

JOINT COMMUNIQUE SECOND REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON MIGRATION

The II Regional Conference on Migration was held in Panama City, on March 13 and 14, 1997, with the participation of Belize, Canada, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and the United States of America.

Representatives of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) also participated.

The governments acknowledged the advances achieved by each of the participating countries with respect to the commitments agreed upon at the I Regional Conference on Migration held in Puebla, Mexico.

In addition, they highlighted the consensus which exists among the governments regarding the importance of migration issues for the countries of the region.

The governments agreed to establish the Regional Consultation Group on Migration, to advance the implementation of actions in accordance with the commitments agreed upon at the I and II Regional Conferences on Migration held in Puebla and Panama, respectively.

In the II Regional Conference on Migration, the participating governments adopted the Plan of Action attached to this Joint Communiqué, which will be implemented by the Regional Consultation Group on Migration.

The governments also agreed to establish a Coordinating Committee, for the purpose of liaison and coordination of actions, comprised of the current and future host countries of the Regional Conference. The Coordinating Committee will provide all possible assistance in the follow-up and exchange of information for the implementation of the Plan of Action.

The governments stated their approval of the positive spirit and cooperation which characterized the discussions. The participating delegations also thanked the Government of the Republic of Panama for the hospitality shown during the conference and acknowledged the need to continue and to strengthen the constructive dialogue on the important subject of migration. Therefore, the governments decided to hold a meeting, at the technical level, in the second half of 1997, in Costa Rica. They also decided to hold the III Regional Conference on Migration, at the Vice-Ministerial level, in the second quarter of 1998 in the city of Ottawa, Canada, to which some South American and Caribbean countries will be invited as observers. The Government of Canada, for this purpose, will request logistical support from the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

PANAMA, MARCH 14, 1997