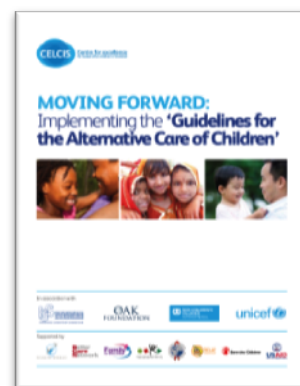


**Launch Event of Moving
Forward:
Implementing the Guidelines for
the Alternative Care of Children
11 April 2013
UNICEF House, New York City**



TALKING POINTS AMBASSADOR REGINA DUNLOP

First of all, I would like to thank the organizers of this event for their efforts to promote the implementation of the ‘Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children’, unanimously welcomed at the UN General Assembly in 2009. In our view, the Guidelines, although not binding, fulfill an important gap in the system established by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

The elaboration of national policies and the strategic exchange of information regarding successful experiences in alternative care promotes children's rights, especially those that lack parental care, while reaffirming family-based environments as a more favorable alternative for the full development of children.

For the past decade Brazil has intensified its commitment to this issue after a mapping survey was carried out by the Federal Government Agency –IPEA-, in 2002. The survey pointed out that in average a quarter of Brazilian children living in shelters were there because of the impoverished conditions of their families. Furthermore, research indicated that half of the children had been living in institutions for more than two years, shifting from a temporary and exceptional situation to an eventually permanent one, with severe consequences to their development.

The debate raised by this data influenced a 2004 decree issued by former President Lula, which established an Inter-Agency Commission to develop the National Plan for the Rights of Children and Adolescents to Family and Communitarian Living.

In this context, the Brazilian government created the National Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents. Likewise, it adopted in 2006, after public consultations, the National Action Plan for Promotion, Protection and Defense of the Right of Children to Family and Communitarian Living, as well as the Technical Guidelines for Children and Adolescents Hospitality Services.

The Brazilian Government thus began to structure policies for promoting the rights of children and adolescents in family and national parameters for childcare services. In 2009 the National Adoption Act was approved, geared towards preventing boys and girls from remaining more than two years in institutional care services, whether public or not.

Last but not least, Brazil created the National Adoption Registrar, which has become more responsive to the procedures of finding new families for children without parental care. The policy prohibits discrimination between adopted and biological children, including with relation to inheritance. Most importantly, it strengthens the right of every child to be reared and educated by a family, in line with the following order of preference: biological family, extended family or larger (close relatives or communities); and surrogate family (adoption).

Furthermore, this new legislation provides for the mother and adoptive parent the right to maternity/paternity license and leave since it understands that this period ensures benefits for the adaptation process.

While this extensive policy implementations were going on in Brazil, in 2005 the Committee of the Convention on Rights of the Child recommended the promotion of an international discussion about the subject of children deprived of parental care and the

preparation of guidelines on alternative care, to be considered and adopted by the United Nations General Assembly.

In response to this, a working group of international NGOs within the NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child developed a first draft of such guidelines, in cooperation with UNICEF and with broad civil society and expert consultation.

UNICEF then invited the Government of Brazil to help mobilize governments around this document. As a result, in August 2006, the first intergovernmental meeting on this issue was held in Brasília, with the participation of 47 countries, during which a preliminary version of the document produced by experts was analyzed.

In Geneva, as Coordinator of the Group of Friends, Brazil conducted long negotiations, which involved a broad consultative process held at the Human Rights Council. We were very pleased that the Guidelines were finally welcomed by UN General Assembly, in 2009, along with the relevant HRC resolution (A/HRC/RES/11/7). They were later adopted on the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Brazil continues to encourage States to take the Guidelines into account and to bring them to the attention of the relevant executive, legislative and judiciary bodies of government and policymakers.

We believe that families are children's first line of protection, and that effective child welfare practices should aim to prevent separation, promote reunification and provide appropriate short or long-term family-based alternatives. Thus we welcome all member states to join us in helping to disseminate the Guideline's principles within the United Nations System and throughout global society.

Thank you.

