

ACCESS TO HEALTH FOR THE MIGRANT POPULATION: VACCINATION AGAINST COVID-19

Side-Event at the International Migration Review Forum
Wednesday, May 18, 2022
18h00 to 19h30 (New York Time)

Format: Online via Zoom

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 within the first International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) chaired by the President of the General Assembly, at the United Nations (UN) Headquarters in New York from 17-20 May 2022; with a series of IMRF side-events which are being organized in the margins of the IMRF.

During the past two decades, the National Government of Ecuador has advanced in the promotion of and recognition of free and Universal Access to Health and Universal Health Coverage for all. This recognition has been established in the Constitutional and regulatory framework, as well as in the public health policy, mandating as a state responsibility to guarantee access to health for every person in the Ecuadorian territory, regardless of nationality, sex, gender, ethnic, migratory status, etc.

These progressive actions and frameworks are in alignment with Objective 15 of the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM) which promotes access to basic services for migrants. Abiding by adopting measures to ensure that health services delivery does not discriminate against people in human mobility. In addition, the health centers enabled for the basic services such as the vaccination national plan, were accessible and available on a local level with a people on the move inclusive approach. Lastly, the actions that incorporate the health needs of migrants and refugees into local and national policies have been implemented, throughout the strengthening of capacities for public health officers, equipment for health centers, non-discriminatory access of health provision, to promote the health and well-being of people on the move as well as host communities.

Following the response to the COVID-19 pandemics, the Ministry of Public Health led and deployed the so called "PLAN 9/100" Vaccination Plan against COVID-19 which, in a joint effort with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and international cooperation stakeholders, successfully implemented several actions and strategies from communication and information campaigns to the adaptation of regulatory and information management processes, and key capacity building interventions, in order to promote and assure the inclusion of people on the move within the aforementioned immunization plan.

The vaccination plan for people on the move in Ecuador was applied mainly in the border areas through which these people enter or leave the country, without being restricted only to these areas, under the guidelines established by the MPH, the which were communicated to national and international entities and organizations that watch over the interests of this group of people. In this sense, the actions implemented by the Ministry of Health at border points, are also in accordance with Objective 11 of the GCM, in commitment with managing borders in an integrated, secure, and coordinate manner.

The National Immunization Strategy, in charge of tactical and operational planning of the National Vaccination Plan against COVID-19 "Plan 9/100" generated guidelines to avoid gaps in vaccination against COVID-19 due to lack of identification of people; the population in a condition of human mobility that does not have any

identification documents, will be registered by creating a 17 digit code and access vaccination services, such as the services provided by the national government through the MPH.

In this regard, the coordination of integrated efforts, resulted in a total of 1,842,268 doses applied to migrants. 744.562 foreigners received a complete vaccination schedule (with single-dose and two-dose vaccines), and 172.196 people received a booster.

In the other hand, the Ministry of Public Health has developed important public policies to guarantee the right to health of people residing in Ecuadorian territory, including the migrant population. In order to comply with these policies, joint actions have been implemented with international cooperation.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, these actions have made it possible to carry out research processes, supply sexual and reproductive health devices, medicines and supplies in health facilities; in addition, the capacities of health professionals have been strengthened. Also, educational and communication materials have been developed.

All this considered, the present event seeks to share Ecuador's experience in relation to the success of the immunization campaign against COVID-19, which has an inclusive approach based on universal access to health, and which will be presented from the perspectives of: the academia, the international cooperation and the lessons learned of the National Government within the implementation of this strategy, which is already part of the regular framework and public health policy of the country.

GENERAL OBJECTIVE:

The event aims to discuss the different regional experiences of the several vaccination strategies where the approach of people on the move and migrant people where or where not included, towards the fostering of future experiences sharing between governments, international cooperation, and academia. This analysis will be based on the alignment of Objective 15 of the GCM on promoting access to basic services for migrant population.

OUTCOMES:

- Raise the awareness of the importance of regional and bilateral articulation on vaccination schemes.
- Further discuss follow up regional vaccination and immunization agenda in the context of the Venezuelan migration flows and COVID-19 such as:
 - Promotion of activities and interventions to advance in the inclusion of people on the move with the public health policies implementation (health surveillance and immunization scheme included)
 - Harmonization of vaccination schemes or validation of the different immunization schemes applied in each country.
 - Multilateral preparedness and response articulated processes within health surveillance and Latin-American region country capacities under the Points of Entry module of examination of the International Health Regulations (IHR).
- Establish a regional discussion space which collects and retake previous initiatives on human mobility and health surveillance.

PROPOSED SPEAKERS:

MoPH Ecuador - Dr. José Ruales Estupiñan, Vice Minister of Health Governance and Surveillance

José Leonardo Ruales Estupiñan, is a Doctor in Medicine and Surgery and Master in Public Health. He has a Diploma in Health Economics, Health Services Management and Health Diplomacy. Degrees obtained in recognized universities by such as Universidad Central del Ecuador, University of Paris, Andalusian School of Public Health, Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva.

With more than 35 years of experience in Public Health, Dr. Ruales has worked with Ministries of Health in most countries in Latin American and Caribbean region in the development and organization of health systems, health system and health care network reforms, development of public health policies with a focus on equity and primary health care, health promotion and social determinants of health.

For more than 20 years, he has been a consultant and representative of PAHO / WHO and consultant of the World Bank in Latin America and Washington DC.

Doctor José Ruales has held senior positions in the Ministry of Health, the Ecuadorian Institute of Social Security, the Health Secretariat of the Municipality of Quito and the National Service for Risk Management and Emergencies of Ecuador. In addition, he chaired Ecuador's Intersectoral Committee for Tobacco Control, and currently serves as Deputy Minister of Health Governance and Surveillance in the Ministry of Public Health of Ecuador.

Dr. Ruales is a university professor and former director of the Master's Program in Public Health at UCE. Also, is visiting professor at universities in several countries. He promotes policies on health systems development, organization and reform of health systems, construction of integrated health services networks, social protection in health and health insurance.

IOM - Aleksander Arnikov, Regional Migration Health Specialist for the Americas Region.

M.D. Aleksander Arnikov is a public health specialist with over 20 years of experience in international cooperation and government stakeholder related to health, with a strong background in migration and health, monitoring and evaluation, health systems strengthening, data management, education, and research

Dr. Arnikov has a proven track record of success in developing/implementing multimillion-dollar public health programs and is consistently engaged in program management, program implementation and community outreach. Following specific experience within several regions of the world with key vulnerable populations such as migrants and people living with HIV, Dr. Arnikov is adept at leading public health initiatives serving diverse communities.

From 2014 onwards, Dr. Arnikov is part of the IOM, currently serving as the Regional Migration Health Specialist for the Americas, with base in San José, Costa Rica.

Academia - Cheryl Martens, Director of the Institute for Advanced Studies on Inequalities (IEAD) of the Universidad San Francisco de Quito (USFQ)

Cheryl Martens is the Director of the Institute for Advanced Studies on Inequalities (IEAD), Social Sciences Coordinator and research professor in Sociology within the College of Social Sciences and the Humanities, Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Ecuador.

She has a PhD in Sociology from the University of Manchester and has worked as a consultant and researcher on migration and health, including an IOM-MSP study on access to sexual and reproductive health and protection services, with a focus on migrant women and teens (IOM, 2022), Human Mobility and temporary housing and shelter in Ecuador (Care, 2021).

Professor Martens has taught a wide range of courses in the Social Sciences at Universities in the UK, Japan, Canada, Argentina and Ecuador. She has also developed and overseen research policies and doctoral research training within several research institutions.

Description of the Side-event

Format: Online via Zoom *Interpretation will be provided in English and Spanish.

Suggested agenda: (see below next page)

Register [here!](#)

Suggested agenda

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| <p>Wednesday, May 18, 2022 18h00 to 19h30 (New York Time) Online via Zoom</p> | |
| 10 minutes | <p>Opening Remarks, presentation of event and speakers Moderator: Med. Francisco Vallejo Undersecretary of Health Promotion and Inclusion</p> |
| <p>Panel expositions <i>60 minutes</i> Panelists presentations with representatives of Government (Ecuador MoPH); International Cooperation (IOM); and academia (USFQ)</p> | |
| 20 minutes | <p>An Overview of the COVID-19 Regional Response for Migrants Aleksander Arnikov Regional Migration Health Specialist for the Americas Region, Migration and Health Division, International Organization for Migration.</p> |
| 20 minutes | <p>Covid-19 vaccine take-up among migrant and refugee populations: service delivery and barriers to access in Ecuador Cheryl Martens Director of the Institute for Advanced Studies on Inequalities (IEAD) of the Universidad San Francisco de Quito (USFQ)</p> |
| 20 minutes | <p>Ecuador National Vaccination Plan: A positive experience for the inclusion of people on the move. Dr. José Ruales Estupiñán, Vice Minister of Health Governance and Surveillance, Ministry of Public Health of Ecuador</p> |
| 15 minutes | <p>Discussion / Q&A Moderator: Med. Francisco Vallejo Undersecretary of Health Promotion and Inclusion Space determined to read and respond to questions posted via Q&A chat and foster the the discussion of the following generating ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise the awareness of the importance of regional and bilateral articulation on vaccination schemes. • Further discuss follow up regional vaccination and immunization agenda in the context of the Venezuelan migration flows and COVID-19 such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Promotion of activities and interventions to advance in the inclusion of people on the move with the public health policies implementation (health surveillance and immunization scheme included) ○ Harmonization of vaccination schemes or validation of the different immunization schemes applied in each country. ○ Multilateral preparedness and response articulated processes within health surveillance and Latin-American region country capacities under the Points of Entry module of examination of the International Health Regulations (IHR). • Establish a regional discussion space which collects and retake previous initiatives on human mobility and health surveillance. |
| 5 minutes | <p>Closing Remarks Moderator: Med. Francisco Vallejo, Undersecretary of Health Promotion and Inclusion</p> |