

## **JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ**

The VII Regional Conference on Migration (RCM) took place in Antigua, Guatemala, May 30-31, 2002, with the participation of the member countries of Belize, Canada, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and the United States of America.

The Viceministers expressed their solidarity with the people and Government of the United States of America for the deaths and damage caused by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2002, and urged member countries of the RCM to continue offering their support. For its part, the Government of the United States of America thanked the member countries of the RCM for their demonstration of solidarity.

### **APPROVED**

#### **SUBSTANTIVE MATTERS**

1. To acknowledge the important role played by migration policies in the area of regional security, as well as to adopt essential actions for the security of the region within a framework of full respect for the human rights of migrants, particularly in terms of distinguishing positive and beneficial migration flows from those individuals and groups who pursue terrorist and other criminal purposes. To this end, they have approved the attached Declaration Against Terrorism.
2. To adopt "Towards Regional Solidarity in Security and Migration" as the theme of the RCM in 2002.
3. To recognize the importance of mechanisms for the consular protection of migrants in situations of detention, as contained in the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations or those established by other international agreements, as a course of action within the framework of full respect for the human rights of migrants.
4. To accept the proposal entitled "Convergence of Regional Processes in the Americas in Addressing Migration Issues" as a reference document, and to request that the Presidency Pro-Témpore establish initial contacts with different regional fora in order to identify areas of cooperation and coordination on common initiatives.
5. To request that IOM expeditiously prepare a proposed plan of action based on the results of the case studies on migrant trafficking, so that the RCM may consider it as a basis for cooperation in this field.
6. To acknowledge the importance of bilateral operational agreements for the orderly and safe return of regional migrants. In this sense, RCM member countries are urged to consider, as the basis for a regional approach, the document entitled "Regional Program for a Dignified, Safe and Orderly Return Over Land of the Central American Migrants," as updated by IOM at the request of the RCM.
7. To continue evaluating the adoption of the document entitled "Framework for Implementation of a General Program of Cooperation of the Regional

Conference on Migration for the Return of Extra-regional Migrants” as a basis for the negotiation of agreements between IOM and RCM member countries.

8. To recommend that member countries of the RCM sign, ratify and implement, as the case may be, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, as well as the two supplementary Protocols: “Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Particularly Women and Children”; and the “Protocol Against Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air.”
9. In relation to the subject of linking the private sector with the phenomenon of migration, they agreed:
  - a. To invite representatives of the private sector to the next meeting of the RCM to participate in a dialogue, as is the case with civil society.
  - b. To organize a seminar in the last trimester of 2002 in San Salvador on “The Role of the Private Sector in Addressing the Challenges and Opportunities of the Migration Phenomenon.”
  - c. To charge the Presidency Pro-Témpore with seeking alternatives for the undertaking of a project identifying best practices as well as various areas of cooperation with the private sector beneficial to migrants.
10. Concerning the activities of the Network of Liaison Officers for the Ongoing Exchange of Information to Combat Migrant Trafficking, approve:
  - a. Changing the name of this Network to The Liaison Officer Network to Combat Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking.
  - b. Their Work Plan as a tool to monitor the activities of the Network.
  - c. Coordinated training exercises, sponsored by the governments of Canada, United States and Mexico, as an ongoing RCM activity.
  - d. The lengthening of the Network’s working sessions, permitting the meetings to be held immediately prior to the RCGM meetings.
  - e. Inclusion of the terms “smuggling of migrants” and “trafficking in persons” according to conceptual definitions contained in the protocols of the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, as terms of reference for the activities of the Network.
  - f. Establishment of a follow-up mechanism for the Network’s activities, by the Presidency Pro-Témpore.
11. In reference to the Liaison Officer Network for Consular Protection, approve:
  - a. The establishment of cooperative mechanisms in the areas of consular protection and national legislation, through the development of training courses, seminars and other activities for consular officers of member countries of the RCM, in order to make assistance to their co-nationals more effective, fast, and prompt. To achieve this, each country will identify its needs and training opportunities in consular matters.

- b. The exchange of information on visa requirements and types of visas, by means of the Virtual Secretariat within a period of 30 days.
- c. The urging of member countries of the RCM to develop information campaigns on the risks and dangers inherent in irregular or undocumented migration.
- d. To identify countries that hinder the issuance of the travel documents necessary for a safe, dignified and orderly return of extra-regional migrants, in order to consider potential regional actions to facilitate obtaining such documents.
- e. Establishment of a follow-up mechanism for the Network's activities, by the Presidency Pro-Témpore.

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

- The efforts of El Salvador in its capacity as host of the Virtual Secretariat (VS) servers.
- The studies on migrant trafficking in Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic, prepared with the financial support of Canada and the technical cooperation of IOM.
- The exercise carried out by Canada, United States and Mexico in terms of coordinated training and activities for the detection of fraudulent documents, with the collaboration of other member countries of the RCM.
- The presentation of the report of the Government of Mexico on the International Workshop "Migration, Regional Development and the Productive Potential of Remittances," taking into consideration a) the need to continue to study the potential productivity of remittances; b) their link with development; and c) the promotion of cooperative mechanisms aimed at studying ways of reducing the cost of sending remittances.
- The presentation of the Government of El Salvador on the theme of positive links between the private sector and the phenomenon of migration.
- The work carried out by the Governments of Guatemala and Mexico in relation to their efforts to provide assistance to temporary migrant workers.
- The efforts of the Regional Network of Civil Organizations for Migration (RNCOM) and to take note of their suggestions and proposals, including their preparation of the draft of the document entitled "Regional Guidelines for the Protection of Human Rights of Migrants in Situations of Interception, Detention, Deportation and Reception."
- The initiative of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean/Demographic Institute for Latin America (ECLAC/CELADE) and IOM to organize the Hemispheric Conference on Human Rights and Trafficking of Migrants in the Americas, to be held in Santiago, Chile, in November 2002, as

- a follow-up activity to the Plan of Action approved by the III Summit of the Americas in Quebec.
- The efforts of the Governments of Canada and Mexico in the drafting of a study related to migrant children in the region.
  - The presentations by Guatemala and Mexico on the topic of Migration and Health, and consider their projects as a frame of reference for the design of similar activities that could be incorporated into the RCM Plan of Action in the section on Human Rights.
  - The generous contribution of the United States to support the advances of the Statistical Information System on Migration in Central America (SIEMCA), and to encourage governments to seek funding for the continuity and sustainability of this project.
  - The presentation of the report by the Government of the Dominican Republic on the results of the seminar entitled "Modernization of Migration Management and Cross-Border Cooperation," and approve the following recommendations:
    - a) To acknowledge the importance of strengthening coherence between internal and external national policies on migration matters, in order to formulate internally consistent legislation.
    - b) To acknowledge that, at present, the migration phenomenon tends to transcend the characterization of countries as countries of origin, transit and destination, suggesting instead that all RCM countries, to a certain extent, are countries of migration.
    - c) To acknowledge the benefits of engaging civil society, and to promote an increased participation of these groups in the formulation of migration policies.
    - d) To acknowledge that cross-border cooperation in the areas of infrastructure, development, migration and customs cooperation, through integrated agreements, constitutes an ideal tool for the economic development of border countries, and to request that IOM design a project proposal on this subject.
  - The presentation of Mr. Gervais Appave, Director of the IOM Migration Policy and Research Program (MPRP), and accept the offer of the Canadian and Guatemalan Governments to host a workshop under the auspices of the MPRP.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

1. In relation to the Technical Support Unit (TSU):
  - a. To approve changing the name of the Technical Support Unit (TSU) to the Technical Secretariat of the Regional Conference on Migration.

- b. To take note of the establishment of the Technical Secretariat and the presentation of progress reports to the RCGM.
- c. To take note of the initial voluntary contributions that made possible the establishment and operation of the Technical Secretariat, and to urge member countries to undertake the necessary procedures to make their annual contributions.
- d. To approve the budget included in the document "Budget and Work Plan of the Technical Support Unit (TSU) of the Regional Conference on Migration" presented during this meeting of the RCGM. To accept the suggestion made by the Technical Secretariat that their fiscal year coincide with the calendar year, beginning in January 2005.
- e. To request that the Technical Secretariat submit its budget request during the Vice-Ministerial Reunion a year prior to its execution.

- 2. To approve the allocation of a space within the RCM Virtual Secretariat, to be used by the members of the Permanent Technical Commission of the Central American Commission of Directors in Migration (OCAM).

The Viceministers also expressed their appreciation and approval of the offer of the Delegation of the Government of Mexico to host the VIII Regional Conference on Migration during the first trimester of 2003.

The participating Delegations expressed their deep appreciation to the people and Government of Guatemala for their warm hospitality and excellent organization of the event.

The Viceministers expressed their satisfaction with the participation, as observers, of Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, as well as the following International Organizations: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean/Demographic Institute for Latin America (ECLAC/CELADE), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).