**REGIONAL TRAINING WORKSHOP**

**PROTECTING NATIONALS ABROAD AFFECTED BY CRISIS**

**San Jose, Costa Rica**

**1-2 February, 2017**

**CONCEPT NOTE AND AGENDA**

**Rationale:**

A number of recent humanitarian crises have shown that migrants are often among those who suffer the most both in conflicts and in natural disasters. With growing international mobility and an unprecedented number of people displaced by conflicts, violence and disasters, most countries today host some kind of migrant population. The presence of such a significant number of people living outside of their countries of origin has specific consequences in times of crisis, especially when individuals are undocumented and with limited income and/or access to local resources. They are likely to need specific forms of support and assistance, which are not always provided to a sufficient extent by the institutional and non-institutional actors of the country in which they are residing.

Over the last years, a number of calls have gone out to make sure that the needs of migrants in crises situations are adequately addressed. As a consequence of these calls, a small group of actors started working to explore and define the issues, look at best practices, collect the evidence base, and propose a set of guidelines to strengthen national and international capacities to address the migrants’ vulnerability in disasters through the Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC) Initiative[[1]](#footnote-1). The voluntary and non-binding *Guidelines to Protect Migrants in Countries Experiencing Conflict or natural Disasters* were launched at the United Nations in June 2016.

The Mesoamerica Region is one of the most important migration corridors in the word, encompassing countries of origin, transit and destination. The Region is also exposed by a variety of natural hazards. In June 2016, the Regional Consultation Group on Migration (RCGM) of the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM) thanked the Costa Rica and United States delegations for their presentation on the MICIC Initiative. The Group acknowledged this initiative as a tangible contribution to the Presidency Pro-Témpore theme: *Shared Responsibility*.

Better capacity by all relevant actors to address migrants’ specific needs in times of crisis is key to reducing their vulnerability. In order to strengthen the existing capacities of the region to address the needs of migrants affected by emergencies, IOM proposed (during the XXI RCM Meeting) to organize a regional workshop on “Protecting Nationals Abroad Affected by a crisis”. The training will focus on strengthening awareness of and capacities for emergency planning and response of relevant institutions.

During the XXI Vice-Ministerial Meeting of the RCM, held in Honduras, San Pedro Sula, from the 15th to the 18th of November, 2016, Member Countries decided to “Approve the Workshop on Consular Management of Crisis and MICIC Guidelines, as recommended by the RCGM, and to thank Costa Rica and the United States for its financial support through the Mesoamerica Program implemented by the IOM.” In fulfillment of this decision, the RCM, with the support of the governments of Costa Rica, and the United States, as well as the Mesoamerica Program, implemented by IOM, extended an invitation for this Workshop to be held on 1-2 February, 2017, in San Jose, Costa Rica.

**Objectives:**

The overall objective of the training is to enhance regional capacities to address the needs of migrants in countries experiencing a crisis, and to help prevent indirect, longer-term negative impacts on the well-being of communities of origin and destination of migrants.

Specific Objectives:

* **To strengthen the awareness** of the personnel of migrants’ home country institutions tasked to support and assist citizens traveling, living, and working abroad on the specific challenges their nationals face when confronted with crises in their host country;
* **To provide concrete information** and practical guidance to reduce migrants’ vulnerability through a variety of measures covering both emergency preparedness and response;
* **To build capacity of consular officials** to address some of these challenges before, during and after crises, including the use of specific tools and the development of consular contingency plans;
* **To promote coordination** among relevant institutional actors of countries of origin and destination, as well as at the national and regional levels.

**Participants:**

The training is scheduled according to a methodology for a 30-people group. In order to select participants, it is highly recommended to read the following paragraph on the methodology.

Member States are invited to nominate two, and up to three (maximum) officials, with preference for officials with average up to high technical level, with responsibilities regarding consular protection of their nationals abroad. Additional participants may be considered from other department/institution, with responsibilities toward providing assistance to emigrants or returnees.

Furthermore, two representatives of the Regional Network of Civil Society Organizations for Migration (RNCOM) are invited, as well as Observers of the RCM.

**Methodology**

The training will be based upon a mixed methodology, with presentation and sharing of experiences and case studies, along with presentation of key concepts and working groups.

It is expected that one representative per country will be able to choose one of the topics on the agenda, and to make a presentation of the experience of their country and / or institution in the matter. To this end, once the participation of officials has been confirmed, the IOM facilitating team will contact each participant. This presentation should not be longer than 5 minutes.

The methodology of the last session of the agenda will be based on a working group, oriented to the formulation of technical recommendations based on the exchanges during the workshop. It is expected that these technical recommendations will then be raised to the RCGM.

**AGENDA**

**Day 1: February 1st, 2017**

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| 9:00 – 9:15 | | **Opening**  Mr. Salvador Gutierrez, Ad Interim Coordinator, RCM Technical Secretariat  Mrs. Gisela Yockchen, Director General, Migration Directorate, Costa Rica  Mr. Marcelo Pisani, Regional Director, IOM |
| 9:15 – 09:30 | | **Presentation of the training Agenda** |
| 9:30 – 10:00 | | **Participants’ Introductions** |
| 10:00 – 10:45 | | **Introductory Session**  *The RCM; the MICIC Initiative and the Regional Consultation in Latin America; the MICIC Guidelines and Inter-relations with IOM’s Migration Crisis Operational Framework*    Government of Costa Rica, IOM and ST-CRM |
| 10:45 – 11:15 | **Coffee break** | |
| 11:15 - 12:30 | | **Session 2: Migrants in vulnerable conditions and crisis situations**  *Participants will look into what factors might make their nationals abroad specifically vulnerable in crisis situations – and why they may require specific support by their home government.*  Group work and presentation in plenary |
| 12:30 – 13:30 | | **Lunch** |
| 13:30 – 15: 00 | | **Session 3: Relevant frameworks and institutions, and collaborating with key actors**  *Participants will look into arrangements and institutions that play a role in reducing the vulnerability of migrants in crises, including in their home country and in host and third countries.*  Panel discussion and group work |
| 15:00 – 15:30 | **Coffee break** | |
| 15:30 – 17:00 | | **Session 4: Gathering information on nationals abroad to guide crisis preparedness and response**  *Participants will look into:*  *- data that may be useful to inform crisis preparedness, response and recovery efforts targeting their nationals abroad.*  *- existing sources to collect data, and options to collect first-hand data*  Group work and debriefing in plenary |
| 17:00 | | **End of Day 1** |

**Day 2: February 2th, 2017**

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| 8:45 – 9:00 | **Review of Day 1**  Plenary |
| 09:00- 10: 30 | **Session 5: Communicating with migrants in times of crisis**  *Participants will look into different options for effectively disseminating awareness raising messages, early warnings and emergency communications to their nationals abroad.*  Interactive presentations |
| 10:30 – 11:00 | **Coffee break** |
| 11:00 – 12:00 | **Session 6: Planning for crises**  *Participants will look at the need for, and content of, a consular contingency plan.*  Group work |
| 12:00 – 13:00 | **Lunch** |
| 13:00 - 14:30 | **Session 7: Providing relief and recovery assistance to affected nationals**  *Participants will discuss the main forms of direct assistance nationals affected by crises abroad may need from their home governments during and in the aftermath of a crisis.*  Collective exercise and discussion with recap presentation |
| 14:30 – 16: 00 | **Dialogue on the development of Cooperation Mechanisms for Crisis preparedness and response**  *Participants will discuss feasibility and opportunity for various mechanisms for coordination and cooperation among home country institutions, both at post and at capital level.  Each group is expected to list technical recommendations for follow up action by relevant actors.*  Discussion in breakout groups |
| 16:00 -16:30 | **Coffee break** |
| 16:30 – 17:00 | **Dialogue on the development of Cooperation Mechanisms for Crisis preparedness and response**  Technical recommendations developed in the previous sessions are presented and discussed in plenary  Plenary discussion |
| 17:00 | **Closing remarks** |

1. The Initiative, led by the United States and the Philippines and supported by a working group of States (the Philippines, the United States, Australia, Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, and the European Commission), international organizations (IOM, UNHCR, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on Migration and Development) and research institutions (Georgetown University’s Institute for the Study of International Migration), engaged in a broad and inclusive multi-stakeholder process and produced a set of recommendations to improve the ability of different stakeholders to prepare for and respond to the needs of migrants caught in emergency situations. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)