COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION ISSUES OEA/Ser.W

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SUMMARY OF SPEECHES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

THEMATIC SESSION OF THE CAM

ANNUAL MEETING ON MIGRATION GOVERNANCE AND INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL MECHANISMS AND PROCESSES IN THE AREA OF MIGRATION:

“TOWARD THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTEGRAL, HEMISPHERIC APPROACH: STRENGTHENING REGIONAL COOPERATION TO IMPROVE MIGRATION GOVERNANCE AND INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION IN THE AMERICAS"

May 9, 2023

* **Recommendations and main points addressed by the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM)**

*H.E. Vladimir Adolfo Franco, Minister in Charge of Foreign Affairs of Panama, Pro Tempore Chair of the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM)*

* + The Regional Conference on Migration (RCM) is a non-binding process that for more than 27 years has been consolidated as a space for dialogue among member countries on regional and international migration, ensuring greater coordination, transparency, and cooperation among countries.
  + As a result of the socioeconomic repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic, the region is facing an exponential growth in the irregular migratory flow of migrants from the Antilles, South American countries, and other continents, in addition to migrants from the countries of the region. This situation poses a greater security and health risk so that humanitarian aid is essential. This is additional to the environmental damage caused by disproportionate transit to natural ecosystems and indigenous peoples.
  + In its 27 years, the RCM has recorded various experiences and sound practices shared among its member countries that have contributed to the strengthening of migration governance, the protection of the human rights of migrants, labor mobility, and coordination among States.
  + With respect to opportunities and areas for articulation, the RCM has maintained a permanent dialogue with several of the mechanisms and interstate consultation processes participating in this meeting. A clear example is the dialogue with the South American Conference on Migration (SACM).
  + The recommendations shared by the RCM and SACM focus on: 1) dialogue to implement joint actions to help address irregular migration, such as strengthening visa processing systems and border management; 2) strengthening information sharing to combat the smuggling of and trafficking in persons; 3) facilitating access to asylum and international protection systems for those who require it; and 4) identifying mechanisms for the integration of migrants and to combat xenophobia.
  + Senior Representatives of both Conferences are expected to meet again to analyze the migration situation and identify joint strategies to address it. The RCM has proposed the establishment of a Human Mobility Observatory and the launching of a Regional Communication Campaign focusing on combating misinformation promoted by human trafficking and smuggling networks.
* **Recommendations and main points addressed by the South American Conference on Migration (SACM)**

*Mr. Alberto Alejandro Farje Orna, Director General of Peruvian Communities Abroad and Consular Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Peru, Pro Tempore Presidency of the South American Conference on Migration (SACM).*

* + The South American Conference on Migration (SACM) is a regional consultative mechanism on migration created to coordinate policies that promote peer-to-peer learning. Throughout its 24-year history, it has been a benchmark for consultative processes and for achieving policy consensus. The promotion and defense of human rights and migration governance are among its central concerns.
  + In recent years there has been significant progress that has contributed to the enhancement of peer-to-peer discussions. During Argentina's period as Pro Tempore Chair, the objective was to improve the participation of States via networking. That has led to progress in addressing issues such as border management; human trafficking; children and adolescents; migration; the environment; gender; labor insertion; work and education. These networks have enhanced governmental cooperation, enabled the continuation of work agendas, and created concrete products that have resulted in public policy tools.
  + Within the framework of the network on migration and the environment, a joint country position paper on the effects of climate mobility was promoted and presented at COP27. This document positioned itself as the only consultative process that addresses human mobility due to factors related to climate change.
  + The SACM has proposed updating the human development plan for migration, as well as the international community's regulatory frameworks in this area. Likewise, the aim is to provide the Conference with a more robust regulatory framework to ensure that there are common objectives at the regional level and efficient policies at the national level.
  + Peru, which is currently Pro Tempore Chair of the SACM, wishes to address the challenges of migration and promote effective cooperation based on the participation of all stakeholders. Revitalization of the expanded troika, promotion of dialogue with other regional processes, and the construction of a regional work agenda are being proposed as ways to achieve this objective.
  + The member states of the SACM have stressed the importance of the multilateral approach to migration and the expansion of communication channels with other processes and mechanisms for dialogue on migration issues to address issues such as socioeconomic inclusion and gender equity.
* **Recommendations and main points addressed by the U.S Representative regarding the Los Angeles Declaration.**

*Mr. David Foran, Director, Department of State, Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State.*

* + The Los Angeles Declaration is comprehensive and recognizes the opportunities that migrants represent for countries of origin, transit, and destination. Its signatories undertake to protect the human rights and freedoms of migrants. In this regard, the United States aims to cooperate to facilitate safe and orderly migration where there is the possibility of a dignified return.
  + Among the pillars of the Los Angeles Declaration are the promotion of stability, assistance to communities, promotion of regular channels, humane management of migration, and coordinated responses.
  + Migration should be voluntary and not a necessity. Therefore, actions must be promoted to ensure that people remain in the countries and that the dignity of migrants is respected.
  + In October 2022, a ministerial meeting was held within the framework of the OAS General Assembly in Lima, Peru, where thematic groups led by each of the signatory countries of the Los Angeles Declaration were established. As a result, various policies have been promoted, and the United States has earmarked US$870 million to support the Declaration's efforts.
  + At the Lima meeting, it was agreed to include the role of climate change in migration and discussions were also initiated to create a Secretariat for the Los Angeles Declaration.
  + As a result, several working groups have been formed. For example, Chile leads the group on integration and support for host communities; Colombia heads the group on regularization of migrants; and Ecuador heads the group on international financing for countries receiving refugees. For its part, Peru is playing a key role in xenophobia issues, Mexico in mobility issues, and Canada in asylum issues. Similarly, Paraguay and Peru lead the way in setting standards for the granting of visas; El Salvador leads in family reunification, and the United States in human trafficking and human smuggling issues.
  + There is a lot of work still to be done. There is hope that a meeting will be held after the anniversary of the signing of the Declaration to define a package of actions to address climate change as a factor in displacement.
* **Recommendations and main points addressed by the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS)**

*Mrs. Holda Álvarez de Marré, Technical Coordinator of the MIRPS Pro Tempore Presidency*

* + All States, based on the principle of shared responsibility, have entered into international agreements (conventions, memorandums of understanding, declarations) that have made it possible to find adjustable, flexible, and coherent guidelines intended to benefit forcibly displaced persons.
  + The Cartagena Declaration on Refugees, the Brazil Declaration and Plan of Action, the San Pedro Sula Declaration, the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection, as well as the San José Declaration and Plan of Action are some examples of frameworks that commit States and hold them accountable for increasing efforts to address current migration challenges.
  + It is for this reason that in 2017 the MIRPS arose as a regional response to achieve progress with the commitments undertaken. The MIRPS is an initiative that contributes to improving the lives of this vulnerable population, responding to and promoting regional cooperation among the countries of origin, transit, and destination, in accordance with the principle of shared responsibility for prevention, protection, and lasting solutions.
  + Upon assuming the Pro-Tempore Presidency in 2023, Panama has made a concrete commitment to pursue actions to identify regional realities. To achieve this, roadmaps have been drawn up with the technical work teams, which are made up of all the countries comprising the MIRPS.
  + In this regard, the MIRPS working groups have made significant progress. In the Working Group on Jobs and Livelihoods, a map of employability initiatives in the MIRPS countries was drawn up; in the Working Group on Local Governance, a questionnaire was prepared on services available online with the aim of creating opportunities for guidance on health services, employment, and inclusion of sports and cultural activities; in the Working Group on Internal Displacement, there will be opportunities for dialogue on issues such as care and assistance for psychosocial disorders; and in the Working Group on Reception, Admission, and Processing of People in Need of International Protection, a template was prepared for mapping asylum/refuge systems, reception systems, and differentiated procedures in MIRPS countries.
* **Recommendations and main points addressed by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).**

*Dr. Jeremy T Harris, Specialist, Migration Unit IDB*

* + The study:"*Migration, integration, and diaspora engagement in the Caribbean"* focuses on the 9 IDB Caribbean members with loans and some OECD countries (The Bahamas, Belize, Barbados, Dominican Republic, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Jamaica, and Haiti). This study analyzes migration in the Caribbean and notes that, in recent decades, factors such as climate change, natural disasters, and changes in global mobility patterns have contributed to a significant change in the migration landscape in the Caribbean. The percentage of intra-regional migrants is estimated to have grown from 46% in 2000 to 56% in 2020.
  + The migrant population represents between 1% and 16% of the population of the nine countries included in the study. Among these countries, Belize and The Bahamas have the highest number of migrants.
  + Although the Caribbean has historically been seen as a region of emigration, intraregional migration is increasingly prominent. Previously, less than half of the migrants in the Caribbean came from this region. In 2020, more than half of the migrants in the Caribbean came from this region.
  + Haitians and Venezuelans account for the largest number of migrants in the nine Caribbean countries studied. The exodus of Haitian people began after the earthquake in Haiti in 2010. The migratory flow of Venezuelan nationals began in 2014 and, in the Caribbean, has been concentrated especially in the Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, and Guyana.
  + Remittances to the Caribbean declined in 2022 after reaching what appeared to be a historical peak in 2021. However, the trend has been increasing over the past decade. The Dominican Republic is the country that receives the most money in the form of remittances. Likewise, 21% of Jamaica's GDP and 19.6% of Haiti's GDP comes from remittances.
  + There are tools for more fluid communication with the diaspora. One example of those tools are the applications that have been developed for the identification of diaspora members and the communication of key projects that may be of interest to them.
  + At the institutional level, it is important to highlight the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), which has a free mobility regime that allows citizens of the 15 member states to stay in the countries for up to 6 months without a visa. This free mobility regime does not grant work permits and, depending on the country, is subject to certain restrictions.
  + Another aspect to highlight about CARICOM is that for certain categories of workers there can be free mobility if they have a vocational certificate. This benefit, which takes the form of a free mobility certificate and work permit, is limited to certain professions and qualifications.
  + There are other regional agreements that have mobility provisions such as the Central American Integration System (SICA) and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS).
  + In the Caribbean, access to refugee status is limited but the demand for protection is significant. There are few institutions and regulations for humanitarian protection in the Caribbean. In 2020, 8 of the 9 countries studied had fewer than 200 refugees hosted under UNHCR's mandate.
  + The Caribbean is one of the regions of the world hardest hit by the effects of climate change and natural disasters, which has resulted in a high number of displaced persons. This situation has led to the implementation of measures and mechanisms to facilitate the accommodation and mobility of people displaced by hurricanes, earthquakes, and other natural phenomena.
  + The challenges in the region are related to: the high migratory flows in the region, especially of people from Haiti and Venezuela; Caribbean migration laws that are outdated compared to the rest of the countries in the region; and the high level of risk posed by the effects of climate change and natural disasters.
  + Opportunities for improving migration governance could include expanding programs for skilled workers; establishing frameworks for action to facilitate rapid response to natural disasters and the effects of climate change; and developing tools for ongoing interaction with the diaspora to address the challenges posed by the brain drain.
* **Recommendations and main points addressed by the International Dialogue on Migration**

*Ms. Olga Alexandra Rebolledo, International Dialogue on Migration Coordinator*

* + The International Dialogue on Migration is a forum for dialogue on migration open to countries, civil society, academia, the private sector, migrants, and other stakeholders. It is a global platform for the exchange of information and lessons learned. It contributes to the analysis of the different migration factors and to the understanding of sound practices. It seeks to be inclusive at every stage of the planning and execution of migration governance.
  + It has a very important feature, which is that different sessions open to the public are established in which all parties involved are given the opportunity to discuss migration policies. In this process, different experts are invited to address the components of migration policies and satisfaction surveys are conducted to measure the degree of credibility of the dialogue.
  + Particularly noteworthy sound practices identified by the International Dialogue on Migration include the importance of knowledge management, capacity building, and the participation of migrants.
  + Knowledge management should be based on data and evidence to design, implement, and evaluate migration programs and policies. Capacity building should be promoted through the forging of alliances, the promotion of dialogue, and peer-to-peer coordination to advance the commitments established in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. Finally, it is essential to promote the participation of migrants using an inclusive approach based on human rights. The objective is to promote the mainstreaming of migration at all levels and to link the voices of migrants at the local and global level so as to create a participatory and multidimensional platform.
  + Opportunities to strengthen coordination and cooperation between the Dialogue and other regional processes should be facilitated through the dissemination of the recommendations of the different consultative processes, the identification of joint actions for the fulfillment of the Millennium Development Goals, the strengthening of coherence and consistency of governance and migration policies, and collaboration with civil society and academia.

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