COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION ISSUES OEA/Ser.W

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CONCEPT PAPER

# ANNUAL SESSION ON MIGRATION GOVERNANCE AND INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL MIGRATION MECHANISMS AND PROCESSES.

# TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMPREHENSIVE AND HEMISPHERIC APPROACH: STRENGTHENING REGIONAL COOPERATION TO IMPROVE MIGRATION GOVERNANCE AND INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION IN THE AMERICAS

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(Prepared by the Chair of the CAM with the support of the Technical Secretariat)

In the Americas, according to 2020 data, there are an estimated 73.5 million international migrants, including 58.7 million in North America and 12.5 million in Latin America and the Caribbean.[[1]](#footnote-1) Thus, States, multilateral organizations, and other non-State actors face an increasingly pressing need to manage migration and develop migration governance that can maximize its benefits and minimize its costs. This work goes hand in hand with the implementation of policies that respect the international obligations entered into by States under international human rights law, international refugee law, and the principle of shared responsibility, as well as other branches of international law.

For its part, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration identifies migration as an issue to be addressed by States’ political, legal, and regulatory policies, with a view to, *inter alia*, fostering **cooperation that allows for safer, orderly, and regular migration, as established in Goal 10, target 7 of the 2030 Agenda**.

**For this reason, in recent decades** numerous global and regional consultations have been conducted aimed at generating opportunities for dialogue, coordination, cooperation, and sharing of experiences among States to strengthen international protection of, and access to, the rights of migrants and refugees. Although these consultations are similar in terms of their objectives and raison d'être, they tend to be split among a series of institutions and/or bodies according to the priorities of the States that comprise them. For this reason, coordination and complementarity are required in terms of the actions that are promoted and with respect to the search for resources, which are increasingly scarce. It has also been pointed out that migration governance has remained largely a matter for sovereign states, with no formal multilateral institutional framework.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Within the framework of the United Nations, the second round of the *High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development* derived from United Nations General Assembly resolution 58/208 of 2003, the objective of which is to discuss the multidimensional aspects of international migration and development, resulted in the [*Program of Action*, which comprises eight main courses of action (axes) designed to make migration work](http://www.un.org/en/ga/68/meetings/migration/pdf/migration_8points_en.pdf). Thus, the thematic axes are structured around data and facts on, *inter alia*, migration, labor migration, human rights and exploitation of migrants, human trafficking, cooperation on migration.

For its part, the [Global Migration Group](https://www.iom.int/united-nations-network-migration-secretariat) (GMG) is an inter-agency coordination mechanism made up of the IOM and 15 other entities of the United Nations system, aimed at promoting the application of international and regional instruments and norms related to migration and to encourage the adoption of more coherent, comprehensive, and better coordinated inter-agency approaches.

For its part, the **IOM, through the regional work it carries out via various multilateral bodies, has forged a global political agenda with the participation of both States and a variety of strategic actors, including, among others, international organizations, NGOs, think tanks, academic institutions, immigrant associations.**

Its framework for action includes the International Dialogue on Migration (IDM), IOM's main annual forum for migration policy dialogue, which in its latest version (March 31, 2023) focused on "Leveraging Human Mobility in Support of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)", resulting in some recommendations to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs. These include, *inter alia*, improving the quality of data and their analysis for evidence-based policy making, supporting migrants and displaced people for climate action, developing resilient and peaceful cities and communities, addressing inequalities and vulnerabilities through Universal Health Coverage.[[3]](#footnote-3)

On the other hand, at the regional level, there is the [Ibero-American Forum on Migration and Development (FIBEMYD),](https://www.iom.int/ibero-american-network-migration-authorities-riam) a pillar of the Ibero-American Conference, that seeks to reach a shared understanding of the main effects of migration and development with a view to defining priority programs and projects aimed at mitigating those effects in Ibero-America.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Likewise, the [Ibero-American Network of Migration Authorities (RIAM)](https://www.iom.int/ibero-american-network-migration-authorities-riam) is a consultative forum for intergovernmental cooperation (19 member states), aimed at strengthening migration management at the national, bilateral, and multilateral levels through technical and scientific cooperation, the consolidation of mechanisms for the exchange of information, institutionalization of effective migration processes among its member countries, and the establishment of strategic alliances to combat transnational crimes associated with migration

Other relevant scenarios at the sub-regional level include[[5]](#footnote-5) the [Central American Commission of Migration Directors (OCAM),](https://www.iom.int/central-american-commission-migration-directors-ocam) created within the framework of SICA's Central American Economic Action Plan (PAECA). At its last meeting (December 2022), the Commission reiterated commitments to foster ties of friendship for security, protection, surveillance, prevention, modernization of management, strengthening of borders, and integrated controls, along with technological improvements, international agreements, and other legitimate mechanisms.[[6]](#footnote-6)

Regarding common migration challenges in the Caribbean, the IOM, through the PACTA project, funded by the Bureau **of** Population, Refugees, and Migration of the U.S. Department of State, revealed measures to be taken to implement effective migration governance practices in Caribbean countries. Measures include data gathering, strengthening coastal surveillance, strengthening anti-trafficking laws and protocols, and mechanisms to ensure migrants' access to health care and education.[[7]](#footnote-7)

As mass displacement around the world continues to grow, and as low- and middle-income countries take on much of the responsibility for refugees, **the New York Declaration**[[8]](#footnote-8) **sets out a vision for a more predictable** and **comprehensive response to these crises.** Hence, the [Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework](https://www.acnur.org/5b58ef944%20%5BTRANSLATOR%3A%20check%20link%5D) (MIRPS)[[9]](#footnote-9) that promotes greater support for refugees and the countries that host them in Central America and Mexico. **[TRANSLATOR: check the logic of this paragraph?]** The main goal of the MIRPS is to promote a coordinated response, focusing on areas such as employment and livelihoods, education, health, child protection, and social protection for displaced persons and refugees in the member states, and it has a support platform and follow-up mechanism to implement and facilitate the coordination and exchange of sound practices.[[10]](#footnote-10)

In addition, there is the [Regional Conference on Migration (RCM)](https://www.iom.int/regional-conference-migration-rcm-or-puebla-process),   which serves as a forum for regional dialogue and exchange of ideas and experiences for joint reflection and cooperation on migration issues[[11]](#footnote-11); the [International Technical Meeting on Human Mobility of Venezuelan Citizens in the Region (Quito Process),](https://www.iom.int/international-technical-meeting-human-mobility-venezuelan-citizens-region-quito-process) which focuses on coordinating responses to the human mobility crisis of Venezuelan citizens; the South American Conference on Migration (CSM), which aims to provide a forum for consultation for South American countries in the main areas of development, diasporas, migrants' rights, integration, information exchange, migration statistics, and the fight against human trafficking and smuggling; and the MERCOSUR Specialized Migration Forum, which aims to consolidate a process of migration integration with a human rights approach.

In the OAS context, operative paragraph 56 of AG/RES. 2988(LII-O/22) urges the Committee on Migration Affairs (CAM) to recognize the work of the existing regional consultative mechanisms and processes, and to promote an opportunity for dialogue among them, through an annual session within the framework of its regular sessions, with the objective of helping to improve migration governance and international protection in the Americas, with a comprehensive approach, addressing issues such as regularization, and what migrants need to be admitted into, and stay in, countries, in order to facilitate their integration processes and strengthen protection systems for migrants in the region.

Within the framework of regional efforts, it is worth highlighting the initiative encouraged by the United States that concluded with the Declaration of Los Angeles (2022), within the framework of the recent Summit of the Americas. It constitutes a road map for the signatory countries seeking to mobilize the region around 4 main axes: 1. stability and assistance to communities of destination, origin, transit, and return; 2. regular channels for migration and international protection; 3. humane management of migration; and 4. coordinated emergency response and humanitarian assistance in situations of mass migration and refugee displacement.[[12]](#footnote-12)

Against this backdrop, it is important for the CAM to promote opportunities for reflection and dialogue on migration governance so that, guided and supported by a set of consultative mechanisms, existing bodies can be brought closer together to find synergies between work agendas and avoid duplication of efforts, making the most of the exchange of experiences. Thus managed, migration governance offers the opportunity for States to be better prepared to address their responsibilities with respect to migration and forced displacement.[[13]](#footnote-13)

The existence of these mechanisms represents an opportunity to undertake joint actions to strengthen those areas in which there is a lack of durable solutions to reduce the vulnerability of migrants, refugees, and host communities.

Therefore, this session will foster dialogue to address the following questions:

1. What are the main challenges and good practices that the mechanism or process you represent has developed to respond to migration and/or forced displacement? Given the broad spectrum of instances and mechanisms on migration in the Americas, how would you assess the value added of the instance and/or mechanism that you represent?
2. What opportunities and options do you see for articulation, coordination, and cooperation between the mechanism or process you represent and the other processes or mechanisms present at today's session so as to improve migration governance at the hemispheric level in the Americas?

With this in mind, this session will address the role of regional mechanisms and processes in coordinated management of migration. After the presentations of the panelists, the delegations will be given the floor to speak on the aforementioned topics. It is especially requested that the States share good practices in this area, in order to consolidate the information and make it available to the member states.

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1. . Migration data portal. For more information, please consult:

 [Https://www.migrationdataportal.org/data?amp;m=2&focus=profile&i=stock\_abs\_&t=2020&m=2](https://www.migrationdataportal.org/data?amp;m=2&focus=profile&i=stock_abs_&t=2020&m=2) **[TRANSLATOR: check link]** [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. . For more information, please consult the OAS Department of Social Inclusion's technical note entitled: "Regional Migration Governance in the Americas" available at: <https://www.oas.org/en/sare/documents/TECHNICALNOTE%20_REGIONALMIGRATION.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. . https://www.iom.int/news/leveraging-human-mobility-achieve-sdgs-focus-international-dialogue-migration [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. . <https://www.iom.int/ibero-american-forum-migration-and-development-fibemyd> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. . <https://www.prensa-latina.cu/2022/12/14/el-sica-reitera-compromiso-por-una-migracion-ordenada-y-segura>. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. . <https://www.prensa-latina.cu/2022/12/14/el-sica-reitera-compromiso-por-una-migracion-ordenada-y-segura>. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. . <https://rosanjose.iom.int/en/blogs/9-keys-effective-migration-governance-caribbean> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. 8. [New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants - UNHCR](https://www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/protect-human-rights/asylum-and-migration/new-york-declaration-refugees-and-migrants) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. . <https://mirps-platform.org/> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. . <https://www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/publications/comprehensive-and-regional-approaches-within-protection-framework>. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. . <https://www.iom.int/regional-conference-migration-rcm-or-puebla-process>. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. . <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/06/10/los-angeles-declaration-on-migration-and-protection/> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. . For more information, please consult the OAS Department of Social Inclusion's technical note entitled: "Regional Migration Governance in the Americas" available at: <https://www.oas.org/en/sare/documents/TECHNICALNOTE%20_REGIONALMIGRATION.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-13)