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APPLYING THE GLOBAL COMPACT ON REFUGEES IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND MEXICO

STRATEGIC SECTORS



Protection



Employment and
Livelihoods



Social Protection



Education



Health

Approval of the MIRPS 2021 Regional Plan with Guatemala as Pro-tempore Presidency

The Comprehensive Regional Framework for Protection and Solutions (MIRPS) begins its fourth year of implementation as a consolidated mechanism that has positioned itself globally as a pioneering initiative for the coordination of responses to common challenges, making visible the displacement crises faced by Central American countries and Mexico, generating spaces for the exchange of relevant experiences and lessons learned of member states.

For 2021, the Government of Guatemala as MIRPS Pro-Tempore Presidency, with the support of UNHCR and the OAS as the MIRPS Technical Secretariat, is committed to serve as a facilitator in the generation of opportunities, conditions and solutions for the protection and attention of asylum seekers, refugees, internally displaced persons and persons in need of international protection. All this will be possible through innovative methodologies, coordination efforts as well as joint initiatives with the various actors in this process.

Aiming to provide a platform for MIRPS States to share their experiences and knowledge, to identify joint solutions in different thematic areas, the annual plan creates the following Working Groups:

PROTECTION

Admission, reception and processing of persons with protection needs
Starts: April 8

Internal Displacement
Starts: April 29

SOLUTIONS

Labour Market Access and Vocational Training
Starts: July 6

Local governance
Starts: July 13

THE MIRPS IN ACTION: IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL PLANS

MÉXICO

EMPLOYMENT AND LIVELIHOODS - In March, an inter-institutional round table on labour inclusion for applicants and refugees was held, with the participation of various government agencies, international organizations and civil society. The job placement services of the National Employment Service and the importance of access for the refugee population in Mexico were presented. An ILO, GIZ and UNHCR project was presented, which is also aimed at the employment of this population, through the strengthening of related services in host communities in the south of the country. The subsequent round table in this process of implementing the MIRPS commitments will focus on financial inclusion.

GUATEMALA

PROTECTION - The Guatemalan Migration Institute inaugurated the new office of the Department of Recognition of Refugee Status (DRER), which provides adequate spaces for confidential interviews and the attention to children and newly trained personnel, to ensure a comprehensive response to requests for international protection and refugee status.

EMPLOYMENT AND LIVELIHOODS - A training course in international protection, livelihoods and economic inclusion was carried out for 21 officials of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare that sought to strengthen identification and resolution of barriers that refugees and asylum seekers face when seeking access to labour market opportunities.

HONDURAS

PROTECTION - The three state agencies that make up the National Technical Team (The Secretary of Human Rights, the National Institute of Migration and the Secretary of Foreign Relations and International Cooperation) are advancing in the development of a joint work plan to inform collaboration with civil society organizations. This dialogue will support the participation of displaced persons in the decision-making process, and the advancement in the fulfillment of the MIRPS commitments.

To improve the reception and care conditions for the internally displaced population, the Secretariat for Human Rights began to prepare and define a pilot scheme for individual case management.

EL SALVADOR

PROTECTION - The Commission for the Determination of Refugee Status (CODER) has hired and trained two additional legal technicians to strengthen the operational capacity of the Technical Secretariat, speeding up response times for asylum applications in El Salvador. Likewise, the CODER in coordination with the General Directorate of Migration and Foreigners (DGME) carried out visits and information sessions to share material related to the asylum process in El Salvador at the four busiest border points in the country (La Hachadura, Las Chinamas, El Poy, El Amatillo) and at the International Airport.

EDUCATION - The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology will initiate socialization activities to inform the use of a new care guide for children, adolescents and teachers in a condition of forced displacement or who are at risk of being displaced.

BELIZE

PROTECTION - Due to a ruling of the Supreme Court in late 2020, Government started in January to register asylum claims, no longer applying the 14-day registration time limitation. As part of Government's asylum system improvement commitments, members of the Refugee Eligibility Committee received technical training, while staff of the Refugees Department received follow-up technical RSD training.

HEALTH - At the start of the COVID 19 vaccination program in early March, the Ministry of Health and UN Agencies exchanged relevant demographic information and provided direct operational support for comprehensive coverage of refugee-hosting communities.

COSTA RICA

EXTENSION OF MINARE AS A NATIONAL CHAPTER OF COSTA RICA - Costa Rica has reiterated its commitment to the protection of forcibly displaced persons. In February, the Government of the Republic confirmed the extension of MINARE as the national chapter of Costa Rica for two more years. This decision facilitates the going implementation of national commitments included within MINARE, and its related structure, for the articulation of comprehensive response actions between national institutions and other social actors.

HEALTH - Following the commitment to guarantee effective access to health, the Costa Rican Social Security Fund - the national governing body of health services in Costa Rica - approved the granting of medical insurance for 4,000 vulnerable refugee applicants with severe medical conditions as of April 1, 2021. Currently 6,000 asylum seekers and refugees have this benefit, so this measure will reach a total of 10,000 people in need of international protection.

PANAMÁ

PROTECTION - In line with the commitments of the National Action Plan, ONPAR carried out an assessment mission of the refugee population living in difficult-to-access areas of the Darien province. Nearly 400 cases were assisted, including the receipt of new applications for the recognition of refugee status, the renewal of refugee cards, obtaining permanent residence, work permits, legal advice, and the care for people at risk of statelessness. These missions reduce the cost of transportation to Panama City for the target population.

As part of the implementation of the D.E. No. 10 of January 5, 2019 that approves the procedure for the recognition of statelessness, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs published in the official gazette of April 1, 2021 Resolution No. 444 of March 22, 2021 which officially recognizes the granting of the condition of statelessness to a person residing in Panama.

With the implementation of the Bicentennial Plan "Closing Gaps", the presentation of 14 proposals by the refugee population and applicants for refugee status were facilitated for the creation of public policies on issues such as facilitating access to education, health, the incorporation of post-COVID-19 economic reactivation activities, social and cultural integration.

THE MIRPS IN ACTION: THE MIRPS IN THE REGION

The Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs (CAJP) of the OAS

The CAJP is one of the OAS forums that monitors the implementation of the MIRPS within the framework of the OAS General Assembly Resolution on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. In this regard, in the session of March 11, 2021, the protection of asylum seekers and refugees in the Americas was addressed, where progress achieved within the MIRPS was reported. This included highlighting the work carried out to strengthen asylum and reception systems, the protection of internally displaced persons, and support to solutions in partnership with local governments, the private sector and development actors.

Upcoming events: the MIRPS and Support Platform

Round tables on strengthening asylum systems

Working group on Admission, reception and processing of people with protection needs

AECID, in bilateral cooperation with the MIRPS Support Platform, will support the organization of a series of round tables and virtual sessions through the AECID Training Center of La Antigua, Guatemala. This involves the coordination of sessions and meetings, the facilitation of preparatory activities, translation and round tables. This activity complements the training undertaken in November 2020 for public officials from the seven MIRPS countries at the Training Center, pertaining to asylum application management and refugee integration. The topics of the round tables include:

- Shelter management- led by Colombia
- The identification of needs for international protection, case management and biometric registration - led by Canada
- The management of large refugee flows - led by the European Union
- The use of different modalities in case processing - led by Brazil

The sessions will be held in April and May. The participating countries will report the results during the later plenary session of the MIRPS with the Pro-Temporary Presidency.

Further engagement with the private sector

On **April 27**, a business round table will be held as a convening space to exchange good practices with regional unions and associations, including foundations and other relevant entities with an interest in responding to the forced displacement crisis in Central America, in coordination with the MIRPS Support Platform.

