



social development

Department:
Social Development
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

unicef 
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PRESS RELEASE

New project to improve protection and wellbeing of children on the move

European Union and UNICEF South Africa support the Department of Social Development to improve child protection services for some of the country's most excluded children.

PRETORIA, 15 December 2020 – A new two-year programme launched today aims to strengthen child protection systems and services for children on the move, including unaccompanied and separated migrant children – some of the most vulnerable children in South Africa.

The initiative will improve access to integrated child protection services, from violence prevention to gender specific work, and documentation to alternative care options to help avoid the detention of children. There are an estimated 642,000 migrant and refugee children in South Africa, making it the country with the largest child migrant population on the continent.

Speaking at the launch webinar, Ms. Lindiwe Zulu, the Minister of the Department of Social Development said, "We must protect all children from harm and provide access to services that can prevent exploitation and support children's wellbeing. That's why we are so pleased for this support to further improve and shape child protection services for the specific needs of children on the move," added Ms. Zulu.

The impact of COVID-19 on children on the move exacerbates the challenges that affected children already face in gaining access to child protection, documentation and other services, exposing them to potential abuse and exploitation.

"I am delighted that the European Union supports this important project," said the EU's Ambassador to South Africa, Dr. Riina Kionka. "Sharing global best practices, based on evidence and data, will serve to improve the care and support for children in migration," added Dr. Kionka.

The new R19 million programme forms part of a global European Union, UNICEF and UNHCR initiative that will be implemented in South Africa and three other countries: Mexico, El Salvador and Zambia.

"Every child has the right to be safe and to develop to their full potential," said Christine Muhigana, UNICEF South Africa Representative. "This support from the European Union is vital to provide the specific and essential services that children on the move need for their protection and wellbeing," added Muhigana.

Children on the move include refugees, asylum seekers, victims of trafficking, smuggled migrations and unaccompanied and separated minors.

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About European Union:

The EU is a unique economic and political union between 27 European countries that together cover much of the European continent. The EU is based on the rule of law: everything it does is founded on treaties, voluntarily and democratically agreed by its member countries. It actively promotes human rights and democracy and in 2012 was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for advancing the causes of peace, reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe.

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About UNICEF

UNICEF works in some of the world's toughest places, to reach the world's most disadvantaged children. Across more than 190 countries and territories, we work for every child, everywhere to build a better world for everyone.

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