

**MINISTERIAL MEETING ON TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME AND
MIGRANT SECURITY
MEXICO CITY OCTOBER 8TH, 2010**

The Ministers and High-Level Officials of the Governments of Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, and the United States of America:

- **Noting** the obligation of States to protect the human rights of migrants regardless of their legal status, and acknowledging the major contribution of migration to the economies and societies of all countries and that it is a very important source of national enrichment;
- **Affirming** the sovereign right of States to apply their migration laws and regulations, in conformity with international law, with full recognition of the human rights of all people regardless of their migratory status.
- **Concerned** at the large and growing number of migrants, especially women and children, who attempt to cross international borders without the required travel documents, which places them in a particularly vulnerable situation, and recognizing the obligation of States to respect the human rights of those migrants;
- **Affirming** that migrants should be granted rights by law and protected from criminal abuse, regardless of their migratory status;
- **Aware** that in some countries in our region, transnational organized crime has become the principal threat to the security of migrants, through human trafficking, smuggling of persons, kidnappings, and extortion, among other crimes, as well as their increased vulnerability to these crimes;
- **Resolved** to strengthen the relevant national public policies and institutions in combating transnational organized crime against migrants, including their capacity for protection and consular assistance;
- **Reaffirming States'** commitment to enhancing national actions, with bilateral, regional and international cooperation, to prevent and combat actions by transnational criminal groups against migrants in their respective countries, and to provide the victims with appropriate support and assistance;
- **Outraged** at the increased violence against migrants by transnational organized criminal networks in the region;

- **Condemning** all crimes committed against migrants and, in that regard, expressing their condolences to the families of the victims of the incidents that took place last August in San Fernando, Tamaulipas, Mexico as well as their solidarity with the peoples of those countries whose citizens lost their lives;
- **Recognizing** the efforts that the region's governments have undertaken to fight transnational organized crime and to prosecute crimes committed against migrants;
- **Taking note** of the Special Communiqué by the Ministers of Foreign Relations of the Central American Integration System member countries issued on September 2, 2010 in Antigua City, Guatemala;
- **Agree** to work together on the basis of trust on the following initiatives:
 1. **Strengthen** national capacities in order to make progress toward the design and implementation of schemes for sharing information, coordinating actions to tackle the threat of transnational organized crime, to increase migrants' safety and reduce their vulnerability to abuse and exploitation.
 2. **Intensify** the outreach and information campaigns targeting migrant populations, in order to inform them about the potential risks they face, their rights and obligations, as well as the agencies or civil society groups that may be able to provide them assistance and advice; and upon which they may report crimes, and lodge complaints.
 3. **Take** actions to promote and facilitate the reporting of crimes committed against migrants by through measures, such as dedicated, secure telephone lines in the countries of origin, transit and destination, to enable responsible authorities to be aware of potential criminal activity and enforce the rule of law.
 4. **Establish or strengthen** within police forces and other national law enforcement agencies, operational and intelligence units dedicated to fight transnational organized crime and related felonies, in particular those crimes against migrants, and foster public policies toward raising awareness of the human rights of migrants and provide assistance to those that are victims of these crimes.
 5. **Promote** the presence of public security and other appropriate government officials at formal and informal border crossings, along the main transit routes and in places that have a large migrant vulnerable migrant population.
 6. **Increase** the professionalization of migration control agencies and other authorities involved in administering and enforcing migration laws, including through vetting systems and other measures aimed at reducing corruption and training officials in the protection of the human rights of migrants.

7. **Take into** account in national, regional and international strategies for fighting crimes against migrants, the recommendations of national human rights bodies, commissions, international human rights organizations and the contributions of civil society organizations specialized in the protection of the human rights of migrants.
8. **Consider harmonizing** national regulations and laws addressing the crimes committed against migrants to achieve increased effectiveness in legal proceedings and reduce impunity taking into account, among other measures, OAS model regulations; consider, in that regard and according to national legislations, measures such as the use of undercover agents and witness protection programs; and consider the feasibility of establishing special prosecutors or provide training of existing prosecutors to deal with crimes against migrants.
9. **Promote** the training of judges and public prosecutors through specialized programs on the crimes against migrants, including those committed by transnational criminal organizations.
10. **Facilitate and strengthen** the exchange of information in order to allow for better understanding of the problem, and improve capabilities to act against the activities of transnational organized criminal groups and other crimes against migrants, including through the use of the designated focal points in multilateral and bilateral fora and mechanisms.
11. **Increase** the effectiveness of regional coordination in order to further progress towards the prevention of activities committed by transnational organized crime against migrants, while encouraging the involvement of civil society.
12. **Reinforce** the effective investigation and prosecution of crimes, through coordinated actions within and between national authorities taking full advantage, as appropriate, of the various databases that exist in the region, and through exchanges of strategic, tactical, and operational information, consistent with national laws.
13. **Prosecute** and punish crimes of transnational organized crime against migrants, by intensifying cooperation between all appropriate investigation agencies in order to prevent and prosecute financial crimes related to their activities.
14. **Strengthen** and intensify the exchange of information among the Financial Intelligence Units of the region's countries, in order to deter and effectively combat money-laundering operations that may be associated with transnational organized crime, in particular crimes committed against migrants.

15. **Encourage** the establishment or strengthening of migration observatories and study centers in the interested countries of the region, and encourage them to include in their analyses the effects of transnational organized crime on migrants;
16. **Take advantage** of synergies among sub-regional, regional and multilateral fora to structure, in their working programs, international cooperation for confronting transnational organized criminal organizations that commit crimes against migrants and for the exchange of best practices for protecting migrants, in accordance with their mandates and responsibilities.
17. **Promote** the ratification and implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols, particularly the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children and the Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air.
18. **Request** the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to conduct a project proposal, subject to its financing, regarding the characteristics and trends of in-transit migration, with a regional perspective, and also including an analysis of the causes, impact, and manifestations of crimes committed against migrants.
19. **Request** the Organization of American States (OAS), within the framework of its Committee on Hemispheric Security, to follow up on regional cooperation actions on this matter, and implement the Hemispheric Plan of Action against Transnational Organized Crime, and drawing on its links with civil society.
20. **Promote** the implementation of the “Regional Strategy to Promote Hemispheric Cooperation in Dealing with Criminal Gangs,” adopted at the 40th regular session of the OAS General Assembly in Lima, Peru, in June 2010.
21. **Strengthen** the training of personnel having public security responsibilities in the region, and also strengthen cooperation between national police forces and multilateral agencies such as INTERPOL and AMERIPOL.

The Ministers and High-Level Officials will follow-up on the implementation of these initiatives, within the framework of the corresponding multilateral, regional and bilateral mechanisms and entrust Mexico to make the World Forum on Migration and Development, that will take place in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, on November 8 to 11, 2010, aware of this document.