

XVII REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON MIGRATION (RCM)

“Security within the Framework of Human Rights and Mixed Migration Flows”

DECLARATION

The XVII Vice-Ministerial Meeting of the Regional Conference on Migration, with the participation of Vice-Ministers and Heads of Delegation from Belize, Canada, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and the United States of America, was held in Panama City, Panama, June 21 and 22, 2012.

The Vice-Ministers and Heads of Delegation:

- Recognized the relevance of the Presidency Pro Tempore’s selection of the XVII Regional Conference of Migration theme, “Security Within the Framework of Human Rights and Mixed Migration Flows” which focused on the access of all persons, particularly migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, to the legal system and guarantees related to the respect of human rights, and strengthening policies that prevent crimes against these vulnerable persons.
- Emphasized the importance of the extraordinary “Panama Crisol de Razas” regularization process to legalize the migratory status of undocumented migrants in Panama.
- Recognizing the challenges presented by extra-continental and regional migration movements, as well as transnational organized crime, reiterated the importance of adopting and continuing to develop mechanisms for the identification of protection and assistance needs, and means for finding practical solutions for the management of these movements in accordance with the norms and standards of international law, with the support of IOM and UNHCR.
- Congratulated the decision of the Government of the United States to grant temporary permission to stay and work for two years to young people who meet the requirements. Additionally, welcomed the letters of arrangement the U.S. has signed with some RCM countries that promote the protections afforded to migrant workers under U.S. labor laws and procedures.
- Agreed to continue working toward the effective implementation of the *United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children*, and the *Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air*, supplementing the *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*. In this regard, congratulated the holding

of the International Conference on Migrant Smuggling in Mexico City from April 16-18, 2012.

- Reiterated the importance for the RCM to adapt its structure and procedures to current realities, in order to function more effectively.

Reaffirming the principles established in the Puebla Process, based on recommendations of the Regional Consultation Group on Migration and the deliberations of the XVII RCM, the Vice-Ministers and Heads of Delegation reached the following:

Decisions

1. Approve the budget presented by the Technical Secretariat for the year 2013.
2. Follow up on the proposals resulting from the first meeting of the Ad-Hoc Working Group to discuss, analyze and define the objectives on the issue of extra-continental migration in the region, and include the participation of Honduras and Nicaragua.
3. Invite the Troika of the South American Conference on Migration (SACM) to participate in the next meeting of the RCGM on matters related to continental and extra-continental migration flows in the region.
4. Approve the proposal from the United States on strengthening the procedures related to the organization of RCM meetings, and to annex it to the Santa Fe Document.
5. Convene an Ad Hoc working group to prepare a regional proposal in response to the concern of some RCM Member Countries regarding the irregular movement of Cuban nationals arriving from other countries in the region and their vulnerability in transit. This group will be composed by Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, El Salvador, Panama, Nicaragua, Honduras, and Mexico.
6. Include government migration experts to address the migration of minors, in the Consular Protection Liaison Officers Network.
7. Approve the RNCOM proposal to hold a meeting of the Ad-Hoc RCM-RNCOM coordination working group to determine a common agenda and coordinating mechanisms.
8. Renew the contract of Mr. Oliver Francis Bush Espinosa, Coordinator of the Technical Secretariat until July 2013.
9. Thank the participation of the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB), the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights (ICHR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as observer organizations, and as special guests, Brazil as

representative of the South American Conference on Migration, the International Labor Organization (ILO), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

10. Thank Costa Rica for hosting the XVIII Regional Conference on Migration. Costa Rica proposes to foster relevant actions in the RCM to provide continuity to the following topics: integration of migrant populations, trafficking in persons, migrant smuggling, and protection of migrant children and adolescents.
11. Thank Nicaragua for offering to host the 19th Regional Conference on Migration in 2014.
12. Thank the government and the people of Panama for their hospitality and the excellent coordination, effective and successful organization of the XVII Regional Conference on Migration.