

**Second Global Roundtable on Reception and
Alternatives to Detention of Asylum-Seekers, Refugees, Migrants and Stateless Persons
as part of UNHCR's *Global Strategy – Beyond Detention 2014-19***

With the support of The Oak Foundation and the International Detention Coalition

Toronto, Canada

20-22 April 2015

Concept Note

Background

As part of the *Global Strategy – Beyond Detention 2014-2019*,¹ which has the ultimate goal of ending the routine detention of asylum-seekers, UNHCR will hold its second Global Roundtable on Reception and Alternatives to Detention in April 2015. This roundtable builds on the first Global Roundtable on Alternatives to Detention, held in Geneva, in May 2011,² and aims to provide opportunities for frank exchanges between governments and others on how to manage systems dealing with asylum-seekers and other migrants without, or with more limited, recourse to detention and through the use of alternatives to detention, as appropriate. There will be a special session on family and child appropriate alternatives during the roundtable.

Since the first roundtable in 2011, there have been a number of significant developments in this field. A number of States have piloted as well as implemented alternatives to detention, often together with NGO partners, from which considerable experience can be shared. Governments have also been developing tools such as vulnerability assessments and screening mechanisms to some effect. New research has been carried out since 2011, comparing good practices as well as identifying common challenges.³ There have also been legislative changes at least in Europe that require less coercive means to be considered in each individual case prior to detention,⁴ calling for renewed reflection on existing migration management systems and alternatives to detention in particular.⁵ The financial and human costs of detention are already well documented.⁶

¹ UNHCR, *Beyond Detention: A Global Strategy to support governments to end the detention of asylum-seekers and refugees, 2014-2018*, 2014, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/536b564d4.html>.

² UNHCR and Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Global Roundtable on Alternatives to Detention of Asylum-Seekers, Refugees, Migrants and Stateless Persons: Summary Conclusions*, July 2011, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4e315b882.html>. Other documents related to the roundtable can be found at: <http://www.unhcr.org/3e5f78bc4.html>.

³ For example, Cathyn Costello and Ezra Kaytaz, *Building Empirical Research into Alternatives to Detention: Perceptions of Asylum-Seekers and Refugees in Toronto and Geneva*, UNHCR Legal and Protection Policy Research Series, PPLA/2013/02, June 2013, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/51a6fec84.html>; International Detention Coalition, *Captured Childhood: Introducing a new model to ensure the rights and liberty of refugee, asylum seeker and Irregular migrant children affected by Immigration detention*, 2012, ISBN PDF version: 978-0-9871129-5-8, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/510a604c2.html>; European Union: European Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Separated, asylum-seeking children in European Union Member States*, 7 December 2011, 978-92-9192-653-4, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4e539f1c2.html>; and European Migration Network, “*The use of detention and alternatives to detention in the context of immigration policies*”, forthcoming, at: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/index_en.htm.

⁴ See, for example, European Union: Council of the European Union, *Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and Council of 26 June 2013 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection (recast)*, 29 June 2013, L 180/96, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/51d29db54.html>; see as well, relevant jurisprudence from the European Court of Human Rights available at: http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/FS_Migrants_detention_ENG.pdf.

⁵ See European Migration Network, “*The use of detention and alternatives to detention in the context of immigration policies*”, forthcoming, at: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/index_en.htm.

“Alternatives to detention” refers to any legislation, policy or practice that allows asylum-seekers to reside in the community subject to a number of conditions or restrictions on their freedom of movement.⁷ Appropriate alternatives are not only cost-effective compared with detention, they also can increase compliance with immigration formalities and improve integration outcomes for persons allowed to remain. Some alternatives have achieved between 80 and 95 per cent compliance rates with conditions of release, while others have improved voluntary take-up of return options. Participants will hear how this has been achieved.

The second Global Roundtable on Reception and Alternatives to Detention aims to build upon these positive experiences and to share good practices as well as practical tools for States and other stakeholders looking to develop or strengthen alternatives to detention.

Objectives

The principal objectives of the roundtable are to:

- Exchange good practices and draw lessons on implementing alternatives to detention. A special session will be held on family and/or child appropriate alternatives.
- Learn about tools to assist in minimising the use of detention, such as detention reviews, vulnerability screening and assessment, and case management and resolution processes.
- Participate in on-site visits of two alternatives to detention in Toronto.

Content and structure

The roundtable will be over three days. Day 1 will involve on-site visits to examples of reception and alternatives to detention in Toronto, while Days 2 and 3 will involve the roundtable discussion, with breakout sessions on selected practical themes.

Participants

The roundtable is an opportunity for governments to dialogue with each other on the practical side of developing and implementing alternatives to detention. The roundtable will primarily bring together government representatives, including from countries where UNHCR’s *Global Strategy - Beyond Detention 2014-2019* is being rolled-out, supported by the participation of non-governmental and international organisations and others. Approximately 45 participants are expected.

Location and Dates

The roundtable will take place in Toronto, Canada, 20-22 April 2015.

An agenda and background documentation will be shared with confirmed participants in due course.

Division of International Protection
UNHCR
25 February 2015

do/networks/european_migration_network/index_en.htm.

⁶ Some of these findings have been supported as well by the *Summary Conclusions* of UNHCR’s sponsored *Canada/USA Bi-National Roundtable on Alternatives to Detention of Asylum Seekers, Refugees, Migrants and Stateless Persons*, February 2013, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/515178a12.html>.

⁷ UNHCR, *Guidelines on the Applicable Criteria and Standards relating to the Detention of Asylum-Seekers and Alternatives to Detention*, 2012, paragraph 8, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/503489533b8.html>.