



Belize City Declaration at the VII Annual Meeting of the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS): Expanding partnerships and bolstering regional coordinated responses to displaced populations in Central America and Mexico

Belize City, Belize, December 5th, 2024

The Member States of the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS), Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Panama, under the leadership of the Presidency Pro Tempore of Belize, gathered at the VII MIRPS Annual Meeting in Belize City, with the purpose of reviewing progress, challenges, and achievements at the national and regional levels, as stated at the MIRPS Statutory Charter, and with the aim of continuing to advance in the implementation of the commitments made in the 2017 San Pedro Sula Declaration, in the Global Compact on Refugees and the Second Global Refugee Forum, and the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection.

Recognizing that the Americas continue to experience an increasing number of migrants and persons in need of international protection, which comprise mixed movements, driven by persistent and intensifying structural causes including socioeconomic factors, the different manifestations of violence and insecurity, and the impacts of climate change and disasters, among others.

Emphasizing the multi-faceted causal nature of mixed and onward movements in the region, with particularities and responses specific to each country.

Recalling that States and host communities have demonstrated remarkable solidarity with people on mixed movements, achieving significant strides in finding durable solutions, but the scale and complexity of these movements demands a more coordinated, holistic and effective response that addresses the root causes of displacement, while also providing concrete solutions for those in all stages of their migratory journey in countries of origin, transit, destination and return.

Recognizing our shared responsibility to strengthen host communities and support the integration of refugees into their host communities.

Taking into account that it is essential to take concrete steps to ensure respect, protection, and promotion of the human rights of all persons, including refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons, returnees in need of protection and stateless persons, regardless of their immigration status.

Expressing particular concern about the protection risks associated with embarking on perilous onward journeys in Central America and Mexico, where so many are exposed to violations of their physical and psychological integrity and *recognizing* that access to fair and efficient asylum procedures, other legal stay arrangements and socio-economic inclusion, play an essential role in providing protection and solutions.

Recalling also the commitments adopted in previous declarations adopted in the framework of the MIRPS in Mexico City; San Salvador; Antigua, Guatemala; Tegucigalpa; and Panama City; and in the Omnibus Resolution adopted during the 54th Regular Session of the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS) on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights.¹

Highlighting the importance of strengthening coordination and synergies between MIRPS and other regional mechanisms and processes in the Americas, namely the Cartagena+40 Process, the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM), the OAS Committee on Migration Issues (CAM), the Quito Process and the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection, among others, and recognizing the activities implemented between the MIRPS and these other mechanisms in 2024, which have reinforced a coordinated regional response.

Commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees and highlighting and acknowledging the inclusive and constructive dialogue of the Cartagena+40 Process, led by Chile which allowed States across the Americas to renew, update, and adapt their commitments to address new challenges in displacement, strengthening protection systems, and pursuing durable solutions for displaced persons, through the inclusion of necessary actions and goals in the Chile Plan of Action (2024-2034) as part of the regional implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees.

Taking note of the launch of the Global Alliance to End Statelessness² and UNHCR's call for States to join this global initiative.

Commending the leadership of the States within the MIRPS Regional Technical Teams, and recognizing the significant progress made by their members in enhancing their own capacities through the identification of needs, the development of tools for measuring results, and the implementation of effective communication mechanisms for MIRPS actions.

Welcoming the new members of the local governments of Belize, Guatemala, and Honduras to the Regional Technical Team on Local Governance.

Reaffirming the need to continue expanding strategic and collaborative partnerships by implementing the whole-of-society approach, in the spirit of the Global Compact on Refugees, for protection and the search for durable solutions, including actions by MIRPS Member States, members of the MIRPS Support Platform, local governments, civil society, the private sector, academia, international and regional organizations, development actors, the United Nations system, and other relevant actors.

Welcoming the launch of the MIRPS Dialogue Mechanism with Academia, held in the framework of the V Edition of the Inter-American Course on Migration and Protection, which has opened new avenues for engagement with academic institutions to improve the response to displacement in Central America and Mexico.

¹ AG/RES. 3028 (LIV-O/24) PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS paragraph xxiii. Protection of Asylum Seekers and Refugees in the Americas.

² Costa Rica is a member of the Global Alliance to End Statelessness.

WE AGREE TO:

1. Continue strengthening pragmatic government-led responses to displacement and mixed movements, including through engagement in regional intergovernmental processes and frameworks like the MIRPS, as a comprehensive regional mechanism for effective, coordinated and protection-centered responses for refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons, returnees with protection needs and stateless persons.
2. Advance in the implementation of the MIRPS National Action Plans and commitments in each MIRPS State through the leadership of the National Technical Teams, with the support of the Technical Secretariat, according to each national context.
3. Encourage the continuity of the MIRPS Regional Technical Teams on 1) Reception, Admission and Case Processing; 2) Internal Displacement; 3) Local Governance; and 4) Jobs and Livelihoods. The MIRPS Regional Technical Teams will promote further cooperation, share innovative practices, strengthen asylum capacity and enhance durable solutions for forcibly displaced and stateless persons in the subregion.
4. Recognize the work of other existing regional intergovernmental mechanisms or processes, such as the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection, the Cartagena+40 Process, the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM), the OAS Committee on Migration Issues (CAM), and the Quito Process, as appropriate, while strengthening coordination to avoid duplication, maximize investments and continuing to promote dialogue and cooperation among States of origin, transit, and destination to comprehensively promote protection and solutions through the sharing of information, experiences, and best practices, and the adoption of joint initiatives, whenever feasible.
5. Continue strengthening the capacity of national institutions responsible for refugee status determination procedures promoting targeted investments in differentiated case processing modalities, digitalization and exchange of country of origin information and increasing financial resources, in accordance with the capacity of each country and with the support of the MIRPS Support Platform and international cooperation, and in coordination with the Investing in Asylum Action Package established within the framework of the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection.
6. Coordinate efforts and articulate concrete actions around common objectives between the MIRPS regional priorities and the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM) annual work plans, as appropriate and in the spirit of ensuring complementarity on the application of the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact on Migration in the Americas, to address the needs of refugees and migrants in mixed and onwards movements, within the framework of each forum's specialization.
7. Coordinate efforts with the Quito Process, as appropriate, to strengthen asylum and international protection capacities among member States, ensuring fair, efficient, and adaptable asylum procedures in contexts of large-scale mixed and onwards movements.
8. Highlight the inaugural joint technical meeting with the National Commissions for Refugees (CONAREs) and their equivalents in the Americas, co-convened by the Quito Process and the MIRPS Pro Tempore Presidencies, held in October 2024 in Panama, as a positive effort that should be replicated annually moving forward, with the support of UNHCR and the OAS.

9. Strengthen, in alignment with the actions of the Regional Technical Team on Internal Displacement,³ cooperation and the exchange of best practices in regulations, institutional policies and national coordination mechanisms for the protection and the search for comprehensive and sustainable solutions to the situation of internally displaced persons or those at risk of displacement and, in particular, the efforts addressing internal displacement resulting from the adverse impacts of natural disasters and climate change.
10. Advance efforts to strengthen employment opportunities and livelihoods for displaced populations, including the implementation of strategies to support the recognition of skills and qualifications, and market-based strategies for their access to employment opportunities in alignment with the actions of the Regional Technical Team on Jobs and Livelihoods, in accordance with the capacity of each country with the support of the MIRPS Support Platform and the international cooperation.
11. Advance efforts to deepening cooperation with International Financial Institutions (IFIs) to support the fostering of inclusive and sustainable development, by enhancing investments in local infrastructure, education, healthcare, and other social services and by ensuring access to skills training, job creation, and micro-financing in order to assist host communities to serve the needs of both nationals and refugees and to empower individuals, build resilience, and promote social cohesion.
12. Continue expanding partnerships with municipalities and local governments by strengthening their capacities to establish inclusive communities, highlighting the critical role of local responses in socio-economic integration and combating gender-based violence against displaced persons within their communities, and promoting collaborative, sustainable and comprehensive approaches to respond to the challenges posed by the displacement of people in need of international protection in host countries and communities.
13. Reaffirm the commitment of MIRPS Member States to preventing and eradicating statelessness, and to adopt or adapt domestic regulatory frameworks, as necessary, to establish fair and efficient procedures for its determination and facilitating the protection and naturalization of stateless persons in accordance with national and international laws, while also amending provisions or practices that make arbitrary distinctions based on gender, legal, marital, or immigration status, to ensure the transfer of nationality to children at birth.
14. Highlight the social impact and the achievements of national entities implementing the projects financed by the MIRPS Fund created within the framework of the OAS and to encourage the OAS Member States to step up make voluntary contributions to this Fund, to support the MIRPS Member States in fulfilling their commitments, and to continue strengthening this regional mechanism.
15. Emphasize the vital contributions of civil society in the region whose on-the-ground presence enables them to deliver essential services and advocate for refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons returnees with protection needs, and stateless persons, ensuring they receive the necessary resources and protection.

³ The members of the MIRPS Regional Technical Team on Internal Displacement are El Salvador, Honduras, and Mexico.

16. Emphasize the growing importance of the private sector in supporting regional efforts to address the needs of displaced populations and stateless persons by promoting economic inclusion and providing sustainable livelihoods opportunities through employment, skills training, and access to financial services, which are essential for the successful integration of displaced persons.
17. Acknowledge the key role of academia in advancing the protection and search for solutions for displaced populations and stateless persons by producing research and data that inform public policies across the region, fostering evidence-based responses and policy development.
18. Recognize the technical support of the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (OAS), through its Department of Social Inclusion, as Technical Secretariat of the MIRPS, under the leadership of the Pro-Tempore Presidency of Belize, for their continuous efforts to maintain a regional space for dialogue and solid regional cooperation.
19. Thank the MIRPS Support Platform for its continued efforts to mobilize financial and technical assistance to MIRPS Member States, and in particular, the Government of the United States of America for their leadership as the Third Chair of the Support Platform, and welcome the Government of Colombia as the new Chair.
20. Recognize the distinguished management and leadership exercised by the Sixth Pro-Tempore Presidency of the MIRPS held by the Government of Belize and welcome the Government of Costa Rica as the new Pro-Tempore Presidency.