**REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON MIGRATION (RCM)**

**REGIONAL CONSULTATION GROUP ON MIGRATION (RCGM)**

**REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE LIAISON OFFICER NETWORK FOR CONSULAR PROTECTION**

**Mexico City, Mexico**

**November 9, 2015**

The Liaison Officer Network for Consular Protection held its regular meeting on November 9, 2015 in Mexico City, Mexico prior to the meeting of the Regional Consultation Group on Migration (RCGM), with participation of representatives from the following countries: Canada, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and the United States.

The Network submits its report to the Regional Consultation Group on Migration (RCGM) for consideration, as follows:

1. The delegations of Panama, Mexico, Canada, United States, Honduras and the Dominican Republic made presentations on best practices. The use of technologies and social media to develop new prevention and protection tools for nationals abroad was highlighted, among other issues.

The best practices that were shared are related mainly to populations such as travellers and migrant children and youth, and situations such as emergencies and natural catastrophes abroad.

1. Follow up on agreements was addressed. Regarding the Memo of Understanding for the Establishment of a Network for Consular Protection and Humanitarian Aid in Central America, the Dominican Republic, the United States and possibly, in other countries in North America. RNCOM expressed its interest that this topic be followed-up. Signatory countries were invited to provide information about the process relating to this Memorandum.

Furthermore, in regard to the development of general guidelines for the consular protection of migrant workers, IOM offered to share a set of standards for the protection of this population with the delegations.

1. In regard to the actions implemented by the Ad Hoc Group on Migrant boys, Girls and Adolescents, the delegation from Mexico presented key progress made in previous meetings of the Ad Hoc Group as well as results from an International Seminar entitled “Cerrar Brechas” (closing gaps) held within the framework of the Presidency pro Tempore in July 2015.

As part of the actions derived from the III Meeting of the Ad Hoc Group held in El Salvador, UNHCR reported that a document has been developed together with IOM and UNICEF to systematize and standardize consular protection standards, and another document including minimum indicators for recording information in consular matters, based on the principles established in the Protocol for the Consular Assistance of Unaccompanied Migrant boys, girls and adolescents developed by UNICEF in collaboration with Mexico. These tools were submitted to Member Countries, through the Technical Secretariat, for validation.

In addition, IOM submitted a draft of the “Regional Handbook for the Comprehensive Protection of Boys, Girls and Adolescents in the Context of Migration”. In this regard, IOM proposed that a workshop be held to validate the handbook. The delegation from El Salvador suggested that a specific timeframe should be established for the implementation of actions within the framework of the Ad Hoc Group, and expressed an interest in hosting the workshop to review the draft of the above-mentioned handbook in February 2016.

In addition, IOM reported that progress has been made regarding the regional campaign on boys, girls and adolescents and requested that Member Countries submit specific comments on this social communication initiative through the Technical Secretariat.

Furthermore, in regard to the request to advance toward a regional platform for recording cases of consular protection, IOM suggested that a forum be established to exchange best practices relating these systems among countries at a national level, as a step prior to the establishment of a common platform.

1. As part of the process to regionalize the principles for the protection of migrant boys, girls and adolescents, the delegation of Mexico invited interested delegations to attend a training workshop for consular protection officers on assistance to migrant boys, girls and adolescents in vulnerable situations, to be held on December 7-8, 2015.
2. Canada presented the objectives and results from the Global Consular Forum and its work as Secretariat of the Steering Committee. The Mexican delegation shared their experience regarding this forum, as its second meeting was held in Mexico in May 2015.
3. Mexico, as President pro Témpore, submitted a concept paper on institutional strengthening of the RCM and its components, and presented the central theme of the XX Conference: “Integration, Return and Social and Productive Reintegration of Migrants”. In this regard, the importance highlighting the link between migration and development was mentioned, in the spirit of the 2030 Agenda for Development.
4. During the dialogue with RNCOM, the organizations from the civil society expressed

the need to expedite the approval of the Agreement on Regional Cooperation for the Protection of the Human Rights of Migrants in Member Countries of the RCM. In addition, the importance of promoting coordination between Central American consulates in Mexico and the US, as well as attention to intra-regional migration in Central America was reiterated.

In regard to temporary worker visas, RNCOM asked countries of destination to increase the monitoring of labor conditions of migrant populations. In addition, the consulates from countries of origin were asked to increase measures to control recruitment and hiring processes in order to avoid deceit and fraud, and in addition, to strengthen communication of the consulates with their co-nationals holding temporary worker visas.

RNCOM requested processes of regularization for migrant populations and an increase in the existing programs; as well as a reduction in costs and minimization of requirements for better access to documents of identification and nationality, among others. In that sense, the civil society organizations invited Member Countries to consider the adoption of best practices in order to facilitate the procedures aimed at access to education of migrant people.