

The carrying out of numerous activities, including: Seminars/Workshops held to enhance understanding on a number of migration topics such as: Security Control of Travel Documents (including training) (annually); Migrant Women and Children (2000), Modernization of Migration Management and Cross-border Cooperation (2002), Regional Development and the Productive Potential of Remittances (2002), Migration Management and Inter-state Cooperation (2002), Development of a Regional Work Plan to Combat Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons (2003); the Workshop on the Dignified, Safe and Orderly Return of Regional and Extra-Regional Migrants (2003); the Seminar on Migration and Health (2004) and the Workshop on the Palermo Convention and its Protocols (2004), Training for Trainers on Border Control (2005), Seminar on Integration of Migrants in Receiving Countries (2005), Workshop on Travel Documents and Issuance Systems (2005), Forum-Workshop on the Private Sector and Migration (2006), Technical Meeting to Consider the Possibility of Developing a Regional Protocol for the Repatriation of Victims of Trafficking and other Vulnerable Populations in the Countries of the Region (2006), Training on Migration Control (2006), Seminar on Migration Legislation (2007), Seminar "Women and Migration in the RCM Region" (2007), the Workshop on Best Practices in the Prosecution of Migrant Smugglers and Human Traffickers (2008), the Workshop to Strengthen Regional Cooperation for the Reinsertion of Victims of Trafficking (2008), Workshop on Mixed Migratory Flows: Challenges in Providing International Protection and Finding Durable Solutions for Refugees (2008), Seminar for the Development of Regional Guidelines for the Attention of Unaccompanied Migrant Girls, Boys and Adolescents (2008), Training on Migration Control (2009), Workshop on Temporary Migrant Workers Programs (2009) and a Workshop for the drafting of Guidelines for the Assistance of Unaccompanied Migrant Children (2009).

◆ Establishment of Liaison Officer Networks on Consular Protection and to Combat Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons.

◆ Development of an ambitious Statistical Information System on Migration for Central America and Mexico (SIEMCA/SIEMMES)

◆ Joint exercises that enhance enforcement against the smuggling and trafficking of persons, and improve the availability of information about the use of fraudulent documents.

◆ Endorsement of guidelines for the return of regional migrants by land and for the implementation of the program on multilateral cooperation for the assisted return of extra-regional migrants stranded in member countries of the RCM.

◆ Sponsorship of studies and papers covering a wide range of subjects

◆ Self-sustaining projects

#### Tenets

◆ To create a forum for frank and honest discussion on regional migration issues, leading to greater regional coordination and cooperation.

◆ Undertake regional efforts to protect the human rights of migrants and strengthen the integrity of each member state's immigration laws, borders, and national security, as well as to strengthen the links between migration and development.

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## The Regional Conference on Migration (RCM) or Puebla Process

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2010

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## The Regional Conference on Migration

### Background

The Regional Conference on Migration (RCM) is an inter-governmental regional migration forum in which countries with contrasting migration realities discuss migration issues of regional interest. Its primary objectives are the exchange of information, experiences and best practices, and overall consultation to promote regional cooperation on migration.

The RCM is one of the concrete results of the Tuxtla II Presidential Summit in February 1996, which accorded special significance to aspects of migration within the framework of economic and social development for the region.

The first meeting of the RCM took place in Puebla, Mexico, in March 1996. The purpose was to discuss in a constructive manner one of the most sensitive and complex social phenomena facing member states.

### Members and Observers

Member countries of the RCM are Belize, Canada, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, and the United States.

The RCM has granted observer status to several countries and organizations. The observer countries are Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, Jamaica and Peru.

Observer international and regional organizations are:

- ◆ Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR)
- ◆ International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- ◆ United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean/Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (ECLAC/CELADE)
- ◆ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- ◆ UN Special Rapporteur for the Human Rights of Migrants

- ◆ Central American Integration System (SICA)
- ◆ United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- ◆ Ibero-American Secretariat General for the Ibero-American Summit (SEGIB)

### The Process

The decision-making body of the RCM is the annual meeting of Vice-Ministers (Foreign Affairs and Interior), who carry out their deliberations with full respect for the sovereignty of each member country. The decisions of Vice-Ministers are adopted, after plenary meetings, in a closed-door setting to facilitate informal and frank discussion. While non-binding, the Vice Ministers' decisions provide a framework for cooperation.

The RCM fundamental tenets are the protection and respect for the human rights of migrants; the promotion of orderly and secure migration; and the dialogue and technical cooperation among countries.

In 2001, Vice-Ministers decided to create a Technical Secretariat to assist the Presidency Pro-Tempore in managing the process, including the coordination of meetings and exchange of information. The Technical Secretariat is funded by member countries' contributions and is housed at the Regional Office of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in San José, Costa Rica.

An important element of the RCM is the active participation of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) within the RCM meetings. The CSOs are also invited to participate in the RCM's seminars, workshops and other activities, when appropriate.

The Presidency Pro-Tempore is determined by consensus and rotates annually among member states. The President Pro-Tempore is responsible for the organization of meetings and overall chairmanship of the process during this timeframe.

The Regional Consultation Group on Migration (RCGM), the technical and operational body of the RCM, makes recommendations to the Vice-Ministers, as well as implements and monitors the actions decided by the Vice-Ministers.

The RCM has at its disposal two Internet sites: one public ([www.rcmvs.org](http://www.rcmvs.org)) which serves as its portal by disseminating public conference documents, and a private site ([intranet.rcmvs.org](http://intranet.rcmvs.org)) which serves as the repository of the RCM's internal documents for the coordination of its activities.

### Plan of Action

The Plan of Action is the key document of the RCM which summarizes the commitments for regional action and the basic framework for guiding and coordinating activities. The Plan of Action has been developed along three themes: Migration Policy and Management; Human Rights; and Migration and Development.

### RCM Highlights

Results of the RCM include:

- ◆ Recognition as a forum for effective inter-governmental consultation to better address migration issues from a regional perspective.
- ◆ Promotion of interpersonal relationships among key migration officials which facilitate cordial and frank dialogue in an environment that minimizes hierarchical barriers.
- ◆ Establishment of contacts among senior government officials in member countries
- ◆ Ongoing constructive regional dialogue with Civil Society Organizations.
- ◆ The creation of an environment fostering bilateral contacts between government officials, international organizations and civil society organizations during conference proceedings, as well as throughout the year.
- ◆ High-level discussion of migration issues that benefits from the sharing of member countries' views, including on consular protection and counter trafficking and smuggling practices.
- ◆ Facilitation of joint operational and training activities addressing the goal of more orderly, humane and secure migration.
- ◆ Facilitation of technical cooperation.
- ◆ Having served as the main regional migration forum for discussing implications for migration in the region following the devastation caused by Hurricane Mitch and the terrorist attacks perpetrated on September 11, 2001.