

## **XIII REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON MIGRATION (RCM)**

**Tela, Honduras, 8-9 May 2008**

### **DECLARATION**

The Thirteenth Regional Conference on Migration (RCM), gathering the Vice-Ministers of Canada, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and the United States, was held in Tela, Honduras, on May 8th and 9th of 2008, with the theme of Migration and Human Rights.

The Vice-Ministers reached consensus on the following:

Migration can have positive effects for migrants, as well as for countries of origin and destination countries, and also recognized the links between migration and other issues, such as the fight against poverty, human development, food security, and various types of disasters.

Vice-Ministers reiterated the importance of protecting the human rights of migrants. Also, Vice-Ministers supported the interest expressed by Central American countries and the Dominican Republic to unite forces to provide consular assistance and protection to their nationals through their missions abroad.

Vice-Ministers noted with satisfaction the full implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding between the governments of Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Honduras for the safe, orderly and dignified repatriation of Central American migrants by land, and indicated that this achievement of the RCM should be shared as a best practice in other migration fora.

Vice-Ministers recognized that the conference theme conference theme could be enhanced by a more focused discussion with RNCOM. To ensure the dialogue constitutes the most effective contribution possible, the Vice-Ministers agreed that the participation of RNCOM in the Regional Consultation Group on Migration should include a focused discussion on the theme of the Conference in order to foster cooperation between civil society and governments.

Vice-Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol and acknowledged the importance of providing international protection to refugees in the context of mixed migratory flows.

The Vice-Ministers reiterated the importance of combating trafficking in persons and migrant smuggling and agreed to consider, within their national contexts, mechanisms to facilitate legal and orderly migration, in order to avoid the risks faced by traveling in an irregular manner.

The Vice-Ministers reviewed the strategical fundamentals that created the RCM. They reiterated their commitment to the Conference principles stated in the 1996 Puebla communiqué and recognized the important contribution the process has made over the last twelve years to improving the management of migration in the region.

The Vice-Ministers reiterated their commitment to the decisions previously approved to strengthen the process, highlighting the statements made in Washington in 2000 and Panama in 2004.

In approving the Plan of Action, the Vice-Ministers also reiterated their support for its three pillars: Policy and Migration Management; Human Rights; and Migration and Development.

In Tela, Honduras, the Vice-Ministers underscored that the RCM had matured into a regional dialogue that examines migration challenges and opportunities with a comprehensive perspective and the goal of developing regional responses that emphasized common responsibility in addressing these issues.

As outcomes of the conference, Vice-Minister approved the following:

### DECISIONS

1. Reiterate the importance of the Technical Secretariat (TS) in the sustainability of RCM activities. In this regard, commit to make outstanding contributions in order to guarantee the proper functioning of the TS.
2. Approve the 2009 budget of the Technical Secretariat.
3. Thank IOM for managing the *RCM Fund to Assist in the Voluntary Return of Migrants in Highly Vulnerable Situations*, which has benefited a significant number of migrants in critical situations. Reiterate the commitment to continue making contributions to this fund.
4. Approve:
  - Holding of a *Workshop on Migration and Human Rights*, to be sponsored by the Government of Honduras, in collaboration with the RNCOM.
  - Holding of a workshop on temporary migrant worker programs, sponsored by the Governments of Canada and El Salvador, to be held in El Salvador.
  - Holding of a technical workshop by the Governments of Canada and Costa Rica on effective practices in international protection, identification systems, and refugee status determinations in the context of mixed migratory flows for officials in the RCM region, with the support of UNHCR, to be held in Costa Rica in the third quarter of 2008.
5. Receive with interest the initiative of the Government of Honduras that coincides with the 2001 idea of Mexico to create a Central American consular network, with the inclusion of the Dominican Republic, with the purpose of improving coverage of assistance and consular protection of their nationals in Mexico. This proposal will be formulated in technical meetings and later put for consideration before pertinent Mexican authorities.

6. Thank IOM for its initiative to hold a workshop on the social reinsertion of trafficking on June 27-28, 2008 in Chinandega, Nicaragua, with the support of the United States.
7. Approve the initiative of Mexico to realize a seminar to draft regional guidelines for the assistance of unaccompanied migrant minors in custody.  
In the same manner, receive with interest the proposal presented by IOM, entitled, "Project to Strengthen the Protection of Unaccompanied Migrant Minors." Also, thank the Government of Costa Rica for its offer to host a regional seminar on this topic.
8. Reiterate the commitment to facilitate access to health of migrant populations, in particular high vulnerable migrants. In this sense, ask the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and IOM to strengthen collaboration and support to RCM member states.
9. Task El Salvador to create a list of relevant government institutions in the areas of human rights in RCM countries with the information provided by RCM member countries.
10. Renew the appointment of Mr. Saul Salvador Ronquillo Garcia as Technical Secretariat Coordinator for the period 2008-2009.

Recognize the participation of RNCOM and Ecuador and Peru as observer countries. Also recognize the important contribution of International Organizations, specifically IOM, UNHCR, UNFPA, ECLAC/CELADE, SEGIB and UNODC, and the participation as a special invitee of the Central American Parliament (PARLACEN).

Reiterate their appreciation to the Government of Guatemala to host the next meeting of the RCM.

Thank the people and Government of Honduras for their hospitality and excellent organization of the XIII Regional Conference on Migration.