**Strengthening Production and Analysis of Regional Migration Data:**

**Central America and the Caribbean**

The consideration of migrations as a dimension that is part of the processes of integration and regional development, requires more and more coordination and consensus among the countries involved. Access to data information related to migration serves as a basis to guide the efforts of States in the elaboration of evidence-based migration policies.

The collection, systematization and analysis of reliable data are necessary tools for the promotion of effective migration management. This will contribute towards fulfilling Agenda 2030, specifically targets 10.7 (facilitate orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies) and 17.18 (17.18 by 2020, enhance capacity building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts).

However, there is a gap in the availability of this information and limitations in the coordination between countries for the exchange of data. In 2016, a meeting of the Caribbean Migration Consultations (CMC) emphasized the need for information systems that present accessible regional migratory data; a vacuum previously highlighted by the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM) and by the Central American Commission of Migration Directors (OCAM). Likewise, in the consultations held within the framework of the Global Compact for Migration, the countries have reaffirmed this demand, aligning themselves with the commitments of the Declaration of New York related to the improvement of data collection and international cooperation.

In response to this commitment, the International Organization for Migration has developed a project whose objective is to contribute to the strengthening of institutional capacities for migration through the development of a migration information system that will allow the Mesoamerican and Caribbean countries to have data on migration relevant for the design of migration policies.

The project seeks to strengthen mechanisms for the collection and exchange of relevant information for the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM), to support the processes of analysis and decision making, as well as the implementation of migration policies in the Member Countries. The RCM, as a regional process of non-binding consultation, requires up-to-date information on migration dynamics in countries, be they of origin, transit, destination or return.

One of the initial activities is to create a Regional Network for the development of a Virtual Information Platform for Migration Governance (VIPMG) initially integrated by the countries covered by the project (Mesoamerica: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Panama, and the Caribbean: Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Lucia and Suriname) and aiming to further include all the countries of the region.

The Regional Network of the VIPMG will be integrated by focal points of the Migration Directorates in each direct beneficiary country. This Network will work on the exchange of migratory information (population censuses, household surveys and records of international arrivals and departures, residences, returns and other administrative data), as well as strengthening coordination and information flows between countries.

The VIPMG will make available to decision makers and the public - in a friendly and comparable format - official data on migratory flows and the socioeconomic conditions of migrants, through visual representations such as infographics, interactive maps, dynamic graphs, charts and bases of interactive data that allow the crossing of variables that facilitate the analysis.

Using this information, the project aims to socialize articles and bulletins that respond to the interests of the member countries of the Network that could serve as a basis for the design of their migration programs and policies.

The project will be developed within a period of 24 months and will be implemented by the IOM Regional Office in San José, Costa Rica, which is the preferred interlocutor for coordination issues among the countries of the area.