



## **Rapporteurship on the “High-Level Forum on Irregular Migration Flows in the Americas”**

**San Jose, Costa Rica**

**September 12 – 13, 2017**

This Forum is organized as follow-up to the presentation of the “Report on Irregular Migration Flows to the Americas from Africa, Asia and the Caribbean” by the Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), Luis Almagro, within the framework of the Permanent Council of the Organization. This report was requested by the government of Costa Rica in May 2016, given the migratory crisis the country faced in 2015-2016. The Report provides updated information on the irregular migration status of people coming mainly from Africa, Asia and the Caribbean; the migration routes they use; as well as recommendations to address those challenges.

During his address to the Permanent Council, Costa Rica's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Manuel A. Gonzalez Sanz, invited the Member States to the "High-Level Forum on Irregular Migration Flows in the Americas".

The event was organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship of the Republic of Costa Rica and the General Directorate of Immigration and Naturalization, with the collaboration of the General Secretariat of the OAS, through the Department of Social Inclusion of the Secretariat for Access to Rights and Equity, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Labor Organization (ILO), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM) and the South American Conference on Migration (SACM), and a high representative of the Caribbean.

During the two days of the event, participating States identified the challenges, progress made, and recommendations for the creation of public policies on migration. They also exchanged experiences, information and good practices, and identified the challenges posed by migration management at the operational level. The delegations also deepened their understanding of migration issues with the aim of exploring the possibility of new bilateral and multilateral agreements to address irregular migration

### **Objective of the High-Level Forum:**

The main objective of the Forum was to provide a venue to exchange experiences in order to help identify and analyze the challenges and opportunities in migration matters, as well as generate objectives and commitments for good governance on migration issues. In addition, the Forum seeks to promote a regional dialogue to analyze the recommendations of the Regional Report and identify the challenges facing the region, with the aim of promoting synergies and joint actions in the face of the negotiations of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

## **Methodology of the High-Level Forum:**

The Forum was structured around 6 thematic areas, namely:

1. Human rights of all migrants
2. Smuggling of migrants, human trafficking, and the challenges to human safety and security
3. Migration, climate change and crises caused by human beings
4. Irregular migration, labor mobility and decent work
5. Migration Governance: Priority measures to address extra-regional migration
6. The response of the Americas to the flows of migrants in irregular migration status and the role of international cooperation

The Forum was made up of six panels, corresponding to each established thematic area. Each panel included a presentation of the context to guide the discussion, followed by a discussion among the countries during the plenary session. The discussions were moderated by Mr. Alejandro Solano Ortiz, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica.

## **Opening Remarks:**

The opening of the Forum was attended by Mr. Luis Almagro, Secretary General of the Organization of American States; Mrs. Laura Thompson, Deputy Director General of the International Organization for Migration; Mrs. Carmen Muñoz, Vice-Minister of the Interior and Police of Costa Rica, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship, Mr. Manuel A. Gonzalez Sanz.

### **- Mr. Luis Almagro, Secretary General, Organization of American States**

During the welcoming remarks, the Secretary General of the OAS emphasized the commitment and political will of the Organization to protect the human rights of migrants, and he pointed out the need to generate common basic guidelines and directives.

The Secretary General stated that the Forum fulfilled a double objective. Firstly, it allowed the States to contribute to the negotiations of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration based on the principles, common commitments and shared understanding, promoting consensus for such negotiations. Secondly, the Forum offered a broad framework for constructive dialogue and cooperation to face the region's current challenges.

Mr. Almagro encouraged the States to continue with the approach and construction of a joint response to the challenges posed by irregular migration flows in the continent, which was documented in the study regarding the Forum and which served as an input to the discussions.

He stated that the American continent has seen more migration flows than the rest of the world, and that all countries participate in the migration process, whether as countries of origin, transit or destination of migrants. He added that, in recent decades, there has been a change in the approach to migration, and the focus on security was replaced with a focus on rights.

The Secretary General stressed that there are still great difficulties in implementing legislation. It is still common to find contradictions between standards and administrative practices that limit migrants in the exercise of their rights. In addition, he said that there is still a misperception associating migrants to crime, when in fact they are much more likely to be victims of crimes such as human trafficking.

On migration governance, Mr. Almagro affirmed that the sovereign right of States over their borders must be recognized, but that said right is not unlimited, and it is impacted by the obligations that States have acquired in

matters of international law. Similarly, he underlined the importance of incorporating the processes of social inclusion and reintegration as part of an integrated approach to the migration process.

The Secretary General called on the representatives of States, international organizations and civil society to make use of the space provided to contribute to the construction of a comprehensive response to the pressing challenges in migration matters, considering the multiple dimensions of the phenomenon and the feasibility of achieving multilateral agreements to address irregular migration.

He also stated that States have to find a way to strengthen cooperation and regional alliances based on the principle of shared responsibility, and he stressed that cooperation and coordination among countries will help identify challenges and progress made, and provide recommendations to develop public policies. Similarly, he insisted on the need to promote the exchange of experiences, information and good practices among the countries in the hemisphere.

- **Mrs. Laura Thompson, Deputy Director General, International Organization for Migration**

The Deputy Director General of IOM began by emphasizing that irregular migration is a central theme for the Americas. She added that the Forum represents an opportunity to lay the foundations and move towards better global governance of migration. The Deputy Director General emphasized that there was consensus in the international community on the urgency to agree to and coordinate rules, principles and mechanisms to improve the management of migration in a multilateral manner and to ensure that it is safe, orderly, regular and accountable, in order to avoid migration crises and the countless violations of the rights of migrants.

Mrs. Thompson stated that crises such as the one experienced by Costa Rica evidence a lack of standards and instruments to regulate and facilitate international coordination and cooperation in this type of situation, as well as the absence of adequate institutional architecture. Likewise, the Deputy Director General stressed that the Report on "Irregular Migration Flows to the Americas from Africa, Asia and the Caribbean" reflected a complex migratory situation, as well as the extraordinary efforts and challenges faced by the Americas to build a cooperation mechanism on this subject.

She mentioned that it is necessary to implement tools, coordination tasks and information exchanges between countries of origin, transit and destination. Likewise, she highlighted some initiatives that have been implemented in Member States and that could be replicated by other countries, including: encouraging the voluntary return of extra-regional migrants, promoted by Costa Rica; strengthening binational cross-border community committees between Costa Rica and Panama to identify cases at risk and in need of attention, and improve services; developing manuals and protocols; granting temporary residences and humanitarian visas to migrants in Brazil, as well as regularizing a significant number of migrants in Argentina and Chile; carrying out research on migratory flows and vulnerable populations; and the regional consultative processes in Latin America on migration matters.

Like the Secretary General of the OAS, the Deputy Director General reiterated that the Forum is a place to develop principles, understanding, commitments and specific regional recommendations for the two major global processes to strengthen global migration governance that are currently underway. The first process is the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly goal 10.7 on migration, and cross-cutting issues such as the fight against poverty and access to education. The second process is the Global Compact on Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration.

- **Mrs. Carmen Muñoz, Vice-Minister of the Interior and Police of Costa Rica**

The Vice-Minister of the Interior and Police of Costa Rica stressed that the Forum is an ideal place to promote the exchange of experiences, identify and analyze the challenges and opportunities in the field of migration with the purpose of generating goals and commitments to adopt for good migration governance. Mrs. Muñoz highlighted the important advances in awareness-raising seen in the Latin American region. She also stated that the phenomenon of migration must be addressed in a joint and comprehensive manner, based on the principle of

shared responsibility among countries of origin, transit and destination. During her speech, she described the context of migration in the country and referred to points of the Regional Report.

- **Mr. Manuel Gonzalez Sanz, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship**

After thanking the delegations for their participation, Minister Gonzalez Sanz explained the context which gave rise to the request for the Regional Report on "Irregular Migration Flows to the Americas from Africa, Asia and the Caribbean" which constitutes the frame of reference of the Forum and the basis to promote substantive dialogue on fundamental aspects of migration governance in the Americas. Mr. Gonzalez Sanz reminded the room that the study came about because of the need for an in-depth analysis of the migration crisis suffered by the region due to the passage of thousands of Cuban, Haitian and extra-continental migrants en route to the United States in 2015 and 2016.

The Minister called for a balance between sovereignty, solidarity and co-responsibility in the governance of migration from a humanitarian perspective, respecting human rights. In addition, he underlined the interdependence of migration matters, since changes in regulations in one country have consequences for neighboring countries. In this regard, he stated that the region must work in good faith to give effective responses to the effects of the decisions of other countries.

The Minister concluded his speech by inviting the countries present to renew their commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, and the preparatory stages to adopt a Global Compact on Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration.

After the opening remarks came the presentation of the Regional Report on "Irregular Migration Flows to the Americas from Africa, Asia and the Caribbean".

**Introduction: Contextualization**

- **Presentation of the "Regional Report: Irregular Migration Flows to the Americas from Africa, Asia and the Caribbean" and its relation to the Global Compact, Secretary General of the OAS, Mr. Luis Almagro.**

The Secretary General of the OAS, Luis Almagro, began his presentation by providing a brief context on the phenomenon of extra-continental migration in the Americas, and how this phenomenon escalated to extraordinary characteristics, which culminated in the request of the State of Costa Rica to the General Secretariat of the OAS for a Regional Report that provided a snapshot of migration flows.

In response, the OAS, along with key partners, produced the Regional Report entitled "Irregular Migration Flows to the Americas from Africa, Asia and the Caribbean". Key findings include the analysis of migration flows and routes, institutional responses and the experience of humanitarian organizations.

Mr. Almagro stressed that the Regional Report documents between 15,000 and 30,000 situations of irregular migration recorded in one year by countries in the region, with a considerable impact on the countries and communities of transit and destination. This impact is reflected not only in overburdened migration services, but also in growing demands for the protection of migrants in areas such as medical care, food and shelter.

The Secretary General listed some of the main challenges faced by migrants during their journey, including: (1) the impediment to cross some borders; (2) the use of increasingly dangerous alternate routes; (3) the lack of adequate housing and access to basic health care, especially for vulnerable populations such as women and children; (4) the difficulties of access to information on migration regularization processes and language barriers to access such services; (5) the lack of access to adequate means of communication to maintain contact with their families.

He also pointed out that the status of irregularity in which migrants move makes them particularly vulnerable to crimes such as smuggling and trafficking, as well as to other intrinsic risks and crimes linked to irregular mobility, which requires attention on the part of States and society. Mr. Almagro also said the report shows that the strategies to prevent and combat trafficking that have been implemented by the countries have had limited impact so far.

In turn, authorities of the countries in the region face significant difficulties in implementing their migration regulations, as well as responding to these migrant flows and providing them with protection and assistance.

Regarding migration regulations, the Report sets forth that the migration management model currently in force in all the countries in the region, known as the 3Ds (Detection, Detention and Deportation) of people in irregular migration status, has proven inadequate to address the characteristics of these groups of migrants. Mr. Almagro stressed that the governments of the continent face the challenge of being obliged by law to apply migratory regulations that, in many cases, are inoperative and even inapplicable to manage such flows and, at the same time, do not have any legal alternatives that allow them to manage them effectively. He added that extra-regional migrants rarely have documentation and, in many cases, it is difficult to verify their nationality, which means deportation and voluntary return are not easy to carry out.

Mr. Almagro highlighted some institutional responses that States should provide for the protection of migrants. Some include: (1) ensuring specialized treatment of the most vulnerable groups, such as children, adolescents, seniors, persons with disabilities and women; (2) promoting actions to discourage smuggling and trafficking; and (3) fostering the exchange of information to develop joint actions.

As conclusion to the report, he emphasized the need for a collective approach to migration in order to find lasting solutions to irregular migration flows. According to the study, such an approach must have a hemispheric perspective encompassing the Americas in their entirety, through regional dialogue with a focus on the shared responsibility of the States, where collaborative efforts must have, as priority, the protection, well-being and care of migrants.

The Secretary General of the OAS noted there are signs of optimism, such as consensus on the recommendations presented by the report among States, international organizations and civil society.

After the presentation by the Secretary General of the OAS, a panel was opened with Mrs. Laura Thompson, Deputy Director General of the IOM, and Mr. Manuel Gonzalez Sanz, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica, who provided additional remarks.

The Deputy Director General of the IOM underlined four lessons of the last twenty-five years in managing extra-regional irregular flows in the Americas:

1. The volatility of migration flows. She mentioned that today, migration flows go in all directions and are constant. Similarly, she noted dramatic changes in migration flows, with peaks now being the norm. Virtually all countries are places of origin, transit or destination. Likewise, migration flows are mixed and involve economic migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and people with different vulnerabilities, which add complexity to the phenomenon.
2. The absolute need for international, regional and bilateral cooperation in the management of migration. The Deputy Director General stressed the importance of encouraging cooperation, exchange of information and the creation of cooperation mechanisms between countries. States may warn neighboring countries about significant flows of migrants or changes in their regulations that could affect the number of migrants in the region. Likewise, it is essential to create migration plans and programs that transcend the national level. In this sense, a shared responsibility and regional solidarity are crucial to address emergency situations and facilitate processes.
3. The centrality of protecting migrants. Safeguarding the lives of migrants should be a top priority, as well as providing humanitarian assistance when necessary to manage humanitarian crises. In addition, Mrs. Thompson underlined that the specific needs and vulnerabilities of migrants must be taken into account

when dealing with migration flows in order to adequately address them, particularly the most vulnerable groups.

4. A realistic perspective to the status of migrants. The Deputy Director General specified that, in current processes, there are migrants who will not return to their countries given the impossibility of determining their nationality. It is, therefore, necessary to carry out processes of regularization and integration of migrants, with the aim of making them participate in the development process of their host society. This integration includes real access to education, health and employment.

In turn, Minister Gonzalez Sanz stressed that the report offers a snapshot of the situation that occurred in Costa Rica, which persists in the continent. He indicated that no country is exempt from similar situations.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs underlined the importance of coordinating between neighboring countries, reaching agreements on migration and ensuring their enforcement. Similarly, he commented on the difficulties of middle-income countries to access international cooperation.

He encouraged participants to see migration from a positive perspective and as an opportunity, rather than a risk. He also underscored that the report shows that migration is linked to development, associated to the difficulties of the countries of origin, and he insisted on the need to be consistent with achieving the 2030 Agenda.

Minister Gonzalez Sanz called for the joint work of the States and for actions consistent with the international commitments assumed by each country. He concluded by referring to the need for a new multi-causal approach, based on co-responsibility and solidarity to address the issue.

After the panelists' interventions, participating delegations asked questions and commented on the topics discussed.

The delegation of Mexico referred to the growing flows of migrants due to climate change and natural disasters. This delegation asked about proposals for platforms and methodologies to manage migrant flow information in real time. Their representative noted that, according to previous experiences, not all countries use the same systems or methodologies to record information, which makes it necessary to standardize and homogenize the data in order to promote adequate public policies.

Chile commented that the report is a valuable contribution to understanding the entire phenomenon of migration, by merging quantitative and qualitative methods, and emphasized that quality of information on migration issues should be improved. In addition, Chile proposed strengthening the relationship of this space for dialogue with PARLATINO as a means to improve migration regulations.

The Brazilian delegation reaffirmed that a broad and articulated vision is critical to enable countries of origin and destination to protect migrants, and stressed that migrants are important players in the development of their countries of destination and origin. They added that Brazil passed a new migration law incorporating the guideline of promoting social dialogue for the discussion, formulation and approval of migration policies.

In turn, Nicaragua considered it is important to create indicators that measure the economic contribution of migration to countries of origin and destination. For example, they recommended measuring the contribution of migrant labor to GDP, as well as the percentage of migrant workers in the labor force.

Similarly, the Peruvian delegation outlined some of its good practices. Among them, they highlighted the facilitation of favorable conditions for Peruvian migrants who wish to return to their country; the modification of migration laws to provide greater flexibility to different migratory conditions, thus contributing to the regularization of foreigners; as well as the creation of a temporary residence permit for Venezuelan migrants.

Bolivia reflected on migration as an opportunity for countries. They agreed on the need for a new approach that recognizes the contribution of migration, as well as the importance of generating indicators that allow us to make this contribution visible. They closed by referring to the World Conference of the Peoples, convened by Bolivia as a space to discuss the concept of global citizenship.

Following these interventions, the panelists made a brief reply and closing comments.

Mrs. Thompson said that the impact of climate change on migration has been recognized, and highlighted the platform in which several States participate to address the issue of climate change and human mobility. She added that important migration movements are expected, which are not necessarily transnational but between regions of the same country. She also drew attention to a new perspective that considers migration as an adaptation strategy to climate change.

On the issue of governance, she underlined the importance of the negotiation of the Global Compact and the objective of having a more comprehensive system of global governance, with a follow-up mechanism for the New York Agreement. She also noted that most countries have been adapting their migration laws and policies, but that modernizing standards is not enough. There must also be greater collaboration to reduce gaps that allow criminal networks to pursue smuggling and trafficking.

Finally, regarding the positive impact of migration, she mentioned a study by consulting firm McKinsey, which holds that the migrant population represents 3.4% of the world population, but generates close to 9% of the global GDP. This means that migrants contribute to the economy more than double their demographic weight.

In his conclusions, the Secretary General of the OAS emphasized the importance of standardizing the information as a basis for generating better forms of cooperation. He added that there are different methodologies that can constitute a starting point for the recommendations of this meeting.

As for the management model of the 3Ds (Detection, Detention and Deportation), Mr. Almagro considered that these concepts should be adapted and developed in full compliance with the rule of law and respecting the human rights of migrants. In addition, he said that the awakening of hate speeches is counterproductive to a healthy society, as well as migration being part of internal electoral politics.

The Secretary General advocated for a direct fight against smuggling and trafficking, and agreed on the importance of working together with PARLATINO to systematize regulations.

Foreign Minister Gonzalez closed the panel reaffirming the importance of educating the population to promote the acceptance of migrants and counteract xenophobic discourses.

## **Topic I: Human rights of all migrants**

### **Contextualization**

- **Mrs. Laetitia Courtois, Deputy Head of the Regional ICRC Delegation for Mexico, Central America and Cuba**

The representative of the International Committee for the Red Cross made a presentation on the human rights and humanitarian needs of migrants. In this sense, she explained that for the ICRC the definition of migrants is quite broad, including refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons and vulnerable migrants. She added that even if a person leaves a country without violence, the serious conditions they face on their route are sufficient basis to provide protection and humanitarian attention. She also stressed that all migrants are protected by international human rights frameworks.

She urged States not to lower their standards of protection and recognition of the rights of migrants. She added that in migration matters a balance should be struck between security and humanitarian considerations, since States have a responsibility to ensure that measures to regulate migration comply with their obligations under international law and with the humanitarian imperative of safeguarding human dignity, life and security of people. Mrs. Courtois also expressed concern that some of the measures and policies being promoted are based on discrimination and xenophobia, rather than on legitimate security concerns.

With regard to country-specific recommendations, she said that there should be minimum conditions from a human rights perspective. These include respect for the principle of non-refoulement, detention as a last resort, avoidance of separation of families, response to the needs of unaccompanied minors and other vulnerable populations, guaranteeing the right to health, facilitate access of humanitarian agencies to victims of trafficking and smuggling of migrants, as well as the prevention and investigation of the disappearance of migrants.

Finally, she concluded by stressing that the capacity to respond to the protection and assistance needs of migrants requires an early identification system for the most vulnerable migrants (unaccompanied minors, the elderly, victims of torture or trafficking, pregnant women, or the disabled or seriously / chronically ill).

- **Mr. Roeland de Wilde, Head of the IOM in Costa Rica, presented the APP for Migrants.**

Mr. De Wilde presented the "MigrantApp" tool, an interactive mobile application the IOM is developing to provide free, truthful, timely and secure information to migrants in the region. The IOM representative highlighted the functionality features (the app is downloadable, interactive, geo-referential and allows feedback from the user) and the main reasons for creating this application. Among them, he emphasized the lack of accurate and reliable information on the Internet. In that same sense, he stressed that the organization works under the premise that migration an orderly and humane migration benefits both migrants and society. According to Mr. De Wide, the tool provides solutions such as: (1) the free aggregation of truthful, secure and reliable information for the protection of human rights and the opportunity for informed decision making, (2) access to protection and assistance through information and mapping of shelters, migration and health services, as well as other specialized services; (3) general information about the country, its entry requirements and recommendations for migrants. He explained that the application includes over 1,400 geo-referenced points and is available in 3 languages: Spanish, English and French.

The IOM representative concluded that the app allows reducing the vulnerabilities of migrants caused by misleading or inaccurate information, which is sometimes provided by organized crime.

### **Plenary session – Intervention by the States**

The countries provided information on good practices for the promotion and protection of the human rights of migrants in their territories.

Several countries agreed that migration legislation has substantially changed to move beyond the security approach and adopt a rights perspective for the migrant population. These changes have included the adoption of specific laws to regulate migration, assist the refugee population, prevent, punish and eradicate trafficking and smuggling of migrants and protect victims.

Several countries have perceived an increase in the number of migrants entering their country, and have highlighted the creation of institutions responsible for dealing exclusively with migration as a measure implemented to improve migration management, for example the Migration Authority in Colombia.

They also underscored specific programs aimed at migrant care in both transit and destination countries.

With regard to humanitarian assistance in transit countries, Mexico highlighted the experience of the Beta groups, specialized in rescue and humanitarian aid for migrants, and the model of child protection officers, who specialize in the care of minors, women and vulnerable groups. In addition, El Salvador expressed a commitment to the investigation of missing migrants, for which it has promoted the creation of a specialized forensic group.

In the area of prevention, Guatemala mentioned the implementation of information campaigns aimed at vulnerable populations and migrant workers to prevent fraud, deception and trafficking in persons. Likewise, Honduras presented the creation of a working group specialized in the care of children with the aim of preventing their departure from the country.

Regarding protection strategies in host societies, the delegations emphasized the centrality of strengthening the consular network as a means to improve care and monitoring of migrant populations. As part of this strengthening effort, countries such as El Salvador have established consular districts in alliance with civil society organizations. Similarly, Peru highlighted the strengthening of the Vienna Convention on Consular Rights as a possible strategy to be promoted as a region, particularly compliance with article 36: on the right to communicate with their consular representative.

Participants also considered the processes of regularization of migrants carried out in countries like Colombia, Brazil, Chile, Argentina and Peru as a measure to protect migrants. In this regard, the delegation of Chile stated that the irregular situation is the main attack against the rights of migrants and, therefore, access to regularization is the most important requirement to guarantee access to the rights of migrants. Likewise, simplification of visas, facilitation of information on regularization processes, access of irregular migrants to basic services, and flexibility of processes in emergency situations and humanitarian crises as examples of good practices were mentioned.

Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala and Mexico underlined the value of the programs for the attention and reinsertion of the migrant populations that return to their country of origin. Good practices in this area include the appointment of officials to care for deportees and returnees, the provision of information and options for their social and administrative reintegration, as well as labor insertion and training programs.

Bolivia commented on the results of the recent "World Peoples' Conference: For a World Without Walls, towards Universal Citizenship", in which it was agreed, among others, to promote the strengthening of regional citizenships as a step towards universal citizenship, as well as promoting integration programs that guarantee access to the rights of migrants. Reference was also made to the need for a mechanism to monitor diasporas abroad.

Finally, Chile and El Salvador highlighted the importance to promote and make more visible the concept of the migrant family, as well as taking the needed measures to ensure its special protection.

## **Topic II Smuggling of migrants, human trafficking, and the challenges to human safety and security**

### **Contextualization**

#### **- Mrs. Rosilyne Borland, Senior Regional Specialist in Migrant Assistance of the IOM**

Mrs. Borland focused her presentation on three points: the relationship between migration, trafficking and smuggling of people and their trends; the factors determining vulnerability of migrants, and, finally, the cooperation and the need for data on human trafficking.

With regard to migration, she provided context on the overall migration situation and trends in migration. In that sense, she emphasized that Latin America has one of the highest percentages (almost half) of migrant women; this figure corresponds to the worldwide trend of feminization of migration. As part of the trends, she also highlighted the increase in migrant workers, the urbanization of migration and the increase in South-South migration.

She said that the positive or negative impacts of migration will depend on the conditions under which migration occurs, which is why irregular migrants are more vulnerable than migrants who can be regularly inserted in their host countries. She also pointed out the difficulties and challenges for specific groups such as LGBTI migrants and refugees, who have problems accessing safe shelters.

She continued to define and differentiate terms such as human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants. She explained that smuggling seeks to obtain directly or indirectly a material or economic benefit from the illegal entry of a person into a State of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident. Trafficking, on the other hand, refers to the recruitment, transport, transfer, or reception of persons for the purpose of exploitation. Usually, abduction, deception, abuse of power, threat, use of force or other forms of coercion are used to establish authority over a person. The exploitation of a person in a situation of trafficking can occur for different purposes, including sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or organ extraction.

She underscored that one of the main differences between migrants and trafficking victims is that the first group is considered disposable. A trader seeking to obtain economic benefits from the exploitation of persons will try to keep them alive for as long as possible. In contrast, migrants are perceived as "burdens" by traffickers and decide to abandon them in situations of risk. This differentiation has contributed to an increase in the number of missing and deceased migrants on their route to destination countries. In this regard, the IOM specialist stressed the urgency of raising an alarm about the disappearances of migrants.

Likewise, Mrs. Borland highlighted initiatives in progress for an integrated approach to migration. Among them the 8.7 Alliance, a group organized around Goal 8.7 of the 2030 Agenda, the release of a new report and global estimates on migration and human trafficking presented by ILO and the Walk Free Foundation, with the support of IOM. She concluded by adding that the IOM is designing a new Handbook for migrants in situation of vulnerability which includes indicators that can lead to a positive or negative impact of migration.

### **Plenary session – Intervention by the States**

With respect to the fight against human trafficking and smuggling of persons, countries made reference to the fact that in recent decades new normative frameworks have been adopted that typify and have led to convictions for this crime. State interventions also pointed to the need to address the challenges of combating trafficking and trafficking bilaterally and multilaterally, recognizing that no country can achieve results in isolation.

The delegations underlined the importance of a model of multisectoral approach by States to review regulatory frameworks, combat criminal organizations, identify victims and provide them with the necessary assistance, among others. They also referred to the implementation of national plans and anti-trafficking commissions in several countries.

The United States and Canada highlighted the urgency of promoting the fight against organized crime and the potential of civil society organizations and alliances for prevention, victim identification and trafficking management.

Similarly, they referred to the role of prevention and information campaigns against trafficking and smuggling, which have shown good results, and pointed out the need to communicate the message in border communities that are frequently victims of these crimes.

El Salvador in particular, mentioned the importance of strengthening the support provided by the consular networks to activate the institutional framework and respond to the needs of the different cases that may arise. Chile also highlighted the role that the consular network can play in determining the origin of victims of trafficking.

Lastly, the Chair of the OAS Committee on Migration Issues briefly announced the Inter-American Program for the Protection and Promotion of Migrants' Rights, including Migrant Workers and their Families, created in 2005 and updated in 2016 with the approval of the OAS General Assembly in 2016, and referred to the objectives and activities of the program related to human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants.

### **Topic III: Migration, climate change and crises caused by human beings**

#### **Contextualization**

##### **- Prof. Walter Kaelin, Platform on Disaster Displacement**

Professor Kaelin began his presentation with a general overview of displacements caused by disasters. He noted that globally there were 24.2 million people displaced by disasters in 2016. In Latin America and the Caribbean, 18 million people have been displaced by sudden disasters between 2008 and 2016. Some examples are: the earthquake of Haiti in 2010, the floods in Bolivia in 2014, and the hurricane in Nicaragua in 2016.

The speaker highlighted the multiple dimensions of displacement due to natural disasters, including internal displacement, cross-border migration during and after the disaster, migration as a pre-disaster or post-disaster adaptation measure, and migrants trapped in the disaster.

With regard to the International Agenda, he referred to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the 2010 Cancun Adaptation Framework and the Paris Agreement, which gave rise to the creation of the Working Group on Displacement under the International Warsaw Mechanism on Damages and Losses. He also referred to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction which includes several paragraphs on human mobility linked to natural disasters.

Doctor Kaelin discussed a "Toolkit" to protect displaced persons across borders and for risk management of displacement in countries of origin, based on existing practices and endorsed by more than 100 government delegations in Geneva in 2015. He also referred to objective 10.7 of the 2030 Agenda.

At a regional level, the expert indicated that several instruments have been adopted in the last decade. These include the OAS Declaration on Climate Change, Food Security and Migration in the Americas; the Brazil Declaration and the 2014 Plan of Action promoted by UNHCR, which refers to the adoption of integrated responses to cross/border displacement in relation to disaster risk management and humanitarian visa programs.

With respect to cooperation and harmonization of practices, Professor Kaelin mentioned the adoption of the Guide to Effective Practices for member countries of the Regional Conference on Migration, training workshops and simulation exercises. He also mentioned the compilation of effective practices on admission and stay at the South American Conference on Migration.

As human mobility related to disasters and climate change is a reality and will increase in the context of climate change, the expert highlighted some of the most important actions to be considered in the dialogues towards the Global Compact. These include the harmonization and use of temporary protection / humanitarian visas to protect displaced persons across borders, cooperation with countries of origin in relation to possible solutions, cooperation for reconstruction efforts, the creation of regular pathways for migration as a strategy for addressing the phenomenon and integrating human mobility into strategies for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, as well as the use of MICIC guidelines to address the needs of migrants trapped in disaster situations.

#### **Plenary session – Intervention by the States**

The representative of El Salvador, who currently holds the pro-tempore presidency of the RCM, mentioned that it is urgent for the Conference to take up the issue and to promote a protocol to develop working guidelines for climate change and human mobility, following the model that was developed for the gender issue.

The delegation of Chile underscored the role of prevention and commented that many of the fatalities are associated with people who have not been able to leave or have no information, for which he recommended coordinating with the consular networks on how to prevent and inform the migrant community about eventual disasters. He also mentioned the establishment of cross-border integration committees.

Several countries highlighted the importance of strengthening regular migration routes as a preventive measure for the consequences of climate change events. They also agreed that priority actions should include strengthening the capacity of States to reduce and respond to disasters, inclusion of the issue in the school curriculum and consideration of community actors in all prevention actions, as well as the development of protocols that include regional strategies based on good practices.

Finally, they emphasized that the Global Pact offers an opportunity to take back the regional instruments as a basis for integrating a global proposal.

## **Topic IV: Irregular migration, labor mobility and decent work**

### **Contextualization**

- **Mr. Francesco Carella, ILO Specialist in Labor Migration for Central America, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Cuba**

Mr. Carella focused his presentation on four main points: (1) the link between irregular migration, labor mobility and decent work; (2) irregular migration and the world of work; (3) the main challenges and some solutions related to the theme; and (4) recommendations.

He noted that, of the 244 million international migrants, 65% are migrant workers and 73% are of working age. He also highlighted ways to reduce irregular migration through the creation of regular channels. In addition, he indicated that the participation rate of migrants in the labor market is higher than that of the national population, particularly among women.

He also emphasized that all international labor law instruments of migrants apply to the migrant worker population, regardless of their irregular situation.

The ILO representative indicated that in the countries of destination it is necessary to implement regularization policies, especially of those migrants who are part of the labor market. In this regard, he indicated that it is necessary to strengthen the administration of labor migration and to simplify procedures as a way to combat irregular migration. At the same time, he emphasized that it is necessary to meet the needs of the labor market for all types of workers (skilled, semi-skilled and low skilled) and that this should not be addressed mainly through temporary work programs, as they imply less protection for migrant people.

He stressed that, in the case of returnees, it is necessary for the countries of origin to offer socio-economic reintegration programs that guarantee the integration of migrants into the labor market. He also stressed the need to promote decent work in labor mobility as it contributes directly to the sustainable development objectives of Agenda 2030.

In addition, Mr. Carella stressed that the States must ensure the social protection of migrant workers, including their access to social security contributive programs and social protection as a tool to encourage formal and regular work. He added that countries should encourage the linkage of public employment services with the needs of migrant workers. Examples include labor integration of migrants, strengthening labor inspection, improving access to justice, and reducing barriers to such access.

It is also necessary to recognize the skills, qualifications and expertise of migrants as a way of ensuring an optimal linkage between the skills provided by migrants and the market needs. In this area, he highlighted the recognition of diplomas and previous academic studies of migrants, allowing their insertion in the formal economy and access to qualified positions. Equal treatment that eliminates costs for migrants is necessary to prevent worker dumping.

To conclude, Mr. Carella underscored the importance of combating irregular migration through the opening of regularization channels promoting regular migration based on the needs dictated by labor markets; as well as the strengthening of normative frameworks in the countries of origin and destination and the social protection of migrant workers, particularly those with little or no skills or “invisibilized.”

### **Plenary session – Intervention by the States**

Several countries, including Colombia, Mexico and Bolivia, emphasized the importance of harmonizing the academic studies and diplomas of migrant workers to ensure the true integration of these workers into society, based on their competences and with adequate remuneration for their skills. In this same sense, Mr. Carella said that harmonizing academic studies and degrees is a thorny issue for countries, even for regional integration blocks. However, the representative of the ILO cited the example of the European Union as a gradual solution that, despite

not validating the academic studies and diplomas of all the Member States, it does recognize the diplomas and grant them equivalence.

Brazil stressed the project of South-South cooperation for the protection of migrants in Latin America and the Caribbean as an example of cooperation between States, of which Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, and Trinidad and Tobago are part. This project focuses on the promotion of effective knowledge on the rights of workers, and of cooperation channels between Governments.

At the level of regularization processes, Costa Rica shared its experience with respect to the regularization of temporary workers in the agriculture and coffee sectors to facilitate the process of recognition of the reality of labor migration in the country. Panama highlighted the fact that both countries have managed to cooperate and articulate joint actions regarding temporary labor migration flows (for example, coffee workers, particularly the Gnöbe-Buglé population). Honduras also raised the need to adjust regularization policies aimed at cross-border workers in the tripartite area.

On the other hand, the United States stressed the principle of sovereignty, since, despite existing international treaties, countries have the authority to establish immigration policies in accordance with their interests and needs. Chile put on the table the involvement of the private sector for the protection and integration of migrant workers in the society of the destination country. Mexico and Mr. Carella highlighted the essential role played by the consular network in the protection of the rights of migrant workers in the place of destination.

The Chairwoman of the Committee on Migration Issues (CAM) of the OAS referred to the Inter-American program for the promotion and protection of the human rights of migrants, which includes migrant workers, and urges the States to implement objectives and activities related to the protection of the rights of migrant workers.

Finally, the countries agreed on the need to eradicate xenophobic political discourse and visibilize the economic contribution of migrant workers. It also stressed the importance of having data and accurate information on migration as the only way to develop the countries' effective migration policies.

## **Topic V: Migration Governance: Priority measures to address extra-regional migration**

### **Contextualization**

#### **- Mrs. Ideli Salvatti, Secretary of the Secretariat for Access to Rights and Equity of the OAS**

After a brief introduction, Secretary Salvatti defined the term *governance* as the match between social perceptions and demands on the causes, characteristics, and effects of migratory movements, and the possibilities and willingness of the States to respond to these demands within a framework of legitimacy and effectiveness. During her presentation, she described the three migration governance models that allow a better understanding of the phenomenon, and to search for consensus that would lay the groundwork for policies on proper migration governance.

The first “security-based” model has, as the axis of migration policy, the national, social, cultural and labor security of the host country. Under this model, migration policies are designed as part of national security, being characterized by the restriction of rights and linking migration to the deterioration of the economy and of public services. The second is the “shared-benefits” model, based on the premise that migration can provide benefits to both the country of origin and that of destination, provided it is orderly and regular. This model's aim is to achieve alignment between supply and demand in the labor market. The third governance model is “human development for migration”, which rejects the security policies to focus on the rights of people and on dialog and management from multilateral spaces. In turn, this model highlights the structural causes of migration, related to a widening of the development gap between developed and developing countries.

Secretary Salvatti continued by indicating the current status of migration governance in the region, characterized by a fragmented array of bilateral, regional, inter-regional and multilateral institutions. At a formal level, she considered that the challenge facing the region towards the construction of migration governance is to seek convergence between national perspectives, regional processes and global instances. She also underscored inequality as a peculiar aspect of the American continent, which must be overcome.

She finished her presentation by highlighting the regional report on “Flows of Migrants in Irregular Migration Status from Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean in the Americas” as the basis to propose discussion guidelines during the plenary session, adding that, if it were possible to count on an annual report, countries and organizations could carry out actions in a quicker, more efficient manner.

#### **- Mr. Marcelo Pisani, Regional Director for Central America, North America and the Caribbean, IOM**

Marcelo Pisani, Regional Director of the IOM, started his presentation by indicating that Central America is one of the most active migration corridors in the world. Although migration flows in the region have declined in the past year, they are still significant; he also stated that the migration process is changing and cyclic. In addition, he highlighted new trends, such as an increase in Venezuelan migrants, migration bound for South America, and the regularization processes undertaken by some countries in South America.

Regarding the challenges to respond to extra-regional migrants, Cubans and Haitians in irregular migration status, the expert indicated that the mixed nature of irregular flows and the profile of migrants must be considered, including the lack of documentation, the language barrier, and the absence of representation of the countries of origin in the countries of transit or destination, among others.

He made recommendations including the following aspects: responding to the basic needs of migrants with an inter-cultural approach and psychosocial assistance services; legal advice through mobile, inter-institutional teams to provide information and care to extra-regional migrants; conflict prevention using awareness-raising and information strategies for migrants and communities; generation of alternatives to migration and temporary permits; and the development of public policies that facilitate entering the labor market and obtaining visas, and stabilize the community, among others.

He also emphasized the need to generate information systems on migrants' needs for protection and assistance on available services, as well as information systems and the exchange of information for the development of public policy.

Mr. Pisani concluded his presentation by showing project proposals driven by the IOM, such as how to improve the ability to produce and analyze information through existing tools (*Displacement Tracking Matrix, MigApp, Communicating with Communities*); creating networks for training, coordination, and the exchange of information and good practices; connecting supply and demand in the labor market; creating a "good practices" bank, and strengthening registration systems.

### **Plenary session – Intervention by the States**

Several of the participating countries pointed out that one of the biggest challenges faced regionally is to count on reliable information and systematized, comparable statistical data. They agreed that coordination and cooperation in situations of migration crisis from the perspective of a shared responsibility, is another common challenge.

There was also consensus among the countries on the importance of learning from each other and, therefore, documenting good practices.

On the other hand, Brazil emphasized the protection of the rights of migrants as a central tenet of all rights, and Peru reiterated the relevance of the labor component of migration, since the majority of migration, 90% according to the ILO, is for labor purposes.

The United States indicated its support for the promotion of safe, orderly regular migration and suggested as possible areas of cooperation: strengthening migration management to promote safe migration, the exchange of information, the promotion of a safe and orderly return; the capture and prosecution of those who commit the crimes of human trafficking and smuggling of migrants, and the protection of victims.

Canada expressed its support to working together to find regional forms of governance that ensure the rights of migrants, and expressed a special interest in the area of cooperation to combat human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants.

Finally, Mexico said that, with respect to the irregular migration happening along the Mexico-US border and US--Canada border, it has been possible to provide basic services to migrants. In addition, support has been given to Haiti for the establishment of consular presence in areas where there is presence of Haitian nationals.

Finally, the consolidation of the Vice-Ministers ad hoc forum was proposed; this forum has been working together recently, to excellent results.

## **Topic VI: The response of the Americas to the flows of migrants in irregular migration status and the role of international cooperation**

### **Contextualization**

#### **- Mrs. Liduvina Magarin, Representative of El Salvador, Regional Conference on Migration**

The representative of the RCM began her presentation providing a historical context of Central America and the role of El Salvador in the dynamics of migration flows. Regarding extra-regional migrant flows, she indicated that this has been a constant in the region; thus, in the Regional Conference on Migration held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, in 2011, an Ad Hoc Group was established to discuss, analyze and define objectives regarding extra-regional migrant flows, this Group plays an important role in the discussion of this topic.

During her speech, Mrs. Magarin said that it is both imperative and necessary for Governments to commit to the exchange of information and, above all, regional cooperation, in order to control extra-regional migratory flows. In this sense, she suggested creating an integrated information system for all the countries. To achieve this, it is necessary to continue promoting a dialog, with the SACM and RCM Troikas, regarding the topic of extra-regional migrant flows that are in transit through the Americas, in order to develop common strategies and share experiences around the different existing programs that serve this population.

She then added that cooperation is essential to develop differentiated regional policies in order to manage the different nationalities of extra-regional migrants.

As part of the cooperation, she mentioned the importance of implementing regional guidelines for the preliminary identification of profiles, as well as reference mechanisms for migrants in conditions of vulnerability. She also stated that cooperation priorities should be promoted in all stages of the migration cycle, the funding of worthy, agile, safe and orderly return programs; technical and financial support of programs for the insertion of returning migrants; support for programs and projects focusing on entrepreneurship and labor reinsertion of returned migrants; and, finally, the allocation of resources to accompany programs for the orderly and dignified reception implemented by the return countries.

Likewise, she described the challenges the region faces regarding migration topics, highlighting among them: (1) incorporating more international organizations to the work with migrants, according to their specialization, (2) aligning the Pact and other regional and global efforts such as those driven by the RCM and the 2030 Agenda, (3) ensure an active role of the territories and local governments in the implementation of measures to address the structural causes of migration, (4) mobilizing resources to achieve effective public policy measures, and (5) greater coordination with the private sector and civil society.

Vice-Minister Liduvina Margarin ended her presentation highlighting that the Global Pact is a historic opportunity to change the perspective in favor of migrants; implement cooperation models focused on migrants; and guide the efforts in line with the spirit of the Addis Ababa Action Plan.

#### **- Mr. Pedro Hernandez Gonzalez, Representative of Chile, South American Conference on Migration (SACM)**

Mr. Hernandez listed the principles guiding the work of the South American Conference on Migration (SACM), among which he emphasized the governance of international migration, the migrant person as a subject of rights in line with an unrestricted respect for human rights, the importance of dialogue and international cooperation to advance regional integration, free mobility of people and South American citizenship, the relevance of the host community to the integration and integration of migrants, the recognition of the contribution of migrants to

sustainable development, access to justice for migrants and keeping communication links with migrant nationals residing abroad.

On the governance of international migration, he highlighted the need for a migration policy based on the human rights and gender approach, which addresses the challenges of democratic governance of migration, regional integration and citizen participation. This governance must be guided by a migratory institutionality, which, from the integrality of the migratory process, includes mechanisms of citizen participation, incorporates inter-sectoral and inter-institutional aspects, and addresses regional and local challenges by means of migratory regulations that express the contents and advances of International Migration Law and the proposal of framework norms and the harmonization of legal systems regarding migration. He also stressed the importance of having a guaranteed citizen participation that incorporates civil society as a fundamental actor in the process of integration of migrants and respect for human rights.

He also shared with the plenary some of the responses that the Conference has provided to the flows of irregular migrants and their role in the area of cooperation. In this sense, he emphasized that regularization is a fundamental element of public policies in the immigration field. It is, therefore, necessary to maximize efforts to regularize the situation of migrants in an irregular status and, in turn, to reject the criminalization of irregular migration status and its possible classification as a felony. He emphasized that migrants, regardless of their migration status, have rights.

He added that regularization helps to make people more visible and allows an effective safeguard of human rights, avoiding exposure to situations of vulnerabilities such as the crimes of trafficking in persons and illegal trafficking of migrants. Likewise, he considered as a fundamental measure to guarantee the access of the migrant people to the justice in cases in which they have been victims of crimes or of violations of their fundamental rights and labor rights.

Finally, he emphasized the importance of the social inclusion of migrants and the relevance of the host communities for a successful integration and integration. He also stressed the importance of international cooperation in border areas, particularly the promotion of development in border integration zones and the commitment to continue working on the infrastructure of border crossings, the incorporation of technologies and the analysis of new modalities of border mobility to allow the free transit of migrants and the development of new studies on the dynamics of border areas.

- **Mr. Garth Williams, Deputy Director General of Operations, Passports, Immigration and Citizenship Agency of the Government of Jamaica, Caribbean Migration Consultations (CMC)**

Mr. Williams shared the experience of the Caribbean in building a Caribbean consultative process. In this sense, he informed the plenary that the process is underway and is marked by its informal, non-binding nature, with the purpose of bringing together the Caribbean countries to address migratory issues.

Likewise, Mr. Williams emphasized the objective of the forum to create a forum for member countries to discuss migration issues honestly in order to develop coherent and coordinated regional efforts for the effective management of migration. The consultative process also seeks to coordinate and promote the exchange of information among Member States, with an emphasis on the exchange of good practices related to the management of mixed migrations, as well as to develop policies with a rights-based and governance-oriented approach to migration in the region.

In order to meet these objectives, the consultative process calls for the construction of information exchange networks through these meetings and conferences, with the expectation that countries will take advantage of these opportunities to improve migration policies in the region. To this end, Mr. Williams emphasized the

importance of strengthening contact with, and encouragement of, the participants in the process and promoting networks and articulating the exchange of good practices and capacity building.

However, Mr. Williams said that the consultative process presents some challenges, including: obtaining the necessary political support, the establishment of a technical secretariat, obtaining strong, permanent financial support from at least three sponsor countries, the consolidation of specialized networks and thematic working groups, and building the necessary confidence among members for the exchange of information and open dialogue.

- **Mr. Luis Diego Obando, Regional Legal Unit, UNHCR**

The representative of UNHCR, Mr. Luis Diego Obando, introduced the main aspects of governance in the protection of refugees, stating that refugees and displaced persons should be part of the dialogue on international migration.

With regard to global trends, Mr. Obando provided general data on the scale of the phenomenon, indicating that, globally, 65.6 million people were displaced in 2016. In the Americas, this number amounts to more than 200,000 refugees and more than 321,000 asylum seekers. He added that of the total number of refugees and asylum seekers in the world, 84% are in developing countries.

He explained that, currently, the main refugee situations in the Americas originate in Colombia, the North Triangle countries of Central America, Cuba and Venezuela.

Mr. Obando underscored that, during the two days of the Forum, the Global Pact on Migration had been discussed, but it was necessary to remember that the New York Declaration established two covenants: migration and refugee covenants and not it is possible to separate the treatment of these subjects. He added that the Declaration reflects the political commitment of 193 States with the rights of migrants and refugees and contemplates solidarity and shared responsibility. He stressed that, beyond the humanitarian response, the Declaration proposes sustainable long-term solutions and a comprehensive response framework for refugees.

Next, the UNHCR representative identified points to be considered in the context of mixed migration:

- Identify those who need protection, offer secure reception conditions that safeguard dignity, paying special attention to people with specific needs. Provide assistance through national and local authorities such as public health, education, social services and child protection services. Support local associations of civil society that contribute to the humanitarian response. Deal with the provision of resources given the increase in the need for protection and the burden on social services. Work on clear reference pathways to specific processes according to each person-s profile.

The expert also addressed the relevance of having a Specific Arc and a Compact on Refugees that meets specific situations, such as:

- People who have fled persecution and violence, and who can not return to their country, or other country where they have the same rights of a national person (C51, other instruments). The inexorable necessity of joining a country that is not their country for a significant period of time due to the impossibility of returning, considering aspects such as decent work, access to rights of other resident migrants and lasting solutions by means of cooperation for the resettlement and reintegration. Reference to specific procedures to determine their status.
- The Right to Asylum and Non-refoulement (Inter-American Court of Human Rights OC/25)

Mr. Obando then made reference to the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), which provides for joint humanitarian and development actions between humanitarian and development actors (development

planning), with the support of international development agencies (Agenda 2030), dealing with the causes of displacement, supporting countries of asylum and promoting cooperation with the private sector.

Regarding the regional frameworks, the speaker mentioned the Brazilian Plan of Action that integrates the base Framework for contributions to the global process of drafting a Pact on refugees in Latin America and the Caribbean. He also mentioned that consultations are underway for the triennial evaluation of the Brazilian Action Plan and the first report in 2018 by UNHCR in South America and the Caribbean.

Finally, he referred to the development of National and Regional Refugee Solution Frameworks to address the situation of people of Central American nationalities, among others.

With respect to extra-regional migration, the UNHCR representative noted that the motivations of this migratory group vary, so it is necessary to establish effective and permanent mechanisms for identification, reception and referral of people to the corresponding protection systems. He also noted that there are other alternatives to provide protection, including regularization programs that contribute to reducing the pressure on asylum systems and ensure adequate protection for everyone.

Mr. Obando ended his presentation by reminding the plenary of the Declaration of New York, which, among its goals, provides comprehensive, uniform and sustainable answers from the principle of shared responsibility of the States and regional cooperation. He added that the Declaration serves as a prelude to the Global Pact on Refugees and the process of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF).

There was not a plenary discussion by the Member States concerning this thematic panel.

## **Closing Session**

The closing session of the "High-Level Forum on Irregular Migration Flows in the Americas" featured the participation of Mr. Manuel A. Gonzalez Sanz, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica; Mr. Alejandro Solano Ortiz, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs; Mrs. Gisela Yockchen, Director General of Immigration and Naturalization; Mrs. Laura Thompson, Deputy Director General of the International Organization for Migrations; and Mrs. Ideli Salvatti, Secretary of the Secretariat for Access to Rights and Equity of the OAS.

In his speech, Minister Gonzalez presented a report from the Presidency on the main achievements and results of the Forum (see Annex 1).

In general, the panelists agreed on solidarity, co-responsibility, integrality and the approach of general rights as essential elements of good migration governance. They also highlighted the urgency of producing more and better data and to foster the exchange of information among the countries. They concluded by emphasizing the need for greater bilateral and multilateral cooperation, as well as the relevance of establishing basic guidelines to respond to crisis situations.