

**Regional Conference on Migration (Puebla Process)**  
**VIII Meeting**  
**Cancun**  
**May 29-30 2003**

**DECLARATION**

The Eighth Meeting of the Regional Conference on Migration, made up of the Vice-Ministers of Belize, Canada, Costa Rica, El Salvador, the United States of America, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and the Dominican Republic, held in Cancun on May 29 & 30, 2003, emphasized the importance and usefulness of this mechanism, which constitutes a space for dialogue, open discussion and consensus on the migration phenomenon in the region;

The Vice-Ministers analyzed the different aspects of the migration phenomenon and highlighted the beneficial impact of well-managed, safe and orderly migration;

They indicated the need to continue perfecting the Puebla Process, based on the consolidation of its achievements so it remains a flexible and dynamic mechanism for the attainment of its goals, through the following guidelines and actions:

- Strengthen respect for the human rights of all migrants regardless of their migrant status, with special attention to those vulnerable groups such as women and children.
- Intensify our cooperation to combat smuggling and trafficking of persons, making our borders safe and orderly places.
- Reinforce coordination among our authorities to guarantee that repatriation of migrants is undertaken in a safe, dignified and orderly manner.

In order to attain these goals, the Vice-Ministers made the decisions contained in the attached document.

They thank the Government of Mexico for its hospitality and the Government of Panama for its offer to be the venue for the IX Meeting of the Regional Conference on Migration.

**DECISIONS OF THE VICE MINISTERS**

The Vice-Ministers decided to:

Express their satisfaction with the participation as observers of: Colombia, Ecuador and the following International Organizations: the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR); the Latin American and Caribbean Economic Commission (CEPAL/CELADE); the Inter-American Human Rights Commission (ICHR); and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Thank Regional Network of Civil Organizations on Migration (RNCOM) for their contributions.

Acknowledge the value of the special guest participation of representatives of: Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC); Council of Europe; the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD); the Special Rapporteur for the Human Rights of Migrants of the United Nations; the Swiss Government (Berne Initiative); and the Director General of the International Organization on Migration.

Acknowledge the member countries of the RCM that have signed or ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Complementary Protocols: Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children; and Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea, and Air. Urge remaining members to sign or ratify said instruments.

Request that RCM member countries implement and/or reinforce their public awareness campaigns to warn potential migrants of the dangers entailed in irregular migration.

Continue joint efforts to combat trafficking of children. In this respect we recognize the importance of having the appropriate mechanisms to facilitate legal reunification of families and exchange of information regarding RCM member countries' policies on this process.

In order to implement the Project for the Dignified, Safe and Orderly Return of Regional Migrants by Land, Mexico and Guatemala, in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), will prepare a proposal of a general framework. This project will be discussed in El Salvador within two months.

Acknowledge the efforts of Guatemala to start implementation of an emergency plan to facilitate transfer of regional migrants to their places of origin, in conformity with their migration policies and in respect for the human rights of migrants.

Continue to evaluate the Program on Multilateral Cooperation for the Assisted Return of Extra-Regional Migrants Stranded in Member Countries of the RCM. Mexico, after consultation and on the basis of applicable international laws, and in collaboration with the IOM, will prepare a proposal for a general framework. This initiative will be discussed in the same meeting in El Salvador.

Include the "Pilot Project for Voluntary Repatriation and Social Reinsertion of Children, Victims of Smuggling/Trafficking" in the Plan of Action under the theme of Human Rights. Acknowledge the financial support of the governments of Canada and the United States.

Accept Mexico's proposal to create a database on RCM's private web site with input from all countries on false documents and documents obtained fraudulently.

Approve the attached Work Plan for the Liaison Officer Network on Consular Protection.

Encourage continuing progress in the creation of the Central American Consulate in Veracruz, Mexico. Countries that are prepared to start operations are invited to do so as soon as possible.

Include in the RCM Plan of Action special attention to the protection of migrant women's and children's rights, under the theme of Human Rights.

Urge member countries to send any comments, within a period of three months, on the project " Establishing a database of Migration Departments in the Region on Alerts, Capture and Impediments to Entry and Exit for Crimes Related to Trafficking in Prostitutes and Sexual Exploitation of Minors", presented by the Government of Costa Rica.

Accept the requests of the Central American Integration System and the Special Rapporteur for the Human Rights of Migrants from the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, to be observer members.

Accept the proposal to include training on protection of refugees as a pilot within the joint training program offered by Canada, the United States and Mexico on detection of fraudulent documents. This module will be held in cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Within 60 days of the end of the VIII Meeting of this Conference, Nicaragua will be the venue for the first training session of this type.

Authorize the Regional Consultation Group on Migration in its next meeting to consider adopting the "Proposed Plan of Action for Combating Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking", if and when it has been approved by the Liaison Officer Network on Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking.

Approve the budget of the Technical Secretariat for the period 1 June 2003 to 31 December 2004, which has been programmed for 19 months to change the budget timeframe to coincide with the calendar year, as agreed at the VII RCM.

Approve the establishment of a Reserve Fund to support the activities of the RCM proposed by the Vice-Ministers, based on the available surplus reported by the Technical Secretariat upon termination of the initial phase of their operations. Disbursements from this fund will be authorized by the Regional Consultation Group on Migration either in regular meetings or through the Virtual Secretariat. The reserve fund could be used for the following activities:

a) Finance pending priority activities identified in the Plan of Action that require funding; the Presidency Pro-Témpore, in consultation with the other countries, will determine what these activities could be.

b) Address the needs identified by the Technical Secretariat to adequately support its activities.

Entrust the Technical Secretariat with the revision of the RCM Plan of Action and, in coordination with the Presidency Pro-Témpore, preparation of a report on the status of the Plan, highlighting specific progress indicators. The report must be submitted every six months between RCGM meetings and should be incorporated into the Virtual Secretariat.

Express appreciation to the Presidency Pro-Témpore and the International Organization on Migration (IOM) for offering the "Workshop to Design a Proposal for a Regional Action Plan to Combat Migrant Smuggling & Trafficking" held in Mexico City on May 8 & 9, 2003.

Congratulate the United States and Mexico as coordinators of the joint interdiction and inspection exercise held on the Nicaragua-Costa Rica border.

Accept the offer of Canada and Mexico to prepare an evaluation of operation of the Puebla Process, to be presented to the Vice-Ministers for consideration.