

## MANAGUA EXTRAORDINARY DECLARATION

The increasing numbers of unaccompanied children irregularly migrating represent a significant humanitarian protection challenge, and enforcement of the laws in our region.

The Vice Ministers and the Heads of Delegation, recognizing the gravity of the challenge and the fact that unaccompanied migrant children are often victims of terrible crime during the migration process, are committed to actively participate in finding solutions.

The Vice Ministers and the Heads of Delegation of the Member Countries of the Regional Conference on Migration recognizes the regional co-responsibility and the immediate need to implement comprehensive and articulated measures, based on the guiding principles adopted by the RCM, as a response to this migration phenomenon, agrees to the following:

- 1) *Ensuring the Best Interest of the Child*—Reaffirming that the best interests of the child, and family unity, must guide our regional, bilateral and national responses to this urgent humanitarian situation, the Member Countries should extend all available resources to provide protection to unaccompanied migrant children at the earliest point possible through consular networks, identification mechanisms, partnerships with civil society, as well as the access and support of international protection where appropriate.
- 2) *The creation and meeting of an Ad Hoc Group on Migrant Children* —to promote immediate action to provide effective protection to unaccompanied children during any phase of the migration flow.
- 3) *Providing Accurate Information and Engage in Communication Outreach*—Noting that many families are being persuaded to support the irregular movement of unaccompanied migrant children due to intentional misinformation propagated by smugglers, RCM Member Countries intend to actively engage their citizens via public outreach campaigns to provide accurate information regarding “dangers of the journey” and the unavailability of “*permisos*” for those who arrive in the United States.
- 4) *Combating Organized Criminal Human Smuggling and Trafficking Groups and the Strengthening of Cooperation in the Implementation of the Nations’ Respective Laws*—Recognize and condemning the role of organized crime, which prey on and exploit vulnerable children and families, the Member Countries commit themselves to increase efforts to combat these criminal networks, to penalize any collusion with them and to strengthen the cooperation related to the implementation of the nations’ respective laws.
- 5) *Migration Management*—The Member Countries commit themselves to undertake coordinated actions to detect traffickers, smugglers, and related crimes, in order to discourage irregular flows, including the trafficking and smuggling of unaccompanied migrant children, which has resulted in the current humanitarian crisis.
- 6) *Development* – Recognizing that there are many factors that explain the increasing number of unaccompanied children migrating irregularly, the Member Countries commit to working together, and to seek international collaboration, to address the structural causes of this irregular movement of unaccompanied migrant children as well as working toward the eradication of such causes, such as creating social and economical development programs in the communities of origin.

- 7) *Consular Protection*—Strengthen the institutional capacities of consular protection, in particular assistance to unaccompanied children, and reinforce coordination for consular access where these unaccompanied migrant children are located.
- 8) *Repatriation and Reintegration*—Consistent with the RCM’s commitment to supporting the rule of law, in those instances in which children are returned with their families to their country of origin in accordance with due process, and after exhausting all other immigration benefit options, and acknowledging the potentially vulnerable situation of children, the Member Countries agree to cooperate among themselves to dedicate sufficient resources to implement reinsertion and reintegration programs in their communities of origin.
- 9) *International protection*—Recognize that some of the unaccompanied children may be granted refugee status or related protection.
- 10) *Cooperation*—Accept offers of assistance and cooperation from international organizations, civil society, and non-governmental organizations involved in the protection of migrants, particularly in the humanitarian crisis that the children are facing in the RCM Member Countries.
- 11) *Best Practices*—In all of these areas, exchange of best practices should be encouraged via workshops, technical exchanges and training. Additionally, and where possible, financial support will be provided.