

High-level Plenary Session – Third Global Consultation on the Health of Refugees and Migrants

UNICEF written statement - Speciose Hakizimana, Representative Morocco

Your Excellencies,

Globally, more than 36 million children are displaced from their homes due to conflict and violence, disasters, poverty, food insecurity, or the impacts of climate change on their communities. In some instances, children move on their own, away from the protection of family and traditional community structures, leading to heightened risks.

Children on the move have the same, if not greater, needs for health and other basic services. Yet for **most, access to health care is disrupted when they move or spend extended periods in displacement.** Many had limited access to healthcare in the first place, as they come from contexts ravaged by conflict, with weak health systems and numerous deprivations. During migration, children are often forced to marginal, transitory living conditions, increasing their risks of poor health, as well as risk of physical, mental, and sexual abuse, including gender-based violence. Sadly, some legal measures and fear of deportation act as structural barriers to both accessing and seeking health services. **Without access to health care, children on the move miss out on life-saving services, such as postnatal care, vaccines, or antibiotic therapy, and risk dying from treatable and preventable childhood diseases.**

This Global Consultation demonstrates that around the world, national governments recognise the right of migrants and refugees to health, including those who are children, as enshrined in the Convention of the Rights of the Child. UNICEF embraces this shared commitment and open dialogue on how to better fulfil children's rights through concrete actions at local, national, and global level.

Increasingly, countries in different regions have showed us that it **is possible to include migrants and refugees in national health and social protection systems.** As UNICEF, we call on all of you to ensure that the Third Global Consultation leads to action and accelerates the momentum for the inclusion of migrant and displaced children in national health systems.

Making true on our promise to **leave no child behind** is not just a moral imperative - **inclusion is a win for all:** Where children on the move can access good nutrition, health, child protection, and other child-critical services, they are able to grow, to learn, to play, be more resilient in the face of crises, and to contribute to the communities that embraced them.

Thank you.