**Remarks of Mr Robert G. Paiva**

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**Regional Conference on Migration**

**Regional Workshop on Policies, Practices and Conclusions for the Return, Reintegration and Integration of Migrants**

**San José, Costa Rica, September 17-18, 2013**

**Distinguished representatives of the head table:**

**Ladies and Gentlemen:**

On behalf of the International Organization for Migration, it is an honour to attend this workshop held within the framework of the Regional Conference on Migration, and it is a pleasure to have contributed to the implementation of the workshop.

I am pleased to confirm that the agenda for this workshop includes the topic of exchanging best practices. The operative experience is a basic starting point for the establishment of guiding principles that orient regional and national actions in regard to return, reintegration and integration, which is the central theme of this event.

Throughout 62 years of work, IOM has been able to collect important lessons learned and best practices on this matter at a global level, including this region. Allow me to mention – based on our perspective – six elements for reflection that can contribute significantly to the discussions that are about to be initiated in this workshop.

**First.** Migration is a process, and the return, reintegration and integration of migrants are only some of the elements of this process and not necessarily its culmination or conclusion. Thus, managing migration flows involves addressing the needs relating to reintegration, return and integration of migrants.

**Second.** Return, reintegration and integration – as elements of the cycle of migration – should be discussed and addressed based on the same premises that explain the phenomenon of migration itself: that is, with a comprehensive approach that recognizes and addresses all its dimensions and repercussions. Therefore, an only recipe does not exist which applies to every country or community or every migrant. Ultimately, each best practice relating to this matter needs to be thoroughly adjusted to each specific context before being implemented in a specific country or for a specific group of migrants.

**Third.** While discussions about return migration are relatively recent, an agreed conclusion exists: sustainable return processes are of interest to and benefit returned persons as well as their communities and countries. The sustainability of return processes is achieved through appropriate reintegration, including the incorporation of the returned migrants into the labour market, and family, social and cultural reintegration that promotes the resettlement of migrants. Furthermore, the countries receiving returned migrants may benefit from the new skills acquired by migrants while abroad, which promote higher productivity levels.

**Fourth.** Relevant evidence suggests that assisted return processes are more likely to be sustainable than forced return, since counselling and logistical support enable each person to better prepare for the return and reintegration. In the case of Central America, voluntary return prevents the stigma and discrimination associated to youth criminal networks and therefore, facilitates social reintegration.

**Fifth.** Addressing the challenges posed by migration management is a shared responsibility between countries of countries of origin, transit, return and destination. In migration management, in order to achieve sustainable return processes coordination needs to be further increased, clearly defining roles and responsibilities of the sending country – prior to departure – and the receiving country – after arrival.

**Sixth.** Comprehensive integration and reintegration policies, given their broad scope, should be perceived as policies to be implemented by various sectors within the State and therefore, require inter-institutional coordination. In its most fundamental aspects, integration and reintegration policies are human rights policies – including access to essential public services – and, therefore, involve the housing, health and education sectors at a government level as well as the media, civil society and the private sector.

In designing and implementing return, integration and reintegration policies, significant reflection and coordination are required. In this regard, IOM welcomes the on-going efforts of governments in the region to advance policies on this matter and joins the effort of the Costa Rican Government in its initiative to organize this workshop. I am sure that the experiences that will be shared during the workshop will enable collecting a set of lessons learned and best practices that can lead to the development of guiding principles for the implementation of relevant actions at a regional and national level.

Thank you.