

## TOWARDS NEW MODELS FOR WELCOMING VENEZUELAN IN LATIN AMERICA: REGULARIZATION AND PROTECTION MECHANISMS

### Side-Event at the International Migration Review Forum

#### *Background*

In 2022, nearly four years after the adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), governments, stakeholders and the United Nations system will meet to discuss the successes and challenges of implementing this landmark cooperative framework. The first International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) is being held under the auspices of the General Assembly, chaired by the President of the General Assembly, at the United Nations (UN) Headquarters in New York from 17-20 May 2022, with a preparatory stakeholder hearing taking place on 16 May.

A series of IMRF side-events will be organized in the margins of the IMRF. They will provide an opportunity to discuss good practices, challenges and recommendations to further the implementation of the GCM. Side-events will take place on 16-20 May 2022.

#### *Description of the Side-event*

The Venezuelan exodus is impacting Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) at a magnitude and speed never seen before. Since 2015, over 6 million people have left Venezuela, making it the second largest migration crisis in the world. Colombia has received the highest number of migrants and refugees, welcoming more than 1.8 million Venezuelans. Peru is the first destination for those who need international protection and the second country with the highest number of asylum requests, with over 1 million Venezuelans, followed by Ecuador and Chile. Since 2021, the migration of Venezuelan refugees and migrants to Central and North America has increased considerably. The U.S. Customs and Border protection (CBP) reported in January 2022 an increase by 76 times of Venezuelan citizens through the U.S.-Mexico border compared to January 2021.

The regularization of migration and the recognition of refugee status are central elements of the integration of refugees and migrants into their host countries. Having the necessary documentation is essential to have access to services and the formal job market and increase their contribution to the economics and societies of the countries receiving them. However, regularization and granting international protection remain a serious challenge. Some LAC countries have adapted their regulatory measures to implement temporary regularization programs and create special protection mechanisms, while others have imposed visa requirements to enter the country.

In July 2021, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Migration Office of Peru launched the humanitarian residence permit for asylum- seekers to resolve the backlog of asylum- seekers applications In March 2021, the Government of Colombia approved an innovative solution for

the crisis of Venezuelan migrants and refugees: the Temporary Statute of Protection. The Dominican Republic government also approved a resolution in January 2021 that allows access to a migratory status to Venezuelans under the Migration Normalization Plan. On the other hand, neighboring countries like Costa Rica and Mexico have Mexico's migratory policy towards Venezuelans recently shifted towards a more restrictive approach: since January 2021 Mexico imposed a visa requirement to Venezuelans, which makes it extremely difficult to legally migrate to and through Mexico.

From a multi- disciplinary perspective, this side event will discuss the experience with the implementation of these mechanisms, and the impact on the socioeconomic integration of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. It also aims to highlight the importance of regularization measures adopted in the region with a view to guaranteeing the human rights of migrants, promoting their social integration, combating xenophobia and discrimination, and complying with the objectives of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The first part of the event aims at showing the best practices on regularization programmes and highlighting challenges and expectations regarding migration regularization in Colombia, Peru and the Dominican Republic. The second part will provide information about the impact of humanitarian visas on migration flows in Latin America and the Caribbean.

### *Format*

The side event will be composed of one panel discussion and a round discussion table with high- level speakers from different migrant host countries in the Latin American and the Caribbean region. The event will be in Spanish and there will not be simultaneous translation available in English. It will take the form of an online event through the video conferencing platform Zoom. **Connection details will be provided after registration.** Please note that the meeting will be recorded.

Regarding the first part of the event (panel discussion), after the presentation of the different speakers, a fifteen-minute time slot will be provided to answer participants' questions. Each participant will be allowed to ask a maximum of two questions. As for the second part (round table discussion), we invite participants to submit their questions through the zoom platform chat. Then, selected participants will be invited by the moderator to ask their question to the panelists.

Register here : <https://forms.gle/4s44vNHSC7a6rE8QA>

### *Suggested agenda*

<p><b>May 19, 2022</b></p> <p><b>Time: 4:00 - 5:30 pm (New York) / 3:00 - 4:30 pm (Peru) / 10:00 pm - 11:30 am (Geneva)</b></p> <p><b>Venue: Virtual event (Zoom)</b></p>	
10 minutes	<p><b>Opening Remarks</b></p> <p>Betilde Muñoz, Director at Department of Social Inclusion at the Organization of American States (OAS)</p>
30 minutes	<p><b>Panel discussion</b></p> <p>Panel discussion with representatives of UNHCR, IOM, Border Manager of the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia will present to the audience good practices, challenges and expectations on migration regularization programmes in the receiving countries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Federico Agusti, UNHCR Representative of Peru</li> <li>● Lucas Gómez, Border Manager of the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia</li> <li>● Josué Gastelbondo, IOM Representative of Dominican Republic</li> </ul> <p>Moderator: Marta Castro, Research Coordinator at Equilibrium Centro para el Desarrollo Económico (Equilibrium CenDE)</p>
10 minutes	<p><b>Questions and Answers</b></p>
30 min	<p><b>Round table discussion</b></p> <p>Round table with thematic experts will be discussing the impact of visa requirements and the future of the refugee system in the region.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Luisa Feline Freier, Associate Professor at Universidad del Pacífico, Lima, Perú</li> <li>● Luciana Gandini, Senior Researcher at the Institute of Legal Studies at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México; Research Fellow at Center for Latin American and Latino Studies, American University, Washington, United States</li> <li>● Laura Dib, Director of Migrants Legal Clinic at Universidad de Los Andes, Bogotá, Colombia</li> </ul> <p>Moderator: TBC</p>
10 minutes	<p><b>Closing Remarks</b></p> <p>Iris Jave, Researcher for the Institute for Democracy and Human Rights at Pontificia Universidad Católica of Peru</p>