

## High Level Round Table

### “Call to Action: Protection Needs in the Northern Triangle of Central America”

## San Jose Action Statement

We, the Governments of Belize, Canada, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama and the United States of America, with the participation of Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay, and supported by other interested countries, together with national human rights ombudspersons, agencies of the United Nations system, other regional and international organizations, civil society organizations and the academia, as well as with the collaboration and the technical support of the Organization of the American States (OAS) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the support of the Central American Integration System (SICA), under the auspices of the Government of Costa Rica, met to discuss the growing phenomenon of mixed migratory movements, including forced displacement of those fleeing violence and exploitation by organized criminal groups, in the Northern Triangle of Central America;

**Note** that migration and displacement in the Northern Triangle of Central America is multifaceted and has multiple causes, including violence, insecurity as well socioeconomic factors, which compel people to move;

**Recognize** that violence, poverty, and lack of opportunities can result in putting girls, boys and adolescents at risk of being exploited by gangs and criminal organizations, and that there is an urgent need to strengthen national and international institutions for the defence of human rights and social welfare and mechanisms that can offer alternatives and responses to these groups;

**Acknowledge** the protection risks faced by certain individuals, particularly by women, girls, boys and adolescents, monoparental families, human rights defendants, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or intersex (LGBTI) individuals, members of indigenous and afro descendant communities, persons with disabilities and survivors of any form of sexual and gender-based violence;

**Acknowledge** the need for comprehensive actions to enhance protection and respond to the most urgent needs of asylum seekers, refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), migrants and returnees with protection needs as well as other affected populations in the Northern Triangle of Central America;

**Stress** the need for multi-sectorial responses to address protection needs in conformity with applicable international and regional human rights law, as well as on comprehensive responses, based on responsibility sharing arrangements, require distinct but complementary actions at national level in States in the Northern Triangle of Central America, and in States of transit, destination and asylum, and that such actions need to be reinforced by cooperation at regional and international levels with the support of relevant states, the UN system and the OAS, as well as civil society organizations;

**Acknowledge** as countries of destination that we are confronted with a growing number of asylum seekers and refugees and *recognize* the need for asylum systems to identify and respond to those in

need of international protection within the broader migration context, taking into account the flexibility required in response to large-scale migration influxes;

**Reaffirm** the validity of the principles and standards of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, the applicable regional refugee instruments, as appropriate, and in particular the principle of *non-refoulement*;

**Recognize** the importance of implementing fair and efficient asylum procedures, that take into account the particular needs of persons at risk, including unaccompanied and separated girls, boys and adolescents, monoparental families, survivors of sexual and gender based violence, and LGBTI individuals;

**Recall** the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sendai Framework for Disasters Risk Reduction 2015-2030, as well as the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and emphasize their importance for designing responses that are comprehensive, aim to find solutions, and lay the foundation for sustainable development.

**Recall** the importance of socioeconomic development, improving public safety, enhancing access to the justice system, and strengthening institutions under the Plan of Alliance for Prosperity;

**Recognize** national interests in migration and border management that includes the importance of striking an appropriate balance between States' security and respect for human rights, applicable protection for IDPs and refugees, the right to seek and enjoy asylum, and measures to combat human trafficking and smuggling of migrants ;

**Stress** the importance of complementary legal pathways to admission, within the framework of domestic policies and programmes, such as resettlement, humanitarian visas, family reunification, and other legal modalities for regular, safe and orderly migration;

**Reaffirm** the importance of deepening strategic and collaborative alliances among all stakeholders for the implementation of responses and solutions in the spirit of responsibility-sharing and international solidarity;

**Further note** that the outcome of this Round Table constitutes an important contribution to the UN Secretary General High Level Summit to address large movements of refugees and migrants to be held on 19 September 2016 and President Obama's Leaders' Summit on Refugees to be held on 20 September 2016;

**In view of the foregoing:**

**In the area of preventing and addressing root causes of displacement in and migration from countries of origin, all participants endeavor to:**

*Strengthen* coordinated responses in an inclusive, comprehensive and multi-functional way, both at national and regional levels, with particular focus on socio-economic development, access to education and livelihood opportunities, prevention measures through capacity building, consolidating the rule of law, enhancing justice systems and combatting impunity, acting against impunity and

protecting victims under a framework that fully respects human rights and takes into account age, gender and diversity (AGD);

*Develop* harmonized research and investigation tools to foster a common understanding of the regional situation, *establish* and *maintain* national systems to gather and analyse information and accurate data on internal displacement, IDPs and returnees, with an age, gender, diversity and intercultural approach in order to raise awareness of the phenomenon and develop well targeted and effective national responses;

*Design, develop* and *implement* legal frameworks and public policies to provide protection mechanisms for IDPs as well as to develop mechanisms for facilitating the reception and the reintegration of returnees with protection needs using an age, gender, diversity and intercultural approach in conformity with applicable international and regional human rights law.

**In the area of enhancing asylum and protection responses in countries of transit, destination and asylum, all participants endeavor to:**

*Provide* timely identification and documentation of persons in search of international protection and afford unhindered access to fair and efficient procedures for protection, including through capacity building of the relevant authorities and provide timely identification of persons not deserving international protection, recognizing that such procedures must include adequate safeguards and respect human rights;

*Improve*, alternatives to detention, arrangements for reception conditions for asylum seekers and refugees, the provision of reasonable access to legal aid, humanitarian assistance and psychosocial support, recognizing the operational challenges States face with respect to large-scale migration influx situations while balancing the imperative to safeguard refugee protection in such contexts;

*Develop* programs to facilitate early integration of refugees in the receiving communities including multi-sectoral projects to prevent and respond to protection risks of girls, boys and adolescents and sexual and gender-based violence.

**In the area of regional cooperation, all participants endeavor to:**

*Foster* a collaborative approach through partnerships among a wide range of actors including governments, the UN system, other international and regional organizations, such as the OAS and SICA, development actors, such as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, civil society, academia, the private sector, faith-based organizations, asylum seekers, refugees and other persons of concern;

*Enhance* regional responsibility-sharing mechanisms to address the situation, including through complementary legal pathways to admission, such as resettlement, humanitarian visas, family reunification, and other legal modalities for regular, safe and orderly migration;

*Develop* a regional mechanism to gather and analyze data on displacement patterns and profiles, and *ensure* the exchange of best practices, and the coordination of regular capacity building activities with relevant actors.

## **Follow-up mechanism**

To promote follow-up, we endeavor to:

*Undertake* effective measure to implement the above commitments and each participant's action statements, which follow below, at national and regional levels and measure progress with the support of the OAS and UNHCR on the margins of the next OAS General Assembly to be held in June, 2017, in Mexico.

San Jose, Costa Rica, 7 July, 2016

## **Accompanying Statements to the San Jose Action Statement**

### **Specific Action Statements made in the course of the Round Table**

#### **Country Delegations**

##### **Belize commits to:**

*Continue recognizing* the historical and current humanitarian efforts offered to refugees of Central America in the provision of a safe haven from displacement due to insecurity and violence in their countries of origin;

*Strengthening*, through cooperation and collaboration with UNHCR and other stakeholders, the Refugee Eligibility Committee for the Protection of Refugees and national officials in charge of reviewing asylum applications and ensuring the protection of refugees;

*Continue working* with all stakeholders in order to address the protection needs of refugees in a collective manner from a regional approach;

*Strengthening* efforts to build technical capacity and institutional strengthening at our main points of entry;

*Continue making* efforts to implement an effective asylum system, including by participating in the Quality Assurance Initiative for refugee status determination;

*Fostering* dialogue towards the formulation of coordinated efforts and mechanism, under the principle of responsibility-sharing, in regional and hemispheric forums.

##### **Canada commits to:**

*Seeking* to address those factors that are increasingly pushing people to look for opportunities and safe haven elsewhere;

*Remaining open to engage with other States that are interested in expanding resettlement programmes, including private sponsorship of refugee programmes;*

*Exploring the possibility to work with others to expand capacity to ensure the success of the resettlement programmes;*

*Supporting UNHCR's Global compact on responsibility-sharing for refugees, which would ensure more effective and predictable support for host states.*

**Costa Rica commits to:**

*Continue ensuring access to territory and to refugee status determination procedures, including at border points and timely referring to corresponding service providers of vulnerable cases, particularly SGBV survivors, unaccompanied and separated children, and LGTBI individuals, among others;*

*Ensuring, in collaboration with UNHCR and civil society organisations, the prompt identification of persons in need of international protection and other forms of protection upon their arrival;*

*Providing sound and adequate reception facilities to asylum seekers and other persons requiring protection, as well as fast track processing of claims to manifestly well-founded cases and persons with special needs;*

*Continue strengthening refugee status determination procedures through the implementation of the Quality Assurance Initiative with the aim of handing down fairer and timelier decisions;*

*Addressing, with the support of UNHCR, the backlog in asylum applications, as a matter of urgency to avoid possible pull factors and to preserve the integrity of the RSD system, as well as to increase the number of RSD adjudicators to guarantee the efficiency of the RSD system;*

*Strengthening cooperation with UNHCR, civil society actors, private sector and academia in order to foster legal and socioeconomic integration opportunities for the refugee population;*

*Facilitating access to naturalization procedures, allowing for full and sustainable local integration;*

*Ensuring the implementation of existing cooperation agreements with the various Ministries and public institutions, which will allow full access to national programmes for poverty reduction, social development and entrepreneurial support for refugees, as well as technical vocational training and employment;*

*Being a pioneer country in the region to achieve the institutionalization and sustainability of socio-economic integration programmes for the refugee population, through the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Ministry of the Presidency, the General Directorate for Migration and Foreigners and UNHCR, as a means to overcome different administrative barriers that hinder access to state programmes for the refugee population. To this effect, the Ministry of the Presidency coordinated the design of an Inter-institutional Plan of Action that aims at equal access of the refugee population to these national programmes.*

**Guatemala commits to:**

*Requesting* support to UNHCR to promote the dignified return of Guatemalans, as well as the humanitarian assistance to Honduran and Salvadoran citizens in transit across Guatemala. In particular, the Government of Guatemala appeals to special support to improve the Reception Center of Tecun Uman, in the Department of San Marcos;

*Making* a special appeal to improve the reception conditions for unaccompanied girls, boys and adolescents, as well as strengthening capacities of specialized shelters hosting girls, boys and adolescents in Guatemala.

**Honduras commits to:**

*Establishing* an information management system on forced displacement that will periodically generate data on displacement root causes and trends, as well on the expulsion and arrival sites and the impact that those movements generate on the population;

*Requesting* the approval of a national Bill for a Law on Prevention, Protection and Comprehensive Assistance to internally displaced persons, as well as the recognition of forced displacement as a crime under the Penal Code;

*Creating*, within the above legal framework, a roadmap for protection and emergency assistance for internally displaced persons or persons at risk of being displaced, which would allow for the protection of physical and psychological harm caused by violence and coercion; this will include, inter alia, shelters, temporary protection centres, emergency humanitarian assistance, and precautionary measures; Its aim will be included in the institutional budgets of the various State entities mandated for social protection issues;

*Bestowing* the Inter-institutional Commission for the Protection of Persons Displaced by Violence of the human, technical and financial resources needed to develop a national protection framework. This will rely on permanent and full-time staff to follow up and implement its action plan. On the other side, it is requested that the Secretariats and State Institutions that form the Commission define in turn the needed budgetary requirements for addressing the phenomenon and guaranteeing their inclusion in the respective Annual Operational Plans;

*Promoting* awareness campaigns and political advocacy around the problem of forced displacement in Honduras, directed to decision-makers and staff of the different State institutions, in particular those which compose the Inter-institutional Commission and more in general for the population at large, to foster the understanding of the root causes of the phenomenon and the fundamental rights of internally displaced people;

*Establishing* methodologies that would allow a close relationship with internally displaced persons and communities without increasing the level of risk to which they are exposed.

**Mexico commits to:**

*Reiterating* its commitment to the region, underlining that only under responsibility-sharing principles States can guarantee that nationals are protected, either in their country of origin, or transit or asylum;

*Increasing* the capacity of the international protection system in Mexico, taking into account the

increase in the number of asylum applications, through strengthening the presence of the Mexican Commission for Refugee Aid (COMAR) throughout the country, with UNHCR's support. Likewise, Mexico will continue working to strengthen the quality and effectiveness of its asylum system, including in the area of country of origin information;

*Promoting* dialogue among Governments of the regions – including Canada and the United States of America – in order to identify actions for joint assistance. This not only with the aim to continue strengthening quality systems, but also to ensure the dissemination of information on national legislation on access to refugee status determination procedures;

*Facilitating* alternatives for administrative detention for asylum seekers in coordination with civil society organizations and UNHCR, following the issuance of temporary residence permits;

*Continue sharing* its experience and tools for the identification of protection needs for vulnerable populations, such as for girls, boys and adolescents. In this framework, for example, Mexico maintains an important compendium of assistance protocols for migration as well as for consular authorities;

*Continue strengthening* the network of Special Protection Defenders in the entire country to assist girls, boys, and adolescents in situations of heightened vulnerability, including migrants and asylum seekers;

In addition, Mexico considers that the Round Table can also contribute to the processes leading to the important sessions on migration and asylum that will be celebrated next September by the General Assembly of the United Nations. To this end, Mexico considers very important to retain the following elements, which, being already included in the Brazil Plan of Action, will not be alien to participating states, as they have driven the discussion under a perspective of responsibility-sharing and cooperation:

*Improving* eligibility procedures, strengthening knowledge and capacity of the asylum authorities and introducing measures to improve case management and procedures;

*Deepening* cooperation to strengthen the country of origin information system;

Consolidating national refugee status determination systems based on the following principles: effective access, *non-refoulement*, right to legal representation, confidentiality and due process;

*Strengthening* institutional capacities and training of state officials, to maintain quality systems;

*Strengthening* the presence of the National Commissions for Refugees, as well as the exchange of information and good practices among them;

*Designing* and implementing alternatives measures to administrative migration detention for asylum seekers, in particular for girls, boys and adolescents;

*Implementing* wide information campaigns, including in countries of origin about the risks of irregular migration and on the existing protection mechanisms in country;

*Strengthening* cooperation in order to improve basic assistance and support programmes for asylum

seekers and refugees, including access to services;

*Strengthening* collaboration and cooperation between governmental institutions and relevant non-governmental organizations;

*Exchanging* good practices in the field of resettlement as a durable solution for refugees;

*Promoting* synergies among international organizations and regional processes – like the Regional Conference on Migration – in order to sponsor exchange of good practices and experiences, as well as training of officials, among others;

*Considering* the inclusion of the themes discussed during the Round Table in the programme of the Regional Conference on Migration, including with a view to strengthening exchanges among National Eligibility Commissions for refugee status determination.

**Panama commits to:**

*Providing* international protection to all those persons that fulfil the requirements established by the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its Protocol, as well as by the Panamanian Law established to that effect. Panama will continue adopting actions directed at strengthening its asylum system to ensure that its protection is effective;

*Strengthening* the capacity of state officials in charge of determining asylum applications and of the members of the National Commission for the Protection of Refugees;

*Developing* a protocol for the assistance of girls, boys and adolescents in need of international protection, whether they are accompanied or not;

*Ensuring* the participation of girls, boys and adolescents in their refugee status determination procedures, guaranteeing that they will receive the necessary assistance;

*Continuing* working with UNHCR in the implementation of the Quality Assurance Initiative for refugee status determination, as Panama considers fundamental that all asylum seekers should be able to access due process respecting their human rights;

*Continuing strengthening* technical capacities of the National Office for Refugee Assistance (ONPAR), the office in charge of asylum applications, and *analyzing* the mechanisms to ease its procedures, as far as possible. To this effect, Panama continues counting on the support of UNHCR;

*Continuing capacity building of* state officials posted in border areas on the rights and profiles of the asylum seeking populations;

*Continuing working* with the various states institutions, private enterprises and civil society in the campaign for the integration of refugees, which includes information around the realities they are facing in order not to be discriminated against and *promoting* access to livelihoods, public services and other aspects necessary to satisfy their needs, which is essential to obtain an adequate standard of living;



*Participating* in regional mechanisms for responsibility sharing to complement, coordinate and strengthen actions adopted at national level, for which Panama believes it is essential to refer to the support and expertise of universal and regional human rights protection organs, in particular UNHCR and the IACHR.

**The United States of America** intends to:

*Provide* international protection to persons who fulfil the requirements established by the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, as well as by U.S. law; provide complementary forms of protection where appropriate; and continue to ensure that such protection is effective and that durable solutions are provided;

*Further increase* efforts to support national and regional measures to address the underlying conditions that cause many Central Americans to abandon their homes;

*Expand* the U.S. Refugee Admissions Programme, working with UNHCR and non-governmental organizations (NGO), to help vulnerable refugee families and individual refugees from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras;

*Support* UNHCR's June 24th Supplementary Appeal for the Northern Triangle;

*Continue to open* the training programme for USCIS asylum officers to trainees from governments around the world, as it has done for Mexico (COMAR), Belize, Trinidad and Tobago, and several other countries in the region, in coordination with UNHCR.

**The United States of America** further calls for:

*Increasing* the number of nations to regularly contribute to humanitarian agencies and operations;

*Increasing* the number of countries that assist refugees or other migrants, including those from Central America, through permanent resettlement programs, humanitarian visas or programs to study or work.

*Adopting* measures that will help refugees and those who have availed themselves of legal modalities of migration to become self-reliant through access to education and lawful employment and contributing members of their host communities.

**Observer States**

**Argentina** commits to:

*Providing* technical cooperation for strengthening institutional framework with a view to advancing the quality of asylum systems, improving procedures, establishing accelerated procedures, providing legal aid, strengthening registration systems, and enhancing special procedures for girls, boys and adolescents;

*Providing* tools such as the virtual course on refugee protection developed for migration officers and members of the National Commissions for Refugees (CONAREs);

*Supporting* regional cooperation through the sharing of the experience of a regional institutionalized mechanism of the meeting of the Presidents of CONAREs as a dialogue space to exchange good practices, which could benefit from the support of SICA and the Regional Conference on Migration.

**Brazil** commits to:

*Recognizing* the need for a differentiated response to protect people displaced by violence, which has conceptual and operational implications. Conceptually, it is necessary to innovate the eligibility parameters to assess cases of those individuals affected by violence from the Northern Triangle of Central America. Brazil's National Commission for Refugees refers to UNHCR's Guidance Note on Refugee Claims Relating to Victims of Organized Gangs. Brazil suggests that it is for countries in the region to expand the use of that Note as a reference. Operationally, it is necessary to offer durable solutions to persons displaced from the Northern Triangle, through local integration, resettlement and, when possible, voluntary repatriation. The Solidarity Resettlement Program, which is used in South America in favour of Colombian refugees and which was positively evaluated by IUNHCR last December, could be a useful element for Central American countries.

**Chile** commits to:

*Acknowledging* that this Round Table has allowed to give greater visibility to the problems of the Northern Triangle of Central America that has not reached yet Chile, to know its specificities and complexities, which requires, because of its root causes and manifestations, a different and innovative approach;

*Praising* this forum, which reflects the "spirit of dialogue, commitment and regional action" to which the High Commissioner Mr. Filippo Grandi referred to and its importance to provide, adequate, fair and sustainable responses;

*Continuing* reinforcing the asylum system in Chile and ensuring respect for the principle of *non-refoulement*, including non-rejection at the border, thus consolidating it as a 'Country of Asylum and Refuge', in accordance with the Presidential Order of 2015;

*Providing* technical cooperation to strengthen durable solutions, in particular through the dissemination of its program of basic humanitarian assistance; and support the exchange of experiences and best practices, particularly through the CONAREs Meeting of States Parties to the MERCOSUR and Associated States;

*Exploring*, upon completion of the presidential commitment to resettle a group of Syrian refugees, the possibility of extending the resettlement program in Chile to refugees from the Northern Triangle of Central America, given the grave humanitarian situation afflicting the region, as well as other refugees in need of protection.

**Uruguay** commits to:

*Supporting* the regional efforts to provide adequate responses to displacement in the Northern Triangle of Central America.

## **National Human Rights Institutions**

**The National Human Rights Institutions call to:**

*Paying* special attention at the situation of vulnerability that human rights defenders are facing in the region, of girls, boys and adolescents, women, elderly, disabled people, indigenous people and LGBTI individuals who left their countries of origin or residency due to violence generated by transnational organized crime and insecurity, which prevails in countries in the Northern Triangle of Central America;

*Positioning* the topic of insecurity in countries in the Northern Triangle of Central America in the political agendas and debates around migration with the aim to recognize that the gravity of these situations is the fundamental reason for which many persons apply for international protection in countries in the region, in order to save their lives, liberty and personal integrity;

*Establishing* joint regional actions at governmental level in each country as well among national institutions of human rights, with a view to grant the protection of fundamental human rights of asylum seekers coming from the Northern Triangle of Central America.

## **International and Regional Organizations**

**The United Nations Development Group for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNDG LAC) is committed to:**

*Promoting* a strategic and comprehensive framework to address protection gaps in the region committing both national actions and regional mechanisms to anchor and coordinate domestic efforts.

*Strengthening* and *coordinating* support to national actions, as well as a fostering greater spirit of responsibility sharing resulting in concrete solutions, such as increased resettlement quotas, alternative legal pathways, such as scholarships and private sponsorships, as well as humanitarian evacuation programmes and other forms of temporary protection;

*Including* forcibly displaced people in development programmes and plans, in order to leave no one behind, and to achieve the overall aim of the 2030 Agenda. In this respect, other regional mechanisms such as the OAS, SICA, and the Regional Conference on Migration, will also have to play their crucial roles;

*Fostering* the essential participation of civil society organizations, as well as enhancing their discussions with Governments in the region, to further improving protection for the forcibly displaced.

**The International Labour Organization (ILO) is committed to:**

*Promoting* employment policies and programmes in the Northern Triangle of Central America, complementing the efforts of governments, with special attention to youth within the age of work;

*Offering* technical support to countries on vocational skills, education and training in a consistent manner with migration policies.

**The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights calls to:**

*Reminding* that all UN Member States are obliged under human rights treaties to respect the human rights of all persons regardless of their condition;

*Requesting* to abandon a security vision to address mixed migration movements;

*Implementing* responses according to the differentiated characteristics of the persons;

*Sending*, upon request of States, observation teams to better understand protection needs and to support the implementation of human rights protection responses;

*Strengthening* the inter-agency protection cluster. For this purpose, it is recommended that national human rights institutions establish a regional observatory to follow up migration movements, its root causes and effects;

*Reinforcing* the role played by civil society organizations by mobilizing sufficient resources so that they can continue to provide legal and humanitarian support;

*Strengthening* the capacities of national and local agents to respond to this situation within a framework of respect of human rights, particularly in borders areas.

**The UN Children Fund (UNICEF) is committed to:**

*Further strengthening* National Child Protection Systems and Protection Subsystems against all types of violence, so that any girl, boy or adolescent may see their rights protected within their country and outside it;

*Further highlighting* the needs of girls, boys and adolescents in the context of migration within the public agenda;

*Promoting* exchange of information and technical support between the countries of the sub-region;

*Developing or strengthening* practical tools to support different actors involved in the comprehensive protection of the rights of girls, boys and adolescents, especially those separated or unaccompanied during the migratory route;

*Supporting* the harmonisation of international standards on the issue of migration and mainstreaming the principle of the best interest of the child in national legal and policy frameworks;

*Working* in coordination with States, UN agencies, and civil society within the framework on the Regional Conference on Migration, SICA, OAS, and within the framework of this important 'Call to Action'.

**The UN Development Programme (UNDP) is committed to:**

*Increasing* knowledge on disappearances and human trafficking (psychosocial support, shelter, individuals who accessed public health services), replicating the exercise conducted in coordination with the Department of Victims Support in El Salvador;

*Contributing* to strengthening national information systems and registration on the security of citizens, harmonized with the Agenda of Sustainable Development Goals and the International Classification of Crime, as input for the analysis of the problem of insecurity and violence;

*Contributing* to developing information systems and effectiveness of protection and assistance units for victims, through the strengthening of national capacities for data collection, analysis and dissemination of information, based on the exercise that begun in El Salvador, under the leadership the Ministry of Justice and Public Security;

*Contributing* to expanding understanding about the violence that affects women in Central America, including violence in the private and public spaces and its relationship with citizen security, migration and human trafficking;

*Developing* information and knowledge about those factors that contribute to resilience in young people living in communities highly impacted by violence, in countries of the Northern Triangle of Central America. *Coordinating* with UNHCR and other agencies to map the causes and indicators of trafficking, migration and victims of exploitation, making available georeferenced visualization tools and making use of the virtual space 'Infosegura Project' and networks within national Webs;

*Promoting* South- South exchanges and knowledge management on this matter, with the support of information management experts;

*Promoting* coordinated work with the Network of knowledge on citizen security, under which academic centers in the region develop a research agenda and training on key issues, including the establishment of partnerships with international centers such as the Open Society Foundation, the Wilson Center and the Florida International University, among others.

*Strengthening* the capacity of relevant actors to create and implement public policies and coordinate regional efforts to help improving the living conditions and security of poor and vulnerable populations in Central America in the framework of the 2030 Agenda, working with governments and regional institutions such as SICA, United Nations System, donors and civil society. These efforts seek to strengthen the capacities of States and civil society, for the design, implementation and monitoring of policies that help configuring more secure, inclusive and resilient societies.

**The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) commits to:**

*Ensuring* that its prevention, protection and solutions interventions are embedded within comprehensive efforts to address root causes of displacement, including through existing national and

regional strategies and taking into account the magnitude and patterns of displacement and profiles of displaced people, with particular focus on the specific needs of children, women, and LGBTI populations of concern;

*Supporting* authorities in countries of transit and asylum to strengthen asylum systems, with a focus on the implementation of identification and referral mechanisms, reduction of the risk of *refoulement*, improvement of reception arrangements, provision of alternatives to detention, and ensuring access to fair and efficient asylum procedures;

*Supporting* authorities in countries of origin to reinforce national prevention and protection response mechanisms to mitigate the effects of displacement, including strengthening welfare institutions for children and women and Ombudsperson's Offices, support to capacity building of national institutions, provide a safety net for cases at heightened risk, and the strengthening of protection responses of the State and civil society to the needs of affected people;

*Supporting* national authorities in countries of transit and asylum in providing local integration opportunities, strengthening livelihoods and urban refugee programmes, as well as providing alternative pathways and consider enhancing targeted resettlement;

*Promoting* regional cooperation and partnerships to implement responsibility-sharing arrangements, in particular through the enhancement of the inter-agency response to displacement in the region and continue to work closely with the United Nations Development Group in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNDG LAC), alongside UN Resident Coordinators, IOM, as well as other international organizations, the Organization of American States, SICA and other regional organizations and mechanisms, multilateral development banks, civil society, the private sector and all other relevant partners;

*Continuing* to highlight the protection needs of affected populations and mobilizing resources to support the range of activities being undertaken to address them and to find solutions for refugees and displaced populations.

**The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) calls for:**

*Highlighting* the importance of preparedness, recognizing government efforts to improve disaster risk reduction, and include steps to better protect and assist victims or individuals at risk of violence;

*Ensuring* an integrated approach that focuses on assisting the most vulnerable people, in accordance with the relevant legal frameworks and humanitarian principles.

**OCHA** is also committed to:

*Supporting* government efforts at national and regional levels to improve the delivery of protection and assistance to the affected population, through improved information analysis and coordinated response to ensure that assistance reaches the most vulnerable, including forcibly displaced people as well as refugees and migrants, in line with national and international legal frameworks.

**The UN Population Fund (UNFPA) commits to:**

*Highlighting* the need for systematically addressing gender based violence, including sexual violence, during all the phases of displacement, in countries of origin, transit and asylum;

*Promoting* a long term focus on sustainable development complemented by timely delivery of humanitarian assistance, when needed, to break the cycle of violence and displacement;

*Offering* technical support to key actors in the development and implementation of evidence informed strategies to prevent gender-based violence and provide access to integrated services for gender-based violence survivors.

**The UN Special Adviser on the Summit on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants** calls for:

*Upholding* the safety and dignity of refugees and migrants. In Central America both, refugees and migrants undertake perilous journeys, are exploited by criminal smugglers and traffickers, and face hardship and detention at borders;

*Fully implementing* international human rights and humanitarian legal obligations, and action on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

*Intensifying* efforts to prosecute criminal smugglers and traffickers and initiating a review of border management and detention policies to ensure that the human rights of all refugees and migrants, and especially those of children, are upheld at borders;

*Paying* a particular focus on the acceptance and inclusion of refugees and migrants in receiving societies. The increasingly negative tone of public discourse on migrants and refugees will become the subject of a UN-led global campaign to counter xenophobia;

*Appealing* for the adoption of a Global Compact on Responsibility-Sharing for Refugees, which requires states to contribute to a comprehensive refugee response plan, developed by UNHCR immediately at the onset of a major inflow of refugees;

*Protecting* the rights of migrants and improving the governance of migration generally;

*Highlighting* the recommendation to develop more alternative safe pathways, which is, of course, an issue of particular concern for Central American migrants.

**The UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons** calls for:

*Identifying* those with specific protection needs on a complementary basis of international refugee law and the regime for the protection of IDPs;

*Carrying out* a profiling exercise to ensure evidence-based programmes, protection and assistance linked to durable solutions while providing a comprehensive picture of displacement to inform programming, advocacy and fund raising, while identifying vulnerabilities and intentions for durable solutions;

*Implementing* the existing legal frameworks on displacement in the Americas and most particularly the 2013 OAS Convention Against All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance prohibiting the

discrimination, amongst others, of refugees, migrants, the internally displaced, repatriated, and stateless persons which requires action.

The Special Rapporteur is committed to:

*Continuing working closely* with Governments and countries in this region, UNHCR, OCHA, UNDP, United Nations regional and country Teams, and the many national and international non-governmental organizations to help us collectively prevent and respond to the tragedy of displacement in our societies.

**The UN World Food Programme commits to:**

*Providing* support, at the request of States, on food security, in case state capacity is overwhelmed;

*Putting* an emphasis on prevention in socio-economic areas.

**UN Women commits to:**

*Promoting the implementation of* protection strategies in accordance with age, gender and diversity (sexual orientation and gender identity, ethnics, religions, disabilities, etc.). In this regard, UN Women wishes to support the development of information management systems that account for all forms of violence against women and girls including sexual violence, trafficking in persons and femicide, as well as to consider the dimensions of violence against women and girls and their relation to violence experienced in the Northern Triangle crisis in order to allow a deeper analysis of protection trends. The systems should ensure disaggregation of age, gender, and diversity backgrounds in consideration with confidentiality and safety principles, wishes and best interest of survivors;

*Supporting* the development and implementation of protection and assistance strategies and programmes with a cooperative and inclusive approach, ensuring complementarity and alignment with Sustainable Development Goals, and systematically incorporating Gender and SGBV indicators. Some of the actions could consist of preventing and mitigating violence and displacement, delivering humanitarian aid, building the capacity of and providing technical support to national protection institutions, particularly to those responsible for the protection of women, girls and boys, and the prevention and response to SGBV and human trafficking. Likewise, the strategies should promote effective access to health, education, shelter and livelihoods to foster safe reintegration while preventing the continuation of the cycle of violence and displacement. In this regard, UN Women has worked with the Central America Court of Justice to develop approaches that address the continuum of violence experienced by women and girls in the Northern Triangle;

*Promoting* women's participation in citizen security investments that have largely ignored their needs and *placing* them at the centre of an agenda that has the rights and the human rights of all vulnerable populations as its primary objective. Pursuing a collective effort to ensure the consideration of the best interest of the child above migration policies and border control.

**The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) commits to:**

*Providing* technical assistance, upon request by States, to strengthen prevention, treatment, care and support systems related to HIV in contexts of migration, displacement and humanitarian assistance;



*Promoting* zero discrimination against people living with HIV and populations at higher risk and vulnerability to HIV as a cause of migration and forced displacement of these populations;

*Advocating* for both countries of origin and host countries to comprehensively address the needs for prevention, treatment, care and HIV-related support to achieve the purpose of ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030, according to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);

*Collaborating* with national and regional organizations to strengthen health systems and the protection of the human rights of people with HIV, as well as of populations at higher risk and vulnerability to HIV.

**The UN-mandated University for Peace commits to:**

Offering its knowledge, facilities and premises to contribute to the implementation of the outcome of the “Call to Action”.

**Inter-American Development Bank calls to:**

*Continuing* prioritizing support to social aid systems and to vulnerable groups.

**The International Organization for Migration calls to:**

*Recognising* the multiple causes of migration, which include violence;

*Continuing establishing* synergies with UNHCR, UNICEF, ICRC, UNFPA and UNDP to respond to the needs of migrants, including refugees;

*Continuing strengthening* government capacities to gather and analyse information on migrants, including refugees and IDPs aimed at supporting humanitarian action and protect vulnerable migrants, including refugees;

*Continuing exploring*, in coordination with WFP, the link between migration and food security and offering specialized advice to address this issue;

*Continuing providing* reintegration assistance to returned migrants and in particular to those in need; as well as providing support to States in order to strengthen their reception and protection capacities;

*Continuing providing* support to governments of the region in order to favour community stabilization of communities of origin of migrants in order to reduce irregular migration;

*Continuing providing* assistance, in coordination with States and UNHCR, to establish resettlement programmes for refugees, such as the one with Canada;

*Continuing strengthening* government capacities to develop policies and programmes aimed at providing protection and assistance to vulnerable migrants, such as children, women, LGBTI migrants, indigenous migrants, migrant victims of crimes, refugees and IDPs.

**The Central American Integration System (SICA) calls to:**

*Recognising* new forms of forced displacement;

*Acknowledging* an increase in the migration of unaccompanied children to U.S. leading to a humanitarian crisis, due to the fragility of the human rights and child protection mechanisms;

*Undertaking* regional workshops to train and sensitize on forced displacement and protection frameworks, based on the cooperation agreement signed between SICA and UNHCR;

*Promoting* regional policies on refugee protection as part of the discussions for the adoption of a comprehensive migration policy for Central America;

*Promoting* spaces for cooperation and exchange of good practices at regional and national level, including for the creation of an early warning system with emphasis on prevention of displacement and the establishment of an observatory on displacement.

**The General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (GS/OAS) commits to:**

*Contributing* to the development of a monitoring mechanism for the agreements reached in this Declaration in relation to the protection needs of victims of forced displacement and returnees; *reviewing* progress and trends in meeting the objectives of the Declaration and *facilitating* cooperation among participating States.

*Supporting* national institutions in the development of information systems for the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs for the protection of victims of forced displacement and returnees;

*Encouraging* the involvement of government officials and representatives of civil society in the Course on International Refugee Law, delivered by the GS/OAS and UNHCR;

*Contributing* to the development of specific training for government officials and representatives of civil society on designing and implementation protocols for the assistance of victims of forced displacement at heightened situation of vulnerability, such as women, children and people with disabilities.

**The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights calls to:**

*Promoting* a request to the Inter-America Court of Human Rights for an Advisory Opinion on Human Mobility and displacement.

**The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) calls to:**

*Acknowledging* the multiple causes of migration, including lack of employment opportunities, the desire for family reunification, as well as situations of violence and insecurity;

*Establishing* and *strengthening* in countries of origin attention routes and ensure protection;

*Establishing* and *strengthening* mechanisms for the identification of vulnerabilities and protection needs in countries of transit and destination.

The ICRC reaffirms its commitment to:

*Working* with all the authorities to mitigate the humanitarian consequences of displacement, and provide substantive responses for the most vulnerable persons;

*Reinforcing* its presence in the countries of the Northern Triangle of Central America;

*Contributing* to provide assistance to returnees and persons in transit.

Finally, the ICRC reiterates that:

States have the primary responsibility to provide protection, allow that asylum seekers have access to refugee status determination procedures and to ensure the respect of the principle of *non-refoulement*; when proceeding with deportations, States shall guarantee that deportation conditions are in conformity with international law and that people are treated with respect of their personal dignity and security;

The deprivation of liberty due to the migratory status of a person should be generally avoided, that alternatives to detention should be sought, and that detention should be used as a measure of last resort, which shall be determined in an individualized manner for each person, based on its necessity, reasonability and proportionality.

## **Civil Society Organizations**

### **The Civil Society calls to:**

*Developing* and urgently *implementing* information systems and SOPs at entry points and borders, for the identification of the population requiring international protection, responding to their specific needs and avoiding detention and deportation;

The SOPs should: 1. recognize the vital needs and the rights of LGBTBI persons in countries of origin, transit and asylum; 2. recognize that other forms of gender violence, in particular sexual and domestic violence are causes of forced displacement; and 3. recognize and implement the best interest of the child, as well as the potential of adolescents as agents of sustainable development in their countries.

These SOPs for protection and early identification should enable linking asylum claims with fair and efficient procedures to ensure due process, legal and psychological aid during all the phases of the procedure, including the possibility to seek asylum during transit, as vital elements of protection guarantees.

*Acknowledging* the importance of dialogue and coordination of actions with civil society in those important topics, such as the application of the broader refugee definition enshrined in the Cartagena Declaration, the follow up of the Brazil Plan of Action, the implementation of tripartite commissions and in the advances and evaluation of the quality of asylum programme, among others, in order to ensure immediate and comprehensive protection responses and solve recurrent procedural problems and access to rights by the population in need of international protection.

*Underlining* the importance of regional good practices, such as the Advisory Opinion No. 21/14 of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, and the right to work, access to education, health and housing and all the rights guaranteed by the Inter-American System as a means to promote inter-regional cooperation in the Americas as a whole;

*Supporting* the initiative proposed by the Rapporteur of the Rights of Migrants of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to request an advisory opinion of the Inter-American Court on the scope of the protection in human mobility and displacement;

*Recognizing* that forced displacement creates an impact not only in the northern border of Mexico and U.S. but that there is an increasing demand in countries such as Panama, Costa Rica, and also Mexico and Belize. Therefore, civil society organizations call on the implementation of responsibility-sharing strategies in those countries and urge international cooperation, the UN agencies and the countries of the region to strengthen together asylum systems, to ensure access to protection and assistance programmes for the integration of refugee and displaced persons, and to implement specific solidarity resettlement programmes in the Americas;

*Fully respecting* the right to personal liberty and the principle of non-detention for migratory purposes, not even as a measure of last resort, avoiding restrictive and migration control policies, and calling on States to develop and implement prevention and reception programmes and comprehensive community models, as part of alternatives to detention that respect human rights;

*Generating* hospitality policies in countries receiving displaced populations that promote full integration of refugees, so that they can integrate into social, labour, educational, and recreational spaces, with the same rights and conditions of nationals, moving forward to the eradication of discrimination, intolerance and xenophobia against them;

*Recognizing* the importance of civil society and its role in the defense and protection of the rights of migrants and displaced persons, in particular of refugees in the region, with a view to undertaking coordinated actions to facilitate the fulfillment of evaluation processes and decision making, committed to international protection. In this vein, it is strongly recommended the creation of tripartite national and regional follow up mechanisms for the goals proposed in the Brazil Plan of Action, including evaluation systems with indicators to measure the level of protection and inclusion of asylum seekers and refugees in all political, social, economic and cultural dimensions.

**The Central American Network for Sexual Diversity and the Central American Network of Transsexual Men calls to:**

*Urgently implementing* a protocol for the assistance of LGBTI individuals in all cross-border areas, following an inter-sectoral approach;

*Abolishing* all measures that limit the development of LGBTI individuals;

*Adopting* inclusive public policies and legislation for the protection of LGBTI individuals.

**Academia**

**The Jesuit University of El Salvador calls to:**

*Continuing* supporting Governments to comply with their obligations to provide protection to vulnerable populations victims of violence, being this the first step in recognizing the reality that violence in the Northern Triangle of Central America is an important cause of forced displacement and asylum;

*Realizing* changes in the socio-economic structures that will allow for the construction of inclusive societies, based on equal dignity among people and social justice;

The Jesuit University of El Salvador also commits to:

*Offering* support for the realization of studies on forced displacement, its causes, the profiles of displaced persons, territories generating displacement and those sheltering the displaced;

*Supporting* the establishment of the Observatory on Human Rights within SICA, and offers its collaboration for its realization;

*Continue supporting* asylum seekers through legal clinics and psychosocial services together with the institutes of human rights of the university.