global overuse of detention of children and concluded “Locking children up is frequently unnecessary, abusive, and counter-productive. It’s time for states to recognize these facts and end these unlawful practices.”*

be addressed during the plan period. Until complemented or amended by inputs from the National Sections and the Regions, the following issues are listed for consideration by the IGA:

- Active and effective participation in the Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty
- Exploring, in selected countries, the opportunities to lobby for reform of national laws on juvenile justice so that they conform with international standards and with relevant UNCRC General Comments and the 2014 Resolution of the Human Rights Council on the rights of the child.
- Monitoring implementation of juvenile justice laws at the national level (in selected countries)
- Monitoring places where children are deprived of liberty, making optimal use of the DCI Practical Guide (2016), in selected countries, translating the Guide in other languages and adapting it to other regions and legal backgrounds
- Forster the concrete and effective participation of the children at all stages of the Justice system, including in the implementation of the judicial measures
- Develop and promote the principle of the Child friendly justice in disseminating the existing regional Guide lines, adapting them to other regions and using them to assess and improve the Child justice systems at national and international level
- Increased possibilities for strategic litigation at the national level in selected countries
- Optimum use of the DCI regional observatories on data collection and monitoring in selected regions to contribute to the GSCDL and to build them as models for replication in other regions or sub-regions
- Information on the extent that children have access to remedies for violations of rights (in selected countries)
- Collect and consolidate good practices on alternatives to detention and on preventive measures
- Developing information on the impact of detention on children
- Strengthening the effectiveness of existing SLDCs (in selected countries)
- Sharing of expertise on establishing and effectively maintaining SLDCs among national sections
- Awareness raising and capacity building programmes on child-friendly justice for professionals working with children, justice professionals, law enforcement officers, social workers and other stakeholders in selected countries

**[Note for the IGA:** *Detailed plans to address these and other issues, including the selection of countries, the concrete implementation plans and the time-frames will be determined after consultations among the national sections and between them and DCI-IS, as part of the coordination process of the individual action plans. Moreover, some of these activities will necessarily be coordinated or carried out in conjunction with the Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty (GSCDL). ]*

2.4 In addressing the overall objective and the specific issues above, DCI will take into full consideration the Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty. DCI-IS will be responsible to keep members of the Movement informed of the progress of the Study and to signal opportunities to participate in the various steps planned, both nationally and regionally. DCI-IS will also keep the Movement informed of activities, information and developments concerning the work on the Sustainable Development Goals and target 16.3 “promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all”.

2.5 In addition to actively participating in the GSCDL, DCI will continue to employ its various means of action to address the priorities related to justice for children. Advocacy and lobbying will continue at the national, regional and international levels. DCI-IS will continue to participate in the Child Justice Advocacy Group, the Working Group on Children with Incarcerated Parents and the Working Group on Children in armed conflict. National Sections will explore the best opportunities for networking, especially with national coalitions. Direct interventions for empowerment and protection of children will continue at the national level. Some national sections have established effective **Socio-Legal Defence Centres (SLDCs)** that have provided direct services to children. These centres constitute both a substantive programme as well as a means of action. They provide direct access to justice and corresponding quality socio-legal support, including information sharing, referrals to service providers, psychological counselling, free-of-charge legal advice and representation. Building on their success and effectiveness, DCI will explore opportunities to establish new SLDCs in selected countries with peer to peer assistance from existing SLDCs.

## **B. ELIMINATING VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN “No violence against children is justifiable and all violence is preventable”**

2.6 DCI as a whole has long been active internationally and in all regions in efforts to eliminate violence against children. It was a major partner in the NGO collaboration with the preparation of the UN Study on Violence against Children, which was submitted to the UN General Assembly in 2006. DCI-IS is a co-chair of the International NGO Council on Violence against Children and a member of the Child Rights Connect’s working group on Children and Violence. Recently, DCI-IS has become member of the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children. At the national level, eliminating violence against children has been a long-standing theme and remains so.

2.7 Ten years after the completion of the UN Study and the concerted efforts and hard work across the board of Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, the UN agencies and of national and international NGOs as well as of certain Member States, violence against children persists on a massive scale in all settings, including where children should expect a safe environment, such as the home or the school. Some estimates report that at least one billion children suffer from violence in a given year. Despite some progress in the adoption of legal instruments, some of the worst forms of violence remain lawful around the world.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, the issue of eliminating violence against children remains highly pertinent today. **DCI will continue to maintain an overall objective in its strategic framework on eliminating violence against children.**

2.8 Given this overall objective, several specific target areas, together with suggested means of action, are planned to be addressed, subject to consultations with National Sections and Regions. They are submitted for consideration by the IGA:

- Advocating for national legislation prohibiting all forms of violence against children in selected countries.
- Advocating for national legislation prohibiting child marriage and harmful practices such as female genital mutilation in selected countries

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<sup>2</sup>International NGO Council on Violence Against Children, 10 years on: Global Progress and Delay in Ending Violence Against Children – Rhetoric and the Reality, November 2016.



- Monitoring the implementation of existing laws prohibiting violence against children in selected countries
- Monitoring progress on the recommendations of the 2006 Study on Violence Against Children in selected countries
- Creating or strengthening socio-legal defence centres to assist children who are victims of violence, assisting them to seek justice and redress, in selected countries
- Monitoring the use of violence in the Justice system, including violence by the authorities (police), deprivation of liberty, detention, torture and ill-treatment, prison overcrowding, long detention, death penalty
- Developing and promoting effective and efficient complaint mechanisms
- Awareness raising and capacity building programmes for community leaders, school officials, social workers, law enforcement officers in selected countries
- Awareness raising and capacity building on gender based violence
- Awareness raising and empowerment of children related to subjects of violence against children
- Advocating for a specific focus on children deprived of liberty among the wider data collection on violence against children
- Advocacy and promotion of national laws prohibiting trafficking
- Capacity building programmes for local and national authorities on the impact of trafficking on children

2.9 DCI-IS will remain active member of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, in Child Rights Connect’s Working Group on Violence and Children, and the International NGO Council on Violence against Children. It will keep the Movement informed of activities and developments on the GSCDL, particularly covering violence against children deprived of liberty. DCI-IS will inform the Movement on the progress of work related to the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Target no. 16.2 “End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children”, and Target 15.3 “Eliminating all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation”, by 2030.

*[Note for the IGA: As noted above for detailed development of programmes related to justice for children, the programmes on the elimination of violence against children will be formulated after the regions and national sections have developed their own action plans. The specific target areas for work as well as the selection of countries will depend on the priorities and capacities of individual national sections and on an assessment of how the best synergies can be obtained.]*

### **C. PROTECTION OF CHILDREN ON THE MOVE**

2.10 Children on the move comprise child migrants, child refugees, children seeking asylum, internally displaced, and stateless children. Concerns about the violation of rights and protection of this broad grouping of children have been growing rapidly as the numbers of children on the move have increased recently due to wars, civil strife and economic shortcomings in many states. DCI has over the past years undertaken some notable initiatives to protect the rights of children in this grouping.

2.11 The rapid rise in the number of children on the move is often coupled with detention in poor conditions. While the theme of detention will be addressed by the GSCDL, children on

the move face other challenges that also affect their human rights, such forced labour and deprivation of access to health care and to education. Although the issues affecting some categories of children, such as migrants, may well differ from those of refugees, asylum seekers or internally displaced, DCI aims at ensuring that all children on the move can benefit from adequate protection measures, and have the possibility to advocate their rights. Even though the theme is broad and requires fine-tuning to determine specific focussed action, DCI believes it has become a critical and topical theme that merits inclusion in a strategic framework. Some of the sections have already developed expertise and project experience in this area.

2.12 The following is proposed as the DCI overall objective for Children on the Move:

**OBJECTIVE:** Children on the move are entitled to the full realisation of their human rights and protection in compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols and all actions affecting them are to be guided by the principle “in the best interest of the child” and according to the principle of non-discrimination.

2.13 Specific target priorities and means of action for 2017-2021 may include the following, subject to additions and amendments from the Regions and National Sections:

- Contributions to and collaboration with the GSCDL (case studies, documentation, examples of good practices based on experience of past 4 years)
- Promotion of the DCI Practical Guide: Monitoring places where children are deprived of liberty in selected countries (workshops, capacity building, advocacy with a broad range of authorities)
- Tracking and monitoring developments in the UN agencies as they address issues affecting refugees, migrants, victims of trafficking and asylum seekers
- Advocacy and promotion efforts within national coalitions to forge stronger partnerships for communicating with relevant authorities
- Feasibility of SLDCs incorporating broader services for refugees and migrants (lessons learned from those that provide such services)
- Working for the protection of particular categories of vulnerable children on the move (e.g. non-accompanied children in countries of transit, especially girls, stateless children...)
- Awareness raising and capacity building programmes for professionals working with children, migration and law enforcement officers, social workers and other stakeholders in selected countries
- Supporting the resilience of children on the move and promoting specific protection mechanisms as guardianship
- Promoting the effective and efficient participation of migrant children in all subject affecting them
- Creating projects linking in joint action DCI sections from countries of origin and countries of destination
- Continued participation in the Inter-Agency Working Group on Ending Child Immigration Detention (DCI-IS)

[ *Note for the IGA: The above are indicative programmes subject to inputs from the IGA and subject of re-drafting once the individual action plans have been submitted and coordinated.*]

## D. CHILDREN AFFECTED BY CONFLICT

2.14 DCI has a long history of advocating for the protection and the rights of children in armed conflict or affected by conflicts in general (internal strife, political conflicts...). Over the past 20 years, from the Graça Machel report in 1996, the Study on Violence Against Children in 2006, the work of different Special Representatives of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict, and more recently to the Sustainable Development Goals adopted in 2015, DCI has been actively promoting the protection and rights of children in armed conflicts both at the national and regional levels and within the DCI-IS. These activities have been most visible, for example, in Palestine, in Colombia, in the Central African Republic and in the work related to Child Rights Connect's Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict.

2.15 Despite several decades of international attention on this issue and admittedly some progress, children continue to be subjected to the scourge of conflict in general. With the increase of conflicts nationally and across borders in many parts of the world, the impact on children remains grave. Studies have demonstrated that children are the most affected by war and armed conflict. The risks entail not only recruitment as child soldiers, but risks of being killed, maimed, abducted, trafficked, abused sexually and subject to violence in general as well as of being detained without recourse and lacking humanitarian assistance.<sup>3</sup> The impact of conflict on children often extends to the destruction or serious weakening of basic services necessary for children's development, such as schools and hospitals. Incorporating issues of education and health may be considered in DCI programmes dealing with children in conflict.

**OBJECTIVE:** Children in conflict situations should enjoy full protection and realisation of their human rights in compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols (particularly OP on children in Armed Conflict) and other relevant international standards and be enabled to develop their potentials as fully-fledged responsible members of society, especially with a view to being actors of change and peace during and post-conflict.

2.16 Specific target areas for 2017-2021, subject to the consultative process with National Sections and the Regions, may include:

- Promotion of laws and regulations to be in compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols in selected countries especially as regards recruitment of children as soldiers or use of children in the frame of armed conflicts
- Sensitization campaigns and development of capacity building materials in selected countries
- Rehabilitation and reintegration in communities of children associated with armed forces in selected countries
- Collaboration with providers of social services (education, health)
- Integrating programmes with those of justice for children, violence against children, children on the move

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<sup>3</sup> In her last, annual report (Dec. 2016), the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict, Leila Zerrougui, "...remains deeply concerned at the scale and severity of the grave violations that were committed against children in 2016, which included alarming levels of killing and maiming, recruitment and use and denials of humanitarian access, and calls upon the Human Rights Council and Member States to take all available measures to prevent these violations from occurring. In particular, in light of the impact on children, the Special Representative calls upon parties to conflict to immediately end all restriction on the receipt of humanitarian aid by civilians and allow unimpeded access by humanitarian actors."

- Promotion of monitoring and reporting in the context of the SDGs
- Working with children's empowerment as peace-building actors in war-torn societies

[ Note for the IGA: As with the other priority areas, the identification and selection of target areas will be subject to consultations with the National Sections and the Regions once individual action plans have been submitted and reviewed]

### **CROSS-CUTTING ISSUE 1: CHILDREN DEPRIVED OF LIBERTY**

2.17 DCI launched and successfully led the campaign leading to the official request made by the UN General Assembly for a UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty and will continue to co-convene the NGO Panel for the GSCDL, which includes over 115 NGOs. DCI's objective is that the study, once completed and adopted, will, based on sound quantitative and qualitative data, provide firm guidance and practical solutions to Member States and all relevant stakeholders on the protection of rights as well as preventative and restorative measures for children deprived of liberty.

2.18 The DCI Movement will devote major efforts in 2017 and 2018 to contribute strongly in the implementation of the Global Study. This study covers a wide range of issues: juvenile justice/administrative detention; immigration/asylum detention; children incarcerated with their parents; detention of children based on protection related reasons, such as disability, health or substance abuse; and military detention/national security. Consequently, it will cut across most of the strategic work that DCI foresees for the 2017-2021 period. This study will provide a major opportunity for DCI to join forces with UN agencies, Member States, academia, national, regional and international NGOs and children themselves to collect and analyse data, participate in consultations and provide inputs for the study's recommendations that will be submitted to the UN General Assembly in 2018. Throughout the DCI participation in the Study, strong communication links and coordination across the Movement will be maintained to ensure that all members are fully involved.

### **CROSS CUTTING ISSUE 2: CHILD PARTICIPATION**

2.19 The participation of children in all domains and actions that affect them is one of the pillars of the DCI Movement. Child participation is more than having children attend events or be informed; it means involving them meaningfully in all matters that affect their rights and well-being, not only in DCI activities but in matters that are undertaken by local, national and international authorities and institutions. For their participation to be meaningful, children may well need support, particularly access to education as well as special training and briefing.

2.20 It is incumbent on members of the Movement as they undertake activities in each and every priority area, to ensure that means are made available to ensure child participation. This may involve, as in the past, action undertaken with children or groups of children such as training sessions, tool kits, children's clubs, or child-friendly versions of documents. Efforts will also continue to be devoted to briefing and guiding governments and other authorities on the means to ensure child participation. Examples of DCI initiatives and action in this field are noteworthy and will be strengthened in the coming period.

2.21 DCI's priority on child participation is underpinned by the Convention of the Rights of the Child, both Article 12 (respect for the views of the child) and Article 13 (right of every child to

*express his or her views, also in judicial and administrative proceedings) as well as the Optional Protocol 3 to the Convention, which allows individual children to submit complaints regarding specific violations of their rights under the Convention and the Protocols. The Sustainable Development Goals (target 16.7) also call for responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.*

### **CROSS CUTTING ISSUE 3: GENDER**

*2.22 Since the last IGA, DCI adopted internal regulations (Code of Ethics and gender policy) and rules on gender parity (e.g. composition of the IEC) and has also initiated ambitious projects on gender empowerment (e.g. the Girls Advocacy Alliance). Gender issues are imbedded in each of the four priorities and therefore need to be mainstreamed in all DCI policies and activities.*

*2.23 Girls are faced with particular forms of discrimination and violence throughout their life cycle, starting even before birth and continuing throughout childhood and adolescence. The consequences are far reaching and serve only to perpetuate cycles of discrimination and violence against future generations of both girls and boys. Some DCI national sections have developed programmes and activities (e.g. Girls Advocacy Alliance) that empower young girls to become agents of change and challenge gender stereotypes and roles, while others have strived to respond to the specific needs of girls in terms of access to justice, right to education, etc. Efforts to promote gender transformative actions will continue, as they align with Goal 5 (Gender equality) of the Sustainable Development Goals and principles enshrined in the Convention of the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women.*

## **III. MEANS OF ACTION**

3.1 The main **means of action** that will be deployed in 2017-2021 to ensure transformative action include:

3.1.1 **AWARENESS RAISING AND ADVOCACY** - DCI will continue to conduct strategic and evidenced based advocacy and lobby initiatives at local, national, regional and international levels to bring about necessary changes in policy, law and practice. It will continue to monitor and report on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and international standards on justice for children and remain active in discussions in the Human Rights Council and with the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Similarly, it will continue its active involvement in NGO networks.

An added impetus for the 2017-2021 period will be increased efforts to work with a wider range of persons at the national level dealing with children directly or with children's affairs such as social workers, counsellors, education officials, law enforcement officials, judicial authorities, community leaders and custodians or guardians of camps and various institutions detaining, housing or caring for children. Increased collaboration with national coalitions will also be sought. Making optimum use of the CRC General Comments as strategic tools in advocacy as well as in capacity building will be developed further.

3.1.2 **EXPERTISE AND CAPACITY BUILDING** - DCI will continue to intervene in various fora to share its expertise on child rights issues and will continue to strive to strengthen the capacities of professionals working with children. Capacity building within the Movement will continue as well.

The same added impetus noted above will be undertaken within this means of action.

**3.1.3 PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR ACTION** - DCI will continue to produce crucial research and monitoring reports based on field data collection and to develop practical tools for action.

During the 2017-2021 period, special efforts will be made to ensure that DCI's concerns are taken on board in the data collection and analyses related to the GSCDL and the relevant SDGs. By the same token, DCI members will be encouraged to coordinate their own research activities with the major studies and data collection initiatives, especially as concerns definitions and methodologies.

**3.1.4 PROTECTION AND EMPOWERMENT OF CHILDREN** - DCI National Sections will continue to provide direct services to children and empower them to thrive and become actors of change. In some countries this is done through Socio-Legal Defence Centres (SLDCs)

During the 2017-2021 period, a sharper focus will be placed on exchanging information and experiences, on establishing and running the SLDCs among the National Sections, within the same Region and between Regions. The goal is to develop SLDCs in a way that they become flagships of the Movement as a whole by demonstrating their effectiveness.

3.2 These various means of action will be targeted to different activities according to the plans and the programmes of the members of the Movement. Details on their deployment will be spelled out in each Strategic Plan and consolidated by DCI-IS. This consolidation will permit a mapping of who does what, when and with what resources, with the aim of coordinating action and resources among the different components of the Movement as well as different levels of action: National, Regional, International.

#### **IV. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

**4.1** Monitoring and evaluation processes are critical for the success of the Movement. While these processes may be in place and work well at the national or regional levels, there has been little coordination and information sharing across the Movement as a whole. In order to consider establishing a coordinated system, the IGA is invited to consider forming a Task Force to work with DCI-IS and the IEC. The Task Force would be requested to determine the most appropriate approach, taking into account the overall Strategic Framework and its broad objectives and priority target areas on one hand and on the other hand the different action plans developed by the National Sections and the Regions. It would be premature at this stage to determine if one comprehensive system would be feasible since individual action plans, with their own specific objectives are not yet available.

**4.2** It is nonetheless an objective of the Movement that monitoring and evaluation processes should be in place for programmes carried out by all members. These processes should incorporate the standard guidelines and methods used in national, regional or intergovernmental organisations, which employ rigorous criteria for excellence and which would facilitate relations with funding and donor agencies. The Task Force could be called to develop a standard methodology and format and then follow it up within the Movement to

make sure that monitoring and evaluation are in place and properly implemented. The aim of it is to ensure that the actions of DCI has a concrete impact on the possibilities of the children to enjoy effectively all their rights. DCI wants to measure the effectiveness of its action and ensure that it is acting as an “agent for change”.

## **V. DCI GOVERNANCE AND REGULATIONS**

5.1 The DCI Movement is guided institutionally by its Statutes, Code of Ethics and Gender Policy. No changes are proposed for these documents for the 2017-2021 period. Copies of these documents are available for IGA participants. The effort regarding regulation should be in the effective implementation of the existing ones (e.g. codes of ethics and gender) as well as the development of new ones as needed (e.g. child protection policy). Efforts will be put in the implementation, follow up and evaluation of the existing internal standards and policies in order to keep them up-to-date and implement them as far as possible throughout the whole Movement.

5.2 Furthermore, DCI will continue to promote an effective and democratic governance of the National Sections and the different components of the Movement as being part of the professionalization and the strengthening of the national sections.

5.3 There is also a need to strengthen the National Sections in their project management expertise as well as in their capacity to develop programmes, draft proposals, implement a budget and fundraise. The IS, together with the DCI-WS Foundation will organise capacity building activities to increase the ability of the sections to become sustainable and develop long term programs.