



With breaking stories and
newswire products from

UN NEWS CENTRE



Warning of threats to migrant children, UN calls for better protection



8 November 2010 – A new United Nations study warns of the perils of abuse and exploitation that threaten migrant children from Latin America and the Caribbean, and calls for policies to protect their rights.

The authors of “Children and international migration in Latin America and the Caribbean,” published today by the UN Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)) and the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean ([ECLAC](#)), note that migration may bring some benefits such as greater educational and job opportunities.

At the same time, there are negative aspects to migration, including risks when parents migrate and children are left behind in the care of others, and exposure to abuse and rights violations during the process of moving from one country to another.

An estimated 6 million people from Latin America and the Caribbean have migrated within the region and some 25 million have migrated to the United States and Europe.

The study says that while the exact number of migrant children is not known, recent estimates suggest that around 1 in 5 migrants is a child or adolescent who may be exposed to abuses.

“Millions of children have been facing severe human rights constraints due to their migration status or that of their parents,” the authors state in the [study](#), which comes as a key international meeting on migration opens in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.

The 4th Global Forum on Migration and Development, which includes participation from around 150 countries, will focus on issues such as human rights and irregular migration.

The study notes that restrictive migration policies, xenophobia, discrimination and human trafficking are some of the main dangers migrants face, especially if they are illegal migrants.

It says the main challenges for governments in the region are enacting migration policies that protect children's rights, especially of those migrating under irregular conditions, and ensuring the economic, social and cultural rights of children.

Ensuring access to the right to an identity at the time of birth, and avoiding the detention of migrant children and adolescents due to their illegal entry to a country are among the other recommendations set out in the study.

News Tracker: past stories on this issue

[UN official denounces mistreatment of migrants and urges respect for their rights](#)