

Regional Conference in San Pedro Sula as follow up of the New York Declaration

“Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework”

I. Introduction

North and Central America has experienced a broader multi-causal and complex movement of persons due to prevailing violence and insecurity – mainly caused by organized crime – as well as socioeconomic factors forcing people to move from some countries of the region. In recent years, there have also been increasing numbers of refugees and other persons in need of international protection across the region. All countries are affected, - as countries of origin, transit, asylum and/or return, and in some case all the aforementioned situations - and have a shared responsibility to respond. This growing aspect of forced displacement has drawn numerous commitments to strengthening protection and solutions for those affected, while also aiming to address its root causes by promoting stability and fostering an environment for longer term security, economic development, and prosperity.

To build on this momentum, Honduras will host on 26 October 2017 a Regional Conference of governments from across North and Central America, along with other interested countries, civil society, the private sector, regional actors, and development and humanitarian organizations. The main purpose is to share lessons learned and give visibility to the operational plans prepared at a national level by each country in close consultation – among others – with refugees, IDPs, asylum seekers, as well as persons in transit in need of international protection. The Conference will be an occasion to consolidate and leverage regional partnerships directed to a comprehensive, action-oriented response that enhances protection and solutions for affected populations, and breaks the cycle of forced displacement in the region.

II. A New Regional Framework

The Honduras Regional Conference is an important building block in the regional and global efforts to find protection and solutions to forced displacement. At the regional level, there is a rich history of cooperation on this issue. For instance, in December 2014, the Governments of Latin America and the Caribbean met in Brazil to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees. While in Brazil, 28 countries and three territories of Latin America and the Caribbean adopted the **Brazil Declaration and Plan of Action**, setting out a broad set of commitments for the protection of refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons in the Americas, including a specific chapter dedicated to forced displacement in Central America.

Additionally, in July 2016, Costa Rica hosted a High Level Roundtable, organized by UNHCR and the Organization of American States (OAS) with the support of the Central American Integration System (SICA), to explore opportunities to address the protection needs in Central America in a more strategic, collaborative and systematic manner. The outcome document, the “**San José Action Statement**”, sets out a series of commitments from different stakeholders to address the many dimensions of forced displacement: prevention and addressing root causes, protection in countries of origin, international protection for asylum-seekers and refugees, and regional responsibility-sharing.

The Brazil Declaration and the San José Action Statement constitute examples of the existing regional cooperation and shared responsibility in finding solutions to protection challenges in the region. As such, they served as important contribution to the High-Level Plenary Meeting on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants – held during the 71st Session of the U.N. General Assembly in September 2016 – and the unanimously adopted **New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants**. The New York Declaration reaffirms the importance of the international refugee regime and represents a commitment by Member States to strengthen and enhance mechanisms to protect people on the move, as well as to support countries of origin in strengthening their capacity to address root causes.

Recognizing the need for a more equitable and predictable global approach to large scale displacement, Annex 1 of the New York Declaration called for the development of a **Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF)**. The CRRF seeks to mobilize and align early – on the actions of a broad range of partners – States, all national and UN partners, international and regional financial institutions, and private sector and civil society - toward a comprehensive response across four priority areas: i) strengthen reception and admissions mechanisms; ii) support for immediate and on-going needs (humanitarian and protection); iii) assistance for local and national institutions and communities receiving refugees; and iv) expanded opportunities for durable solutions. The CRRF invites a multi-stakeholder approach from the outset, including greater coordination with a broader range of actors and enhanced collaboration with development partners. Such an approach is fully in line with the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development – with its commitment to leave no one behind – as well as the shared responsibilities articulated at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit.

In the New York Declaration, the UN General Assembly invited High Commissioner for Refugees to include a proposed **Global Compact on Refugees** in his annual report to the General Assembly for consideration at its seventy-third session in 2018. This Compact will be informed by past and current examples of burden and responsibility-sharing, including practical experiences applying the CRRF in various countries and regions over the course of 2017 and 2018.

Building on this momentum, Honduras and other countries in the region are taking the opportunity to create a regional CRRF model, known as the “**Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework**” (**MIRPS, for its acronym in Spanish**). The MIRPS seeks to galvanize new commitments and operationalize existing ones to address forced displacement from a wholly regional perspective, incorporating countries of origin, destination and transit and working with a wide range of stakeholders to create a truly comprehensive and sustainable approach. Lessons learned from the practical application of the MIRPS will feed into the **High Commissioner’s Dialogue on Protection Challenges** – to be held on 12-13 December 2017 in Geneva – which will take stock of progress made since the adoption of the New York Declaration. This stocktaking exercise will lay the groundwork for the **Global Compact on Refugees**.

III. Objectives of the Regional Conference

The overarching goal of the Honduras Regional Conference is to strengthen the regional response to displacement by adopting and implementing the MIRPS. The Regional Conference is expected to garner support for the following specific objectives:

1. Present the MIRPS, including the following components:

- i) *Each country participating in the MIRPS* will present a national operational plan that clearly establishes the strategies, programs and actions needed to i) strengthen protection, ii) promote concrete prevention measures, and iii) promote solutions to displacement, in line with each country’s national circumstances.
- ii) At regional level:
 - *Cooperating States* will present concrete responsibility sharing initiatives to support national operational plans and strengthen the regional protection response.
 - *Relevant regional and international actors* will present concrete and quantifiable action plans, outlining how they will support the national operational plans and strengthen regional cooperation.

2. Stocktaking of MIRPS process, in order to exchange lessons learned, best practices, and challenges with a view to refining and implementing the main components of the MIRPS at the national and regional level.

3. **Adopt the MIRPS**, that will feed into the **High Commissioner’s Dialogue on Protection Challenges**, and serve as a regional contribution to the development of **the Global Compact on Refugees**.

IV. Methodology

This Regional Conference is being organized by the Government of Honduras, the OAS and UNHCR. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (ICHR), SICA and the United Nations System will be invited to be co-sponsors of the event. UNHCR will also support as Secretariat to the Regional Conference.

As part of the preparations, each State is conducting a consultative process at the national level. These consultations are contemplated across various sectors – government, civil society, and the private sector – with participation from regional and international partners.

For the Regional Conference, government delegations are expected to include senior officials at the ministerial or vice-ministerial level, as well as national representatives of relevant institutions, including the authorities responsible for refugee and asylum issues. International organizations and civil society will also participate in the Regional Conference, and will contribute to the discussions, based on their respective expertise and complementary mandates.

The Regional Conference will have a plenary presentation of “National Operational Plans” including the methodology for consultative processes, evaluation of needs and a detailed and quantified response. This will be followed by the presentation by cooperating States and regional actors of concrete actions to support the MIRPS. Finally, a joint statement is expected to adopt the MIRPS as a regional contribution to the Global Pact on Refugees.

Prior to the Regional Conference, the Secretariat will prepare the draft MIRPS document, based on national and regional contributions received, which will be circulated among all participants. Following the Regional Conference, the Secretariat will elaborate a summary of the discussions and distribute any outcome documents agreed.

The Regional Conference should be seen as part of an ongoing process. In the months following the Regional Conference, it is expected that the MIRPS will continue to be developed with additional inputs from States, Cooperation Organizations, and regional actors. Equally, there will be an effort to develop concrete responsibility sharing mechanisms and resource mobilization.

V. Further details

Date: October 26, 2017

Venue: San Pedro Sula, Honduras

Host: Honduras

Co-Organizers: Honduras, UNHCR, OAS

Co-Sponsors (to be confirmed): IACHR, ICHR, SICA, UN System

Secretariat: UNHCR

Language: Spanish / English (with translation)

Participants: approximately 150 participants

- Governments / States: Senior government officials at the decision-making level (including migration / asylum / development issues) from CRPSF countries, as well as from cooperating countries.
- Regional networks and stakeholders, such as Ombudspersons, faith based organizations, international NGOs active in the region, ICRC/IFRC.
- OAS / SICA / IOM and other UN agencies, as well as other international organizations, including International Financial Institutions, such as the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank.
- Civil society, the academia and private sector.