

XV MEETING OF THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON MIGRATION (RCM)

Tapachula, Chiapas, Mexico, May 20-21, 2010

DECLARATION

The XV Meeting of the Regional Conference on Migration, with participation of Vice-Ministers of Belize, Canada, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, and the United States, was held in Tapachula, Chiapas, Mexico, on May 20-21, 2010.

Fifteen years after the first meeting of the Regional Conference on Migration, the “Puebla Process”, the Vice-Ministers:

- Recognized the importance of addressing, in a comprehensive manner, the causes, manifestations, and impacts of migration, as well as the benefits and opportunities it creates for all countries.
- Emphasized that for benefits to materialize, implementing national policies that advance migration management is crucial for the establishment of a legal, political, and social framework that ensures respect for human rights.
- Highlighted that migration flows have significantly increased in recent years as a result of economic and labor market disparities, as well as political and social factors, natural disasters, environmental degradation, demographic explosion, and barriers to trade and investment.
- Underscored the need to cooperate in order to promote economic growth and employment and thus, reduce poverty levels to create appropriate conditions for migrants to remain in their country.
- Recognized the need to promote cooperation between RCM member states, oriented toward mitigating structural factors which prompt migration in the region, without detriment to bilateral cooperation programs.

At this XV Regional Conference on Migration held in Tapachula, Vice-Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the established principles of the Puebla Process, and thus agreed to strengthen the Process through new collaborative mechanisms that would allow for more efficient action.

The Vice-ministers gathered at the XV RCM, which had “Migration and Family” as its central theme, recognized the impact of migration on the family unit and the importance of considering family in migration policy-making, the need to take on a cross-cutting perspective including and favoring family integration, and the potential of migration as a catalyst for development in communities of origin and destination.

Within this context, reaffirming the social importance of the family unit, the Vice-Ministers agreed to:

- Renew the commitment to combat migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons.
- Review travel policies for children who are separated from their families, towards family reunification, taking into account the best interests of the child.
- Strengthen inter-regional cooperation for the repatriation of undocumented migrants, with a focus on re-insertion or re-integration of returned migrants to their society of origin.
- Urge relevant institutions to address the causes of migration by promoting opportunities for development and a better quality of life for populations, and strengthening multilateral cooperation to ensure that migration is not the only option for families.
- Ensure that information about mechanisms to facilitate migration reaches potential beneficiaries.
- Promote awareness in society and its institutions regarding the current reality of the phenomenon of migration.

Furthermore, Vice-Ministers recognized the challenges for the region posed by increased extra-regional migration flows and that immediate action needs to be taken in order to gain a better understanding of the scope of the challenge and to identify appropriate coordination mechanisms to address it.

The Vice-Ministers acknowledged the importance of participation by the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM) at the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) and the Ibero-American Forum on Migration and Development (FIBEMYD).

The Vice-Ministers thanked the participation in the RCM of Ecuador, as an observer country, and the following international organizations: the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB).

Consequently, the Vice-Ministers made the following:

DECISIONS

1. Approve the 2011 budget of the Technical Secretariat of the Regional Conference on Migration.
2. Establish a *non-permanent ad hoc* working group, composed of RCM member states and a maximum of three representatives from the Regional Network for Civil Organizations on Migration (RNCOM), which will identify topics for more substantive and exploratory discussions between RCM

- member states and RNCOM at future RCM meetings. The working group shall submit findings before the meeting of the Regional Consultation Group on Migration (RCGM) to be held in October 2010.
3. Approve the procedures for participation of the Presidency Pro Tempore (PPT) and the Technical Secretariat (TS) in events that are external to RCM, contained in Item 2 of the Recommendations submitted by the RCGM at the XV RCM, and accept that the procedure include an analysis of what would be the impact of such participation by the PPT/TS at a given event.
 4. Address the concern of member states of the Central American Commission of Migration Directors (OCAM) regarding the increase in extra-regional migration flows and related challenges, and request the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to develop a proposal, in consultation with concerned countries, aimed at improving capacity for dealing with these trends; this proposal should likewise explore follow-up activities to the Regional Conference "Refugee Protection and International Migration in the Americas" (10-Point Plan) held in Costa Rica (November 2009) and be presented during the next RCGM meeting.¹
 5. Approve the following events:
 - A Workshop on Labor Migration within a South-South Context, to be held in the Dominican Republic prior to the XVI RCM, co-sponsored by the Dominican Republic and Canada with support from IOM and SEGIB.
 - A Workshop on the Child Protection Officer (OPI) Training Model, to be held in Panama in late August 2010.
 6. Consider family as a cross-cutting factor in migration policies of RCM member states to allow for reflection and possible action in benefit of the family unit.
 7. To take up on the proposal by Mexico to consider, in accordance with the needs and characteristics of each RCM member country, adopting the Child Protection Officer (OPI) model as a best practice for the benefit of children, within the framework of implementation of the "Regional Guidelines for the Assistance of Unaccompanied Children in cases of Repatriation."
 8. Support, on the occasion of the 15th Anniversary of RCM, a review led by Mexico as Presidency Pro-Tempore and in consultation with all RCM member countries, aimed at identifying actions to renew the effectiveness of the RCM in addressing the complex topic of migration in the region.

¹ Amended on June 14th, 2010, based on the inputs sent by member countries to the Technical Secretariat during the revision period of the document.

9. Hold a regional meeting sponsored by the United States to address three specific topics: Trafficking in Persons, Forced Child Labor, and Sexual Tourism involving minors, to be held in October 2010 in an RCM member country. For this purpose, a questionnaire shall be distributed for completion by RCM member states prior to the meeting to ensure that their priority training needs are taken into account. Note is taken of the offer by Costa Rica to host the event.

10. Renew the contract of Mr. Jorge Peraza Breedy, Coordinator of the Technical Secretariat, until June 30, 2011.

Finally, the Vice-Ministers thanked the Municipality of Tapachula, the Government of the State of Chiapas, and the Government of Mexico for the excellent hospitality, organization, and leadership on the work of the XV Regional Conference on Migration, and expressed their confidence and support for the Government of the Dominican Republic for the organization of the XVI Regional Conference on Migration.