**Virtual Workshop for dialogue and consultation on best practices in systems/platforms for registration of consular actions and cases of consular protection for their nationals abroad**

**Attendance:** El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Technical Secretariat of the RCM.

**Topics of the agenda:**

* Background of the virtual workshop within the framework of the RCM.
* Presentations by Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico regarding their systems/platforms for registration on consular actions and cases of consular protections for their nationals abroad.
* Section to raise any questions or doubts regarding the topic.
* Conclusion and closure of the event.

**Opening of the Workshop:**

* The TS asks if the presentations can be recorder since it is a virtual workshop and it is considered that the recording could be published in the website to give access to other delegations of the Member Countries that could no participate of the encounter, it is requested that it anyone is against the proposal please say so.
* El Salvador mentions that they don’t have any problem with the TS’ proposal.
* The TS mentions that since there is no one against the proposal, the meeting will be recorder and subsequently sent to the Member Countries so they can access the video.
* The TS asks if the countries agree on inviting Civil Society to participate in this workshop, who have already been interviewed with the Presidency Pro-Tempore (PPT), who in turn have requested the TS to ask the Member Countries if they agree with this participation.
* El Salvador express they agree with such participation, but mentions that because there are only 3 delegations online, what will be the mechanism to share with the Member Countries what happens in the workshop and consult them about the participation of the Civil Society.
* The TS considers that since there is no opposition from the delegations online, the possibility for the Civil Society to participate can be open, and afterwards the decision will be informed to the Member Countries that did not participate in the workshop. Furthermore, the TS recognizes that decision is aligned with what was discussed during the RCM in Honduras, and with the agreements held related to opening more the RCM to Civil Society. Additionally, the event is mainly an informative workshop where no sensitive agreements will be reached. Considering it was difficult to make the enquiry to the eleven countries for different reasons, the Countries will be informed that during the meeting no problem was raised regarding the participation of Civil Society and the TS will assume the responsibility in case there is objection of any country that did not participate in the workshop.
* The TS mentions that RNCOM will be notify of the possibility of participating in this virtual workshop.
* The TS indicates they are waiting on Guatemala to get online to start the presentations in alphabetical order, but since they are online yet the TS asks Honduras to start with the presentations.
* Due to technical problems Honduras can’t start the presentations and the TS requests Mexico to begin.
* The TS starts by mentioning that the main idea of the workshop is to comply with recommendation emanated from the meeting of the Liaison Officer Network for Consular Protection during the XXI RCM, specifically to delve into the presentations made during this event regarding this matter, in which Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico exhibit their platforms/systems. The idea of the workshop is that the aforementioned countries deepen into their presentations for the other Member Countries to get to know better this systems.
* Mexico takes de floor.

**Mexico’s presentation**

* Mexico starts with the presentation of the Comprehensive Consular Protection System (SIPC), which is the one being used currently to register, manage and follow up on protection cases around the world. Even though this is the system with which they continue operating and some modifications can be done to make it more practical, it is considered that the system is outdated by the current reality of attention of cases. In this sense, a new system is being developed, or at least an ideal version of this kind of system is already schematized.
* The current SIPC had its first version in 2001, this system allows to register cases and to follow up on them in real time, all representations of Mexico around the world have access to this system. In this sense, this tool has allow that regardless of time differences cases can be register and given the appropriate follow up.
* This system accelerates the attention of requests and follow-ups and also helps monitor all the protection needs and evaluate the performance of the representations. The aforementioned, allows measuring the number of cases assisted and the number of follow-up that is being given to each case. This is important because there are some representations that assist more cases or follow up a greater number of cases, this allows to measure for the effects of the central offices how to better distribute the human resources and materials in the field.
* As general background, it is mentioned that it has been noted that information must be able to be consulted, there are several options of the fields that can be crossed to obtain reliable statistics, variable statistics and statistics in real time. Mexico tried to show the Power Point presentation to present the current SIPC and the proposal of the new SIPC, however there were technical problems to share it.
* It was also mentioned that the system has allowed a uniform methodology for case management. It is important that all systems be accompanied by a kind of decalogue of how cases should be fed.
* The system grants passwords with different level of access, there is an administrator level in each of the representations and this administrator can decide who else to give the passwords to access the system and can also feed certain information. Then there are the user passwords that what they can do is to register the cases, follow up on them, obtain statistics, among other functions. But it is important to note that each user must be trained.
* It should be taken into account that not only the development of the system is important, but also to develop an online training course to be used for the people who use the system, for them to know how to enter the cases, register cases, and how they have to be followed up, additionally it would also be good to have control from the central offices on how to feed the cases in the system.
* In the current protection system one of the main issues is that the unit of measurement is cases and not people. For example, if a Mexican person arrives asking for assistance at the consulate, what is done is to register his case, to categorize the person in one of the areas, according to the assistance requested, if that same person makes a request for another type of case the system double counts the person and only the central offices can determine that it is the same person because the system does not allow to register a case without the basic biographical information, so the count in the end in statistics will generate only the number of cases that are being assisted and not the number of people who are being given the attention. This is the first change that is being required to reflect on the new SIPC, that it be aligned to the person and that from that person derived the different types of assistance and consular protection that are being given.
* An updated guide for the use of these systems should be available online.
* In terms of transparency, the protection system should be made with as many fields of information as possible, so that requests for transparency can be addressed in a more efficient and practical way, this also allows people to have faster access online to information. However, currently to generate this information officials are required to do it, using many resources for this end.
* It is also mentioned that all the information that has the SIPC is kept in *Plataforma México*, which is the national security data website, and all the information of the people that are assisted is confidential, nevertheless statistics are shared.
* The SIPC, additionally to keeping information on protection cases, it also stores the registration system Pan Americans abroad as a tool to promote responsible traveler culture. This is an initiative increasingly carried out by the countries in order to promote more preventive tools for those traveling for business and tourism, in that sense it was determined that the consular protection system must be able to connect with this traveler who gave his information voluntarily so that in case of natural disaster in the country where the person goes, he/she can quickly be reached and this information can be available from the SIPC.
* It is necessary that the new processes that have been developed over the years can be properly registered in the SIPC and can generate rapid information already analyzed, so that information can be retrieved from other databases.
* When a country is facing a change in immigration policy or a new procedure or program is born, it should be possible to include new items in the platform to have an accurate count of people who qualify under this new procedure. Another element that should have an ideal SIPC is the way to map exactly where a person passes through to know the migratory circuits, not only case by case but by region of origin, where they cross, where they are being stopped and which are being the return paths, which can be mapped with a well-planned system.
* It is also important to define before making a database or record system, what are the fixed criteria to be captured, what will be classified as protection cases, consular assistance and cases of guidance, this allows to work better With preventive protection programs.
* It must be define how to classify information. In the case of Mexico there are that begin as a civil case that can lead to a criminal or migratory case. The most important thing is that around the identification of a person you can see all the complexity and needs that is generated around that case.
* Engineer Mr. Jesus who is the director of these systems and the engineer that gave rise to the system takes the floor and mentions that he considers that it is best that these systems are developed internally since they are products are tailor-made and can be given greater continuity and development, however, this depends on the budget, you can also hire third parties, but it is better to work *in situ* (in the building) to better monitor development.
* Mexico believes that a common regional platform (even if each country owns its information) can be thought of so as to exchange information that is useful for all countries and to share statistics and requests for information that allow a much deeper regional analysis.
* The TS thanks Mexico and mentions that they pointed out to a topic that has been discussed in the RCM related to using the same information system that would eventually allow for more coordinated attention and to facilitate the exchange of information to make regional analysis easier.
* The TS open the floor for new questions to Mexico. No delegation takes the floor.
* The ST raises two questions: In terms of resources, what is the magnitude of the requirements that an effort of this type entails based on the experience of Mexico? And, when processes are migrating from one system to another system or information that is only in one database to another, how complicated are these processes understanding that many of the countries in the region already have data bases developed on their own systems and if you wanted to migrate to a regional or common system would involve certain resources, what would be the magnitude of such effort?
* Mexico mentions that they don’t have the exact cost, but could find out and share it. Regarding the migration of information it is considered that it is worthwhile to make a technical file of the characteristics of the system that each country has to do a technical analysis to identify if the different platforms can be integrated, in order to advance in a secure migration of data. In relation to the development of the SIPC, it is mentioned that for the development of this platform was hired from 6 to 8 people and takes a development time of 6 to 8 months, if you are going to hire a company it should be mentioned in the contract that is they must do the process of migrating information to the new platform to visualize times and costs.
* The TS opens the floor for new questions and participations.

**Guatemala’s Presentation**

* Guatemala starts their presentation, the engineer Mr.Evan Rodas y Ms. Gabriela Lix are introduced.
* It is pointed out that the “Information system and registry of consular actions” (SIRAC) is based on an open source, and as a data base it uses SQL, which allows for the system to have very rapid takeoff of the platform, so that the system can grow quickly without being tied to the financing.
* This system was created with the help of UNFPA, first it was developed to be a register for NNA and it was based on a statistical project. The platform can generate graphs and allows to access real-time information and can breakdown the data according to the permit the person is using, if it a an administrator or a common user, to view the data in excel and manage graphs. It also has a feature called Atel that searches for persons through the database and allows to search for a person through a range of matches, this is connected to a mobile messaging system and can send an alert to the consuls or psychologists with the person's photograph, it is also important to mention that the system is designed for servers with little memory and little space so your system runs fairly fast.
* Guatemala shared the screens of the system to show how it works logging in as the administrator and as common user that would be giving the assistance at the consulate.
* The screen of the system in the consulate of McAllen is shared, it shows a monthly register with the amount of NNA divided into categories by male, female and returned. Likewise, it has a feature called Alba-Kenneth alert, it hasn’t been used yet but its purpose is to send a search alert for missing persons.
* The platform also shows the entries in each one of the procedures and the services at the consulate. An app is about to be launched linked to this system, which will generate all the information of the consulates.
* The system also has a list of the consulates and it shows the global information. The system allows you to create a consulate and an embassy within the system itself, without requiring any programming. The administration was decentralized so each consulate can reset its password, create its own user and select the privileges for the users.
* The most important thing is that the information is divided into chapters because the psychological file is quite extensive, it can also be consulted online and offline and can be given continuity to. The system can capture the basic information of the person and then it is possible to continue incorporating information through the agreements to share information of the registries with other institutions, especially with the other actor and institutions this persons have contact with after the consulate, who are given a user name and can access the file that is already entered into the system by the shelter homes and can continue adding information.
* The system allows to detect where is a user connected, an administrator and identify from which consulate is connected.
* To generate a search in the registers you can filter with keywords, you can see a summary of the file and continue looking for information in the chapters, in addition you can generate a PDF with all the information of that person and could generate a special travel pass through the system, for which the systems asks for an authorization code, the special travel pass is printed and people can take a flight. The system can take a photograph of the person, enter it in the system and print the pass, when a user does not have enough privileges the system will not generate the special travel pass.
* The consulate information of the person who performed the interview, and each of the questions asked, generate a statistical report that can be exported to Excel, and can also separate data of accompanied and unaccompanied children to generate a report of what has happened in the current month, depending on the privilege the data can be seen in a graph.
* The system is designed to work on tablets, a cell phones or any mobile device, since something called mobile consulates is being used to generate real-time information and allows queries.
* The TS opens the floor for new questions.
* El Salvador asks, how does Guatemala avoids repeating the case, since migrants traditionally try to do the routes several times, so every time the person is detained is it possible to identify that it is recurrent or does it count as a new record?
* Guatemala answers that each person who enters is a new data because each time is a different action that is documented, a search can be made to identify if the case is recurrent, but as for the psychological file it needs to be a new record because every time is a new story. The system is also complemented with another system that is part of the Directorate of Migration, which keeps statistics with the re-entries of the person, but that is another system complementary to this one.
* The TS asks, in terms of human and financial resources how much has the system cost and if they have recommendations regarding the difficulties encountered?
* Guatemala mentions that the system was born as a consultancy to UNFPA and in about three months the first prototype was already working, with the experience of the consuls meeting weekly to contribute their inputs, to reach the current point was taken from 6 to 8 Months, with an approximate cost of 15 thousand to 20 thousand dollars and are planned to make some updates and improvements in the security of the same.
* Guatemala mentions all information fields in the case files were made through intersectoral consultation, with international organizations, civil society and government, to avoid requesting information that is not going to be used, or repeated information.
* The pilot process already works one hundred percent at the McAllen consulate, this week there is a meeting with all the other consulates to make the deployment, and add in the changes that have been requested.
* El Salvador asks if it is possible to use the system with devices offline?
* Guatemala answers that system can work offline in the with the new version where you can fill the register form being offline, and whenever the device is connected to internet it syncs the information and includes the data that has been added offline.
* The TS thanks Guatemala for their presentation and opens the floor for new questions.
* A question is raised on whether the system used by Mexico is connected to all consulates in Mexico.
* Mexico responds that in fact each representation has access to the system, even in the national territory; the person who has first knowledge of the case registers it and can generate a request for the search to be made. As for the location of person there are extra fields to collect information which is necessary to find a person including the options of giving physical information, which may be relevant to locate a person, to which consulates can have access.

**Conclusions and Closure**

* The TS thanks Guatemala and Mexico for their presentations and comments that Honduras had a technical problem to present their system so probably a bilateral meeting will be organized for Honduras to share their presentation and save it for inclusion in the video that TS will make with all the presentations and then share it with the other delegations. Subsequently the TS opens the opportunity again for other questions or comments on the presentations.
* El Salvador mentions that they also had some problems during the presentations and asked if there was any way to have the links of Guatemala’s and Mexico’s system forwarded to try to use the platforms and see how it works.
* Mexico mentions that it is a bit complicated to forward the link of their platform since the equipment must be configured to be able to use it, but they can share a presentation where the screens shots of the system are available and also offered to invite the consuls of El Salvador to come to their consulates for a Live demonstration of the system, they would only need to know which consulates would be interested to inform the consul so he can receive them a give them demonstration of the system.
* Guatemala mentions that they could share the Power Point presentation of the screens shots of what was shown during the presentation.
* El Salvador thanks Guatemala and Mexico for sharing their information which will be of great value for the development of this kind of tool, and thanks the TS and apologizes for having to withdraw from the meeting since they have another commitment and would appreciate that Honduras can also share a presentation with them.
* The TS asks if anyone else would like to participate.
* The TS thanks Guatemala, Mexico and Honduras for their availability to share the information, and commits to send the minutes of the workshop and a link to access all the presentations shared by these countries for the countries that could not attend the meeting.