**Girls Advocacy Alliance oral statement at the**

**Half-day of general discussion of the CEDAW Committee on**

**Trafficking in Women and Girls in the Context of Global Migration**

Thank you.

This statement is delivered by Plan International, in collaboration with Terre des Hommes International Federation and Defence for Children International Secretariat, who are working together in the Girls Advocacy Alliance to affect policy change to combat violence against girls.

The Girls Advocacy Alliance welcomes this new General Recommendation by the CEDAW Committee on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration, and we would urge the Committee to reflect in this new guidance the specific vulnerabilities experienced by girls in this context, and the ways in which States can address these through targeted interventions.

Although in absolute terms, adults are more than twice as likely to be victims of trafficking than children, when looking at the gender distribution of victims amongst adults and children, the differences are striking. Amongst adult victims of trafficking, women are two times more likely than men to be victims. Amongst child victims of trafficking, however, girls are three times more likely than boys to be victims.

In the context of migration, girls who fall victim to trafficking do so either while migrating (especially girls who are migrating on their own or accompanied by an intermediary), or after trafficking (especially during the initial days where girls are particularly isolated). There are numerous factors that determine how safe a girls’ migration experience will be, including:

* The amount and accuracy of information they have on departure;
* How much support they have from their families;
* Their legal status;
* Having limited or no social network in the destination country.

The current policy and funding climate on trafficking and exploitation of girls tends to heavily emphasize prosecution of these crimes. The Girls Advocacy Alliance promotes an approach to addressing trafficking that comprises four pillars: prevention, protection, prosecution and partnerships. Clearly, prosecution should be part of the response but a shift from a solely law enforcement focussed approach to more human rights–based approaches is urgently needed. These include immediate assistance and alternative livelihood training for trafficked girls, along with efforts to address the root causes of trafficking: poverty, marginalisation of minorities, and gender-based discrimination and violence.

In conclusion, as it drafts the new General Recommendation, we would recommend that the Committee:

* Promote the collection of sex- and age-disaggregated data of adolescent girls aged 10-15, as very little is known about the migration patterns and trafficking experiences of this cohort.
* Encourage States to involve girls in the development of policy responses to address trafficking, so as to avoid responses that do not respond to their needs or best interests.
* Urge States to take a human-rights based approach to combatting trafficking that does not privilege prosecution at the expense of other critical pillars of prevention, protection and partnerships.

We thank the Committee for this opportunity and remain at its disposal during the rest of this process.