



# Monthly Review

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## EDITORIAL

### 2016 new year resolutions: Time for change?

*2015 concluded on a note of hope – hope for greater respect for our planet, hope for a more united world through the adoption of the [SDGs](#), hope for a better protection of children in a vulnerable situation, including children without family care. 2016 has now begun, and with it, time has come for the realisation of these aims.*

This year has now started and, with it, the adoption of positive new year resolutions, which will guide us throughout the over 360 days before us. The ISS/IRC would like to invite you to share its positive resolutions for 2016, which are inspired by children's universal rights, and which we commit ourselves to disseminate and implement day after day. We wish this year to be a new contribution to the building of this ideal world, where every child could grow up in a caring family environment that is suitable for the fulfilment of his unique and unlimited potential.

#### A great deal of courage

What if 2016 became the year, in which we dare to make changes, the year of those long-awaited reforms in many of the world's regions to bring child protection systems closer to the needs of children separated from their families or at risk of so being? Several countries – such as Spain, Benin, Indonesia, to mention just a few – have embarked upon this path. These efforts remain to be pursued, in particular through a political commitment that is immediate and in the long term. Let us encourage law-makers to confirm, in child-related legislation, the developments faced by our societies for a permanent respect for the rights of the child, including those young people having reached the leaving-care age (see p. 4). Let us also encourage the political decision-makers to listen to the voices of children and for each of their decisions to come with adequate financial and human resources (see Monthly Review N° 197 of December 2015). Furthermore,

let us pursue relentlessly our advocacy efforts and actions, amongst others, in order for every child to be able to access his origins if he expresses this wish and need (see pp. 5 and 10). Finally, let us enhance the number of conferences on the rights of all children to permanent family care, such as the one that ISS is currently organising within the framework of the seventh anniversary of the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children in cooperation with many partners<sup>1</sup>, or the national conference announced by China<sup>2</sup>.

#### An increased sense of responsibility

Let us also be the actors of change and let us honour, each of us from our positions, our individual and collective responsibilities in relation to this world's children and their families. Let us therefore act to identify the causes that may lead a mother and/or father to abandon his child, and to remedy the latter (see p. 7). Let us contribute to the support needed for the building of families and for the strengthening of their abilities, by drawing our inspiration from the work undertaken in some countries to support the encounter between the adoptive parents and their adopted child and the development of the initial bond (see Monthly Review N° 193 (2015) and the forthcoming issue of the Monthly Review). Let us ensure that we are all – as professionals involved in supporting families, who care for a child – empathic and duly trained and equipped (see p. 8).

## Ethics on the agenda

At a time when political strategies become clearer with regards to intercountry adoption and to the care of unaccompanied and separated children, it is reasonable to question the role left to ethics and to the countries' respect for international standards. Whilst clearer limitations may need to be imposed in intercountry adoption in order to ensure that only those children, who would truly benefit from an intercountry adoption are declared adoptable, and that only those families, who are able to care for children, whose profiles are increasingly complex are declared suitable and are therefore supported, this is not true in the case of unaccompanied and separated children. Unlike the number of intercountry adoptions, which has not stopped decreasing, the number of unaccompanied and separated children, on the other hand, has been constantly increasing. Has time not come in this field to lift some of the restrictions and to

support, through political will – which remains incomplete to date – some of the concrete solutions that already exist in this field (see p. 11)? A good starting point would be the dissemination and implementation of some key principles that were recently published by a group of international agencies (see p. 3) in order to ensure that every unaccompanied and separated child benefits from the protection that meets his needs.

**The ISS/IRC looks forward to putting all its energy, knowledge and skills into these resolutions and, together with you, to respond to each of these through the adoption of concrete measures throughout this year. Let us ensure that 2016 is a year that measures up to our ambitions!**

The ISS/IRC team  
January 2016

