

Defining regional priorities and sharing best practices – an innovative approach to migration governance in Central America, North America, and the Caribbean

Side-Event at the International Migration Review Forum

May 19, 2022

2:30– 4 PM New York time / 12:30 – 2 PM San Salvador time
(Virtual format)

Summary

This side event is a unique opportunity to show how Member Countries of the [Regional Conference on Migration \(RCM\)](#), one of the oldest and most active regional consultative processes (RCPs) in the world, use the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) to identify regional priorities and work towards a comprehensive regional approach to migration governance in Central America, North America, and the Caribbean.

The side event will also feature the presentation of regional best practices on issues such as labour migration, women migrants, the best interest of the child, migrant smuggling, and migrant' protection, among others, - all of which reflect the consolidated experience of the RCM on key migration issues and its willingness to share important lessons with other RCPs.

Complementing the RCM's formal written submission to the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF), this side event will demonstrate effective practices of regional cooperation on migration governance and engagement by RCPs with the GCM.

Background

Migration and human mobility are defining features in Central America, North America, and the Caribbean. It is well recognized that they take place in a context marked by historical, political, economic, and social ties and are driven by multiple and often overlapping factors such as poverty, inequality, slow economic growth, lack of decent jobs, labour market needs, political instability, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, natural disasters, environmental degradation, climate change, violence, human rights violations, insecurity, and family ties.

The RCM is a non-binding regional consultative process on migration to address migration in the region in a practical and comprehensive manner from a technical-political level. Created in 1996, the RCM is the second oldest regional consultative process (RCP) in the world.

The RCM is a multilateral mechanism for exchange of information and best practices as well as regional dialogue and cooperation on policies and actions relating to migration that are implemented in the eleven Member Countries: Belize, Canada, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, and the United States.

The RCM has also five observer States (Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, Jamaica and Peru) and 13 observer intergovernmental organizations (the Central American Integration System (SICA), the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB), the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights (IACHR), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Office of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)). The RCM also includes civil society represented by the Regional Network for Civil Organizations on Migration (RNCOM).

The RCM focuses on two main objectives:

- Create a forum for open discussion of regional migration issues and the exchange of information and experiences to achieve greater coordination and cooperation in the region.
- Unite to protect the human rights of migrants and create a coherent and adequate network of migration laws, in addition to strengthen the links between migration and development.

Regional consultative processes on migration (RCP) and other inter-State consultation mechanisms on migration (ISCM) are invited in the Resolutions A/RES/73/195 on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) and A/RES/73/326 on the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) to review the GCM implementation at the regional level and contribute to the work of the IMRF by providing relevant data, evidence, best practices, innovative approaches and recommendations and participating in the round tables. As central actors in regional migration governance, RCPs were among entities contributing to the process leading to the development of the GCM.

The RCM recognizes that the GCM presents a framework for comprehensive international cooperation on migrants and human mobility that deals with international migration in all its dimensions, based on ten principles and 23 objectives.

The RCM was one of the first RCPs that contributed to the development of the GCM and formulated a position on it during its 22nd Vice-Ministerial Meeting in 2017. Since then the RCM has regularly discussed the GCM at its meetings and in its work. The RCM also submitted a formal input to the GCM regional review in Latin America and the Caribbean held in 2021 as well as the 2022 IMRF.

Justification

Considering that most international migration takes place within regions and that no country or actor can respond to the challenges and opportunities of migration alone, regional consultative processes, such as the RCM, play a fundamental role in strengthening regional migration governance.

The RCM's eleven Member Countries, several of whom have joined the champion country initiative¹, recognize that the GCM represents a historic step to address the risks and challenges of regional irregular migration by promoting regular migration pathways. The RCM's actions are based on shared responsibility, the obligation to respect, protect and recognize the human rights of migrants, regardless of their migration status, and the need to strengthen international cooperation to optimize the benefits of migration, contribute to the improvement of the lives of migrants, their families, and communities in the countries of origin, transit, destination, and return, and ensure migration contributes to sustainable development.

The RCM adopted an Extraordinary Declaration at the Second RCM Preparatory Workshop for the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF), held from 31 March to 1 April 2022 in Mexico City, with the support of IOM, the co-chair of the regional UN Network on Migration, and other UN agencies². The [Extraordinary Declaration](#) includes regional thematic priorities and cross-cutting areas identified by the Member Countries as the main elements for the RCM's Regional Action Plan for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration.

Objectives

- Share effective practices of how the GCM with the support of the regional UN Network on Migration in identifying regional migration priorities for a comprehensive regional approach to migration governance in Central America, North America, and the Caribbean.
- Share best practices developed and implemented by the RCM on topics relating to key migration governance issues.
- Exchange important lessons on the GCM implementation and review with other governments, regional consultative processes, and stakeholders.
- Provide a concrete and tangible contribution to the IMRF.

Description of the Side-event

The format will be online, with the participation of senior representatives from the RCM Member Countries (organizers), observer countries, observer organizations including UN agencies, the Regional Network of Civil Organizations for Migration (RNCOM) and other RCM Observer Organizations, the South American Conference on Migration (SACM), and other RCPs and ISCMs.

After the presentations, there will be a space for dialogue.

Simultaneous interpretation Spanish - English will be provided.

[Register here.](#)

¹ Canada, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico and Panama.

² ECLAC, ILO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, and UNODC.

Suggested Agenda

May 19, 2022 2:30– 4 PM New York time / 12:30 – 2 PM San Salvador time (Virtual format)	
10 minutes	<p>Opening Remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cindy Mariella Portal, Vice-Minister of Diaspora and Human Mobility of El Salvador, RCM Presidency Pro-Témpore • Michele Klein Solomon, IOM Regional Director for Central America, North America, and the Caribbean <p>Moderator: Luis Alonso Serrano, RCM Executive Secretary</p>
25 minutes	<p>Presentation of the regional priorities identified by the RCM Member Countries regarding GCM implementation. (IOM)</p> <p>Presentation of regional practices on migration governance relevant for the GCM. (IOM and other UN agencies)</p>
40 minutes	<p>Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statements by Member Countries on progress and challenges
5 minutes	<p>Conclusions and way forward</p> <p>Moderator: TBD</p>
10 minutes	<p>Closing Remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michele Klein Solomon, IOM Regional Director for Central America, North America, and the Caribbean • Cindy Mariella Portal, Vice-Minister of Diaspora and Human Mobility of El Salvador, RCM Presidency Pro-Témpore <p>Moderator: Luis Alonso Serrano, RCM Executive Secretary</p>