APPLYING THE COMPREHENSIVE REFUGEE RESPONSE (CRRF) IN NORTH & CENTRAL AMERICA

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"We need to ensure community leaders have safe spaces to deliver protection to our communities," community leader in San Pedro Sula, Honduras

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I. THE MIRPS

Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Panama adopted the **San Pedro Sula Declaration** in 2017, agreeing to work together in the implementation of a **Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework** (MIRPS in its Spanish acronym). The MIRPS is a pioneering initiative in the application of the CRRF and a concrete contribution to the Global Compact on Refugees.

II. MIRPS COMMITMENTS

RECEPTION AND ADMISSION
- Strengthen the capacity to receive, identify, document and refer persons of concern
- Provide alternatives to the detention of asylum-seekers, and ensure no penalty for irregular entry

SUPPORT TO HOST COUNTRIES AND COMMUNITIES
- Support host communities and strengthen response and coordination with local actors, including civil society and private sector
- Prioritize communities affected by violence in national development plans

RESPONSIBILITY SHARING
- Regional cooperation is fostered between countries of origin, transit and destination for greater responsibility sharing on prevention, protection and solutions.
- Involvement of regional and international organizations and 10 cooperating States and entities

IMMEDIATE NEEDS
- Humanitarian assistance and income generation projects for refugees and asylum-seekers
- Reintegration projects for returnees and legal guidance to people with protection needs in transit

EXPAND OPPORTUNITIES FOR DURABLE SOLUTIONS
Include refugees, returnees and displaced populations in existing programmes and promote specific public policies, including for self-sufficiency projects

INCLUSIVE APPROACH
The regional response includes asylum-seekers, refugees, internally displaced persons, deportees with protection needs, as well as populations affected by violence and insecurity

307.900 REFUGEES & ASYLUM-SEEKERS FROM NCA IN THE WORLD

61.000 IN MIRPS COUNTRIES

174,000 INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN HONDURAS IN TEN YEARS

1.1 MILLION DEPORTEES TO NCA IN FIVE YEARS

Figures to mid 2018. Based on data from governments, UNHCR, IOM and/or CIIPPDV. Honduras is the only country with official internal displacement figures. Includes deportees returned to El Salvador, Guatemala y Honduras.

BELIZE

MEXICO

HONDURAS

GUATEMALA

COSTA RICA

PANAMA

III. MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

In a whole-of-society approach, the MIRPS was developed through government-led consultations with persons of concern, UN country teams, civil society, the private sector and academia. Regional networks and organizations complement countries' national action plans and foster regional and global responsibility-sharing mechanisms. As a **direct result** of the MIRPS:

- In **Belize** an initial group of 20 persons with international protection needs have undergone English classes aimed at facilitating their local integration within social and economic spheres.
- In **Costa Rica,** refugees have been included as a category in the national registry system, which will allow for an improved development of national plans and the response to large influxes.
- In **Guatemala** refugees with official documentation can now access work permits within a week, making it possible for them to legally access employment.
- **Honduras** has led a process to raise awareness and develop the capacity of public officials to develop actions that would encourage a greater participation of municipalities within the reponse to forced displacement.
- **Mexico** has incorporated refugees and asylum-seekers within its programme of Unique Population Registry Password (CURP for its acronym in Spanish) which facilitates the issuance of documentation.
- In **Panama** a letter of understanding was signed with a private company to facilitate training and job placement services for an initial group of 90 refugees in Panama City.

IV. WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

- The General Assembly of the **Organization of American States** (OAS) adopted a resolution making specific reference to the MIRPS as a regional cooperation model. Therein, the OAS instructs the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs to organise annual follow-up meetings to monitor the MIRPS.
- The cooperation agreement between UNHCR and the **Central American Integration System** was renewed through the design of a work plan that prioritises capacity-building of national institutions, support for regional policies and greater operational cooperation.
- The **Inter-American Development Bank** is providing technical assistance towards the quantification of MIRPS National Action Plans and their inclusion in national budgets.
- The **Central American Council of Ombudspersons** agreed on a concrete programme of action to support the MIRPS for 2018-2020, including joint border monitoring and advocacy campaigns for forcibly displaced persons.
- The **UN Development System (UNSDG-LAC)** has continued to address the violence as the root cause of forced displacement in the North of Central America, through a comprehensive Joint Initiative endorsed by the UNSG as an innovative application of the New Way of Working.
- Australia, Canada and Uruguay have recently joined the United States in resettling high risk cases through the **Protection Transfer Agreement** (PTA).
- The **CLAMOR Network**, a composite of churches with presence from Honduras to Mexico, has been essential in facilitating immediate assistance to persons in need of protection through its shelters along the region.
- A **portfolio of 30 priority projects** that dovetail with a longer-term operationalization of the three year national plans into joint programming and projects, engaging development partners and other key stakeholders has been developed and implementation has started.

V. NEXT STEPS

- The **quantification of national priorities** and review of national budgets is underway to ensure national ownership of this initiative and will be followed by the identification of international cooperation's needs.
- As instructed by Member States, an annual follow up meeting will be organised at the OAS to exchange experiences and best practices in implementing regional protection and solutions frameworks, including the MIRPS.
- Harmonization of protocols and legal provisions to expedite asylum processes across the region.
- Encourage collaboration across the region aimed at establishing a clear resource mobilization and international support strategy for the MIRPS.

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