

Pro Tempore Presidency of the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS) Mexico

As of December 2018, the new administration of the government of Mexico has adopted a new migratory policy aligned to the Global Compact on Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees, with an overarching principle of the unrestricted respect of the human rights and the promotion of an orderly, safe and regular migration, also in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to leave no one behind.

Similarly, on 1 December, the governments of Mexico, Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala subscribed to the Comprehensive Development Plan to address the migration phenomenon. This Plan seeks to promote actions that would create development and opportunities at the local level, thus to enhance the development in Central America and the south of Mexico, as well as to address the root causes of displacement of foreigners transiting through the region.

The New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants¹, and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, set the basis for the commitments assumed by governments² at the regional level. These commitments have been set forth through the adoption of the 2017 San Pedro Sula Declaration, providing for a joint approach on protection, attention and implementation of durable solutions for refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced people, and those returned with protection needs. On the other hand, the Global Compact on Refugees³ has set a precedent to strengthen cooperation and solidarity towards refugees and their host countries.

In a context of violence and insecurity, compounded by socioeconomic factors, states in the region have been affected as countries of origin, transit, refuge and/or return – and sometimes as having all characteristics at the same time. Their protection and assistance response, in consequence, has been at the national and regional levels⁴. Hence, it is of the essence that the region mobilizes policies that seek to provide protection and facilitate durable solutions for asylum-seekers and refugees, while at the same time addressing the needs of host communities and those of origin. Similarly, in this respect, it is necessary to promote peaceful coexistence, non-discrimination and the fight against xenophobia.

The first Pro Tempore Presidency of the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS) focuses on strengthening the regional and national dynamic in the promotion of shared-responsibility among countries of origin, transit and destination. The following strategic priorities aim to impact the lives of asylum-seekers and refugees, and to promote their local integration at all levels from a comprehensive perspective based on the principle that all people, in spite of their situation, are right owners.

The Presidency gives priority to strengthening partnerships with regional and sub-regional mechanisms, as well as with partners and actors supporting the MIRPS, while establishing dialogue mechanisms with the civil society and mobilizing resources and funds for humanitarian assistance, through a Solidarity Conference⁵ to be held with donors, financing agencies and other development actors.

Hence, the importance of updating commitments and the national plans, as well as of undertaking the quantification of technical and financial requirements for their implementation, could not be greater.

The activities and processes foreseen by the current Presidency will be undertaken with the accompaniment and support from the Technical Secretariat UNHCR/OAS.

¹ A/RES/71/1. A/71/L.1. New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants. UN. 19 September 2016.

² Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Panama.

³ A/73/12 (Part II). UN. AG 73rd session period. 2018.

⁴ Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework.

⁵ A/73/12 (Part II). Global Compact on Refugees. Para 27.

It is worthy to note that two of the MIRPS countries – Panama and Guatemala – are in electoral periods during the first semester of the year, presenting challenges in the transition and continuity of the MIRPS process and its progress. This is an opportunity for them to incorporate forced displacement and refugee affairs within their development, budget and sustainable development plans.

A) Pillars 1 and 2. Reception and Admission. Immediate needs.

Pillar one: One of the main priorities of the Pro Tempore Presidency aims at advocating for the full application of asylum public policies in countries of destination, emphasizing on reducing the backlog in the determination of refugee status, on strengthening current procedures and improve their quality.

- This will be undertaken on the basis of the identification of initiatives (legal amendments, norms and programmes, etc.) to reduce times and simplify procedures.
- A plan schedule and/or roadmaps will be produced to reduce the backlog in the determination of the refugee status.
- To ensure a comprehensive perspective of the movements of people and their needs, the work plan will consider the dynamics of forced displacement from the North of Central America towards the north (Guatemala and Mexico) and towards the south (Costa Rica and Panama).

Pillar two: Efforts will be made to work simultaneously in the identification of protection needs of internally displaced persons. Concretely, the Presidency will seek to:

- Identify best practices on interinstitutional and inter-sectorial coordination to i) facilitate access to attention for immediate needs, and ii) to shelters, with an emphasis on vulnerability criteria.
- In this exercise, persons of concern within the framework of the MIRPS will be understood as internally displaced people, those at risk of displacement, refugees, asylum-seekers, people in transit and those returned with international protection needs.

Methodology: As a result of the work carried out during the year in course, the Presidency seeks to select best practices that can be replicable and considered to optimize the normativity framework in each country in matters related to reducing the backlog. A simple guideline to facilitate the identification of best practices will be provided.

Additionally, the gathering of best practices will inform the *revision and update of the National Action Plans* in light of existing policies and procedures, considering priorities. In accordance with each country's proceedings, this update will allow for an enhancement or the incorporation of work pillars to reduce the backlog in admission and eligibility procedures, as well as in the mechanisms to address immediate needs, both in countries of origin and of destination.

In achieving this, a series of activities are foreseen to be presented in regional online meetings among technical teams. These activities include two types of online meetings with partners and technical teams:

- The first, to discuss best practices in reducing the backlog on RSD, strengthening current procedures and improving their quality so to validate the most ideal and replicable across the region. Each government will present its best practices at the national level, to be sent prior to the meetings to the Technical Secretariat for compilation.
- The second, to present and discuss the best practices on the identification and response to immediate needs of the forcibly displaced so to validate the most ideal and replicable across the region. Each government will present its best practices at the national level, to be sent prior to the meetings to the Technical Secretariat for compilation.

B) Pillars 3 and 4: Host countries and communities. Durable solutions.

The public policies on integration (legal, social, cultural and labour) are relevant for countries of origin, destination and return. In this sense, investing in the creation and strengthening of human capital, self-

sufficiency and transferable competencies is an essential step in facilitating long-term solutions⁶. In this framework, and in line with the objective of the Global Compact on Refugees⁷, this Pro Tempore Presidency emphasizes in promoting the full access to rights and promoting livelihoods through comprehensive and humanitarian responses, and through durable solutions.

This process seeks to result in the establishment of strategic partnerships and to strengthen coordination mechanisms that include the participation of service providers, the private sector, business associations, the civil society, the United Nations, international cooperation organizations, and other partners like local authorities in relevant communities, and representatives of displaced communities with international protection needs, along with their host communities.

The policies linked to the legal and labour integration also require the issuance of the necessary documentation to facilitate the transportation and relocation of refugees to locations with better local integration capacity, particularly in terms of labour and absorption in public services.

In relation to employment and livelihoods⁸, we strive to establish a cooperation mechanism between Ministries of Labour and private sector actors. This will allow for the strengthening of the absorption capacity of national employment services in departments and municipalities receiving asylum-seekers and refugees, the internally displaced people and returnees with protection needs. This, in order to channel work opportunities, and to relocate those with employment offers to spaces with social and/or public support networks.

The proposed activities to enhance these pillars include:

Revision, at the national level, of the integration policies and programmes to identify best practices in responsibility-sharing, procedures and protocols for legal and labour integration, durable solutions, assistance at host communities, challenges in implementation, and priorities, among others.

- In this exercise, persons of concern within the framework of the MIRPS will be understood as internally displaced people, those at risk of displacement, refugees, asylum-seekers, people in transit and those returned with international protection needs.

Methodology:

- Identification public and private actors to establish strategic partnerships and strengthen coordination mechanisms between Ministries of Labour, the private sector and financial institutions. Each country will submit their inputs to the Technical Secretariat, which will also feed the exercise.
- First online meeting with national technical teams, ensuring the participation of the focal points from the Ministries of Labour, as well as from Ministries of Finance (or equivalent) for their introduction to the MIRPS and labour integration issues. Representatives from the ILO will be invited for their articulation to the work, as well as with the civil society with experience and programmes on labour integration. Each government will present their best practices at the national level on labour integration of displaced people, to be sent in advance to the technical secretariat.
- Second online meeting with national technical teams, including focal points from the Ministries of Labour and strategic actors, to discuss best practices on local integration in host communities, and to mitigate episodes of xenophobia. Each government will present their best practices at the national level, to be sent in advance to the technical secretariat.

⁶ A/71/L.1. New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants. UN.19 September 2016.

⁷ A/73/12 (Part II).Par 7. (i) ease pressures on host countries; (ii) enhance refugee self-reliance; (iii) expand access to third country solutions; and (iv) support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity. The global compact will seek to achieve these four interlinked and interdependent objectives through the mobilization of political will, a broadened base of support, and arrangements that facilitate more equitable, sustained and predictable contributions among States and other relevant stakeholders.

⁸ A/73/12 (Part II). Global Compact on Refugees. 2.2 Employment and livelihoods. Para 70 and 71.

C) Creation of coordination mechanisms

The creation of coordination mechanisms specific to regional issues will be another priority for the Pro Tempore Presidency. The process for the creation of these mechanisms include:

- An online meeting with entities that attend to the protection needs of children in MIRPS countries, in order to harmonize evaluation procedures and standards for the best interest determination of the child, considering the guidelines developed in the context of the SICA. UNICEF is foreseen to provide technical assistance during the meetings, as well as relevant civil society organizations will be invited. As a result of this harmonization, best practices will be identified alongside recommendations for MIRPS countries.
- Among the activities of the Pro Tempore Presidency at the *political level*, a process to coordinate and harmonize different initiatives related to displacement and migration in the region will be conducted within MIRPS countries. This exercise includes the link of the MIRPS to the Comprehensive Development Plan between Mexico, Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala – with the support from the CEPAL and SICA, both of whom are currently building the Plan of Action on Migration. Mexico is convinced that the strengthening of the MIRPS benefits from the increase of its member states, particularly with the inclusion of countries of origin. Hence, the necessary actions to establish a political dialogue will be conducted to advocate for the inclusion of El Salvador within the MIRPS.
- Mechanisms will be established to facilitate the dialogue with civil society organizations. A regional in-person meeting is foreseen to take place with the presence of representatives from networks and organizations in order to set the basis for a constant and constructive coordination and communication.
- Dialogue with Resident Coordinators of the United Nations will be promoted to discuss other initiatives being implemented in the region through an online meeting.

D) Annual meeting

The annual follow-up meeting will take place in November 2019, possibly in Cancun, Quintana Roo, Mexico.

Each member country will present progress and challenges in the implementation of national priorities and commitments. International experts on relevant issues that require regional coordination will be present, in order for them to be considered as priorities for the next Pro Tempore Presidency.

In addition, and to the extent possible, other relevant actors – e.g. UN Agencies, Friends of the MIRPS, private sector partners, the civil society – will be present.

The Technical Secretariat UNHCR/OAS will provide support in the elaboration of the annual follow-up report on actions and results of the MIRPS in 2019, in light of the Pro Tempore Presidency that will be presented at the annual meeting. The format to gather progress achieved, challenges and priorities for the year ahead will be incorporated within the II MIRPS Annual Follow-Up Report. Such format will be agreed upon between **April and May 2019 and will include three or four impact indicators per country, and others at the regional level**. Once the format and the impact indicators are agreed upon, MIRPS countries will develop their national reports (deadline to submit national reports – **end of August 2019**).

The report will be presented by the Presidency within the framework of the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs (CJPA) of the Organization of American States (OAS) with the aim of maintaining the relevance of the MIRPS within an political forum opened by the Technical Secretariat, and to continue advocating on issues related to forced displacement in the region.

E) Solidarity Conference

A Solidarity Conference, in line with the Global Compact on Refugees⁹, will contribute to strengthening the support platform for the MIRPS. This space will allow the teams to include different actors to mobilize resources destined for the strengthening of institutions that participate in the implementation of public policies on internal displacement, asylum and integration within MIRPS countries.

⁹ *Ibidem*. para 27.

In order to carry out an efficient and fruitful Solidarity Conference that will lead to concrete support for the MIRPS countries, the quantification of the updated work plans will be prioritized. To achieve such objectives, the following actions will be undertaken:

- UNHCR, as part of the Technical Secretariat will facilitate the hiring of a consultant for each country to undertake the quantification exercise. **(Deadline – end of April 2019)**
- Review and update national plans of action to ensure continuity of ongoing relevant commitments, taking into account the priorities of the Presidency's Work Plan in relation to the four pillars, and incorporate emerging issues as relevant, so they can be projected towards a new period of 2020-2022, particularly to begin a resource mobilization process. Each country may structure such revision as deemed relevant, and taking into account the ongoing presidential processes, and can count with the support from the Technical Secretariat, UNHCR/OAS. **(Deadline – end of May 2019)**
- The Technical Secretariat (or UNHCR) alongside the Presidency will organize an in-person workshop in Washington in **June 2019** to share the methodology agreed upon at the global level, with the aim of ensuring harmony among the countries' contributions.
- Quantify the financial investment being made by each country for the implementation of the MIRPS, including the respective objectives and commitments made in San Pedro Sula. This exercise will be conducted in coordination and using the methodology being developed at the global level under UNCHR's coordination, ahead of the Global Refugee Forum **(deadline – end of September 2019)**
- Quantify the financial and technical needs each MIRPS country intends to propose to donors at the Solidarity Conference **(deadline – end of September 2019)**
- The Technical Secretariat UNHCR/OAS will compile the update and quantification exercises to produce a regional MIRPS document for the Solidarity Conference **(deadline – end of October 2019)**
- This document will be validated at the annual follow-up meeting (date **November 2019**), which will allow for a one-month period for preparation and advocacy in relation to the Solidarity Conference.
- The Solidarity Conference will take place the day prior to the Global Refugee Forum on **16 December 2019**, in Geneva, Switzerland.

The Mexican Secretariat of Government will coordinate efforts to organize the Solidarity Conference, jointly with the Secretariat for Foreign Affairs and with the support from the MIRPS Secretariat.

The Solidarity Conference will offer an ideal platform where main donor countries, at the Minister level, and other development actors, can establish technical and financial pledges that will allow for a continuous implementation of the MIRPS in the region. The role of the support platform Friends of the MIRPS during the Solidarity Conference and other similar scenarios will be fundamental in the identification of opportunities for support. Similarly, advocacy will be undertaken in order to incorporate the MIRPS as an official mechanism within the OAS.

April-December 2019

See annex