

Universal Children's Day

November 19, 2018

Statement by ChildFund Alliance Secretary General Meg Gardinier

New York, NY (November 20, 2018) – In recognition of Universal Children's Day, ChildFund Alliance is reaffirming its commitment to protect and advocate for the safety and well-being of children throughout the world.

An estimated one billion children, more than half of the world's children, experience some form of emotional, physical or sexual violence and exploitation every year. On Universal Children's Day, ChildFund Alliance aims to bring added attention to the importance of preventing violence at all levels, improving child welfare worldwide, and promoting and celebrating children's rights.

For more than 75 years, the ChildFund Alliance, a global network of 11 child rights and development organizations working in more than 60 countries, have nurtured children, their families and their communities, addressing threats of violence, helping during natural disasters, and working with children and youth to influence change.

“On this year's Universal Children's Day, it is important that we not overlook the extraordinary needs of migrant and refugee children who are at high risk of abuse, violence and exploitation,” said Meg Gardinier, Secretary General of ChildFund Alliance. “These children, many of whom are separated from their families, are particularly vulnerable and susceptible to acts of violence and it is imperative that we do all that we can to ensure their safety and fight for their rights.”

At a time when irregular migration¹ is at its highest levels, this critical issue is currently the ongoing focus of a [joint, multi-year, initiative](#) led by ChildFund Alliance members Christian Children's Fund of Canada, ChildFund International (U.S) and Educo (Spain). The \$15.2 million project is examining the root causes and devastating effects of irregular migration in Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua, and mechanisms to keep children and youth safe through measures such as training, safe spaces, and policy and program changes at the government level. The initiative will be the focus of a [ChildFund Alliance forum](#) on December 4 in New York City, in collaboration with UNICEF.

“Whether it's migration, armed conflict, natural disasters, or poverty, the effects are hardest on children,” said ChildFund Alliance's Meg Gardinier. “We are proud to join the UN and other child welfare organizations in celebrating this important day and to reaffirming our own commitment to building a better future for children everywhere.”

Read about ChildFund Alliance efforts to help children have a voice in their own future through the [Child-Friendly Accountability Initiative](#) and about how the Alliance is changing children's lives through sports with the [Pass It Back: World Rugby and ChildFund](#) program.

¹ Movement that takes place outside the regulatory norms of the sending, transit and receiving countries. There is no clear or universally accepted definition of [irregular migration](#).