

January - March 2022

IMPLEMENTING THE GLOBAL COMPACT ON REFUGEES IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND MEXICO

STRATEGIC SECTORS:



Protection



Jobs and
livelihoods



Social protection



Education



Health

MIRPS countries approve regional work plan presented by Honduras as Pro-Tempore Chair 2022

In the fifth year since the adoption of the San Pedro Sula Declaration, the Government of Honduras assumes the Pro-Tempore Presidency of the Regional Comprehensive Framework for Protection and Solutions (MIRPS), a mechanism consolidated in its structure and functioning as a regional framework, and with tangible results in terms of care and protection of displaced persons in the 7 MIRPS countries.

By the year 2022, the Pro-Tempore Presidency of Honduras, with the support of the MIRPS Technical Secretariat, formed by the UNHCR and the OAS, will seek to achieve the following 4 expected results:

1. Create a regional strategic vision of the MIRPS based on the update of the National Action Plans;
2. Consolidate a strengthened regional dialogue with greater visibility on the underlying causes of displacement;
3. Promote regional dialogue through the MIRPS Working Groups and political spaces within the OAS and other relevant regional mechanisms;
4. Strengthen alliances with strategic partners, including members of the Support Platform, the United Nations System, development actors, the private sector and civil society.

In the same way, the Government of Honduras has made a commitment to work closely and in coordination with the Support Platform. All of this, with the objective of making the region's situation visible in global forums, in this way promoting the creation of partnerships with cooperation and development actors; as well as promoting political dialogues and supporting the implementation of the recommendations issued in 2021 by the Working Groups. These actions will have a positive impact on facilitating progress in MIRPS countries, so that they renew their action plans and continue to make progress in the implementation of their national commitments.

MIRPS IN ACTION:

IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL PLANS

BELICE

PROTECTION - The Government's Refugee Department expanded its operational and institutional capacity. It now has five additional officers in charge of refugee eligibility. At the same time, the Department's registration, data storage and analysis processes are being upgraded with new hardware and software for the Ministry of Immigration. The Refugee Eligibility Committee has been trained in the process of adjudicating asylum applications.

EDUCATION AND HEALTH - The Ministry of Health and Welfare, and UNHCR continue to exchange demographic information and provide direct public communication and operational support for the full inclusion of displaced populations in the COVID-19 vaccination processes.

EMPLOYMENT AND LIVELIHOODS - Belize implements demand-driven technical and vocational training options in key economic sectors that benefit refugees, asylum seekers, and Belizean youth.

COSTA RICA

SOCIAL PROTECTION AND HEALTH - In March, a new agreement was signed between the Caja Costarricense del Seguro Social (CCSS) and UNHCR for the insurance of asylum seekers and refugees in Costa Rica. This will continue to provide access to health care services to 6,000 people with chronic conditions until December 2022.

EMPLOYMENT AND LIVELIHOODS - The National Employment System began implementing specific guidelines for the care of the refugee and asylum-seeking population in Costa Rica.

EL SALVADOR

PROTECTION - The "pilot test" was completed as part of the exercise prior to the 2022 update of the study on the characterization of internal displacement in El Salvador. Likewise, the design of the assistance route for returnees with protection needs has been completed, and the design of the Computerized Protection Module that allows for the referral of returnees with protection needs was finalized.

HEALTH - The dissemination of informative materials on comprehensive health care for victims of all forms of violence began, including basic concepts of forced displacement and guidelines of the Special Law on the subject.

EDUCATION - The Guide and the Operational Manual on care for displaced or at-risk children, adolescents, youth and teachers identified within the National Education System have been updated. In addition, the Special Protection of Rights Management and the School Counseling Program have been equipped to provide psychological and psychosocial care.

EMPLOYMENT AND LIVELIHOODS - The implementation of the "My First Job" program continued. In March, the 6-month apprenticeship phase concluded and the young people who completed the program are receiving formal job offers. Also, 4 specialized centers that offer technical and vocational courses have been strengthened.

GUATEMALA

EMPLOYMENT AND LIVELIHOODS - On February 28, the Ministry of Labor and Social Planning announced the launch of the Electronic Platform for Work Permits for Foreigners, so that employers, refugees, applicants for refugee status and foreigners can apply online for a permit to work legally in Guatemala. Likewise, as of March, the certificate of lack of criminal record was extended to refugee and refugee applicants by simply presenting the special identity personal document.

PROTECTION - In Santa Elena, Petén, an Integral Child Care Center was inaugurated, built by the Municipality of Flores and the Children's Shelter with UNHCR funds. The Center contributes to the development of refugee children and the host community.

HONDURAS

PROTECTION - The INM conducted 514 vulnerability interviews and identified 24 persons in transit with international protection needs. Likewise, a preliminary interview was applied to 40 cases of 65 persons, for the application of refugee status. The work plan of the Refugee Commission was also approved.

EMPLOYMENT AND LIVELIHOODS - INM staff and the UNHCR Livelihoods Unit met to map the livelihood needs of applicants and refugees in Honduras.

EDUCATION - Communications are maintained with the Undersecretariat for Technical Pedagogical Affairs to follow up on the plans established for the inclusion of refugee and asylum-seeking children in the country.

HEALTH - 31 refugees and 9 applicants for refugee status received the third dose against COVID-19. In addition, medical attention was provided at the Migrant Care Centers to 30 refugee applicants and 13 refugees.

MIRPS IN ACTION:

IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL PLANS

MEXICO

PROTECTION - Follow-up was given to the agreements implemented in the Inter-institutional Roundtable on Refugee and Complementary Protection of the MIRPS, and in the local Roundtables established in Monterrey, Nuevo León; Palenque, Chiapas; Tenosique, Tabasco; Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas, Tijuana, Baja California and Xalapa, Veracruz. In addition, the opening of three COMAR representative offices was made official: Guadalajara, Jalisco and Monterrey, Nuevo León, Saltillo, Coahuila.

EMPLOYMENT - The Interinstitutional Round Table on Labor Inclusion of Asylum Seekers and Refugees and a Fair for the Labor Inclusion of Women were held. In addition, the Ministry of Finance published a resolution to reform and add general provisions to Article 115 of the Law of Credit Institutions, recognizing the documents issued by the INM, without the need to present a passport, to promote the financial inclusion and international protection of refugees in Mexico.

EDUCATION - The Ministry of Public Education presented the free technological tool “AprendeINEA”, with which young people and adults will be able to complete their primary and secondary education. Also, COMAR, the Foreign Ministry and the civil association DIMA (Habesha) began the process of selecting young people with international protection needs from Afghanistan and other countries in the region to offer complementary pathways to resettlement through higher education.

HEALTH - Progress was made in vaccinating the refugee population in Mexico and in establishing coordination mechanisms to channel refugees with mental health care needs.

PANAMA

PROTECTION - An inter-institutional meeting was held to create the Inter-Institutional Commission on Stateless Persons, convened by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and attended by officials from the Ministry of Labor and Labor Development, the UNHCR, the Public Ministry, the Judiciary, the Attorney General's Office, the Ombudsman's Office, the Ministry of Health and the National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and the Family.

EMPLOYMENT AND LIVELIHOODS - The Empleo Solidario Program is being implemented, aimed at people in a situation of socioeconomic vulnerability caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, including recognized refugees with a valid work permit.

EDUCATION - Panama and the Inter-American Development Bank signed a \$15 million agreement to increase educational access to refugee and migrant children.

HEALTH - A workshop was held to socialize the Protocol for mental health care and psychosocial support in emergencies, disasters or catastrophes for refugees and migrants in the Province of Darien, with the participation of public institutions and civil society. In addition, refugees and migrants have been included in the COVID-19 vaccination program.

MIRPS IN ACTION: MIRPS REGIONAL WORK

MIRPS Advancements are presented to the OAS Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs.

On March 24, 2022, a balance of MIRPS activities was presented to the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs, one of the OAS forums that follows up on the implementation of the aforementioned regional mechanism within the framework of the OAS General Assembly Resolution on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. During this session, the management report of the Government of Guatemala as Pro-Tempore Presidency of the MIRPS in 2021 was presented, as well as the Work Plan and vision for the year 2022 of the Presidency of Honduras. In addition, the UNHCR and the OAS as Technical Secretariat of the MIRPS addressed the regional context and the achievements of the mechanism in 2021. Finally, the representatives of Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela acknowledged the work being done in the MIRPS.

Canada and Honduras organize Technical Support Workshops for MIRPS Working Groups

Under the auspices of Canada and Honduras, the Technical Support Workshops aimed to provide a space for dialogue and exchange between representatives of the MIRPS countries, the MIRPS Support Platform and other stakeholders who have supported the sessions of the Working Groups in 2021. These workshops, which took place between March and April 2022, sought to familiarize the members of the Platform with the activities of the four Working Groups. They offered the opportunity to define possible areas of support, whether technical, material or financial, and to accelerate future collaborations.

Regional meeting to facilitate exchanges on asylum capacity building among MIRPS member countries in Panama

On May 4 and 5, 2022, in Panama City, a regional twinning meeting was held for the MIRPS countries that are members of the MIRPS Working Group on Reception and Admission. The purpose of the meeting was to bring together asylum authorities from MIRPS countries and members of the MIRPS Support Platform who expressed interest in establishing twinning agreements to strengthen the asylum systems in Central America and Mexico. The progress and results derived from the regional projects and agreements of that meeting will be presented at the MIRPS Support Platform Solidarity Event in June 2022.

Upcoming MIRPS and Support Platform Events

MIRPS Support Platform Flagship Event

The Flagship Event on Resettlement, Complementary Pathways and Integration, hosted by the Government of Canada, as Chair of the MIRPS Support Platform, will seek to bring together members of the Support Platform, MIRPS countries, UN Agencies and other strategic actors such as the private sector and refugee-led organizations. All of this in order to share best practices and promote the expansion of mobility and admission channels for people in need of international protection from Central America and Mexico. This event will take place in Ottawa, Canada, from May 24-26, 2022.

