

V Plenary Meeting of the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM) and the South American Conference on Migration (SACM)

10 to 11 October 2024, Bogota, Colombia





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CAN	Andean Community (Spanish acronym)
CIPRAT	Intersectoral Commission for Rapid Response to Early Warnings (Colombia, Spanish acronym)
CONATT	National Coalition Against Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking (Costa Rica)
CORETT	Regional Coalition Against Trafficking in Persons and Migrant Smuggling (Spanish acronym)
EWS	Early Warning System Sistema de Alerta Temprana
GCM	Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IMRF	International Migration Review Forum
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISCM	Inter-State Consultation Mechanisms on Migration
INM	National Migration Institute of Mexico (Spanish acronym)
OSUMI	South American Observatory on Migration (Spanish acronym)
PPT	Presidency Pro-Tempore
PRETT	Regional Platform Against Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants (Spanish acronym)
RCM	Regional Conference on Migration
REDTRAM	Ibero-American Network of Specialized Prosecutors against Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants
RNCOM	Regional Network for Civil Organizations on Migration
SACM	South American Conference on Migration
SEGIB	Ibero-American General Secretariat (Spanish acronym)
SELA	Latin American Economic System (Spanish acronym)
SENAFRONT	National Border Service of Panama (Spanish acronym)
SICA	Central American Integration System (Spanish acronym)
TAM	Andean Migration Card (Spanish acronym)
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNNM	United Nations Network on Migration
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USFROH	Humanitarian Border Security Unit of Panama (Spanish acronym)



I. BACKGROUND

Inter-State Consultative Mechanisms on Migration (ISCMS) pertain to all regional and international dialogues on migration that occur on a regular basis. These mechanisms aim to enhance coordination, transparency, and cooperation; fortify effective migration governance; safeguard the human rights of migrants, particularly vulnerable groups; foster connections between migration and sustainable

development; establish strategic priorities; and address the principal opportunities and challenges faced by countries concerning migration.

In the Americas, the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM) and the South American Conference on Migration (SACM) are acknowledged and established as regional consultative processes on migration.

II. REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON MIGRATION (RCM)

The RCM is a non-binding regional consultative process on migration at technical and political levels. It offers a forum for respectful, candid, and transparent discussions among Member Countries concerning regional and international migration, thereby enhancing coordination, transparency, and cooperation.

Established in 1996 following the Tuxtla II Summit, the RCM has eleven member countries: Belize, Canada, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, and the United States.

The RCM operates three Working Groups: Protection, Labor Migration, and Border Management and Irregular and Mass Migration. Each group includes technical-level officials from foreign ministries, migration authorities, and relevant national institutions. Additionally, the RCM has the Regional Consultation Group on Migration (RCGM), which serves as a technical advisory body to the annual Vice-Ministerial Meeting, aiding in political decision-making processes.

III. SOUTH AMERICAN CONFERENCE ON MIGRATION (SACM)

The South American Conference on Migration (SACM) is a regional consultative process involving twelve South American countries. Established in 2000, it serves as an intergovernmental platform aimed at developing a cohesive regional migration policy through the discussion of ideas and sharing of best practices.

The member countries of the SACM include Argentina, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay, and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

The SACM is grounded on fundamental principles that view migration as integral to regional and sub-regional integration processes. It underscores the intrinsic connection between the economic and social development of countries of origin and migration, and champions the protection of migrants' human rights.

Since the XIX SACM, under the Pro-Tempore Presidency of the Argentine Republic, the conference's efforts have been organized around six thematic networks: Gender and Migration; Border Management; Migrant Children and Adolescents; Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants; Social and Labor Integration, including Work and Education; and Migration, Environment, Disasters, and Climate Change.

Member countries have emphasized the importance of strengthening consultative relations between the RCM and the SACM to address migration issues within a bi-regional framework. This coordinated approach aims to facilitate efficient international cooperation and prevent the duplication of efforts in migration matters. Additionally, it aspires to foster a platform for dialogue and the creation of synergies in both the short and medium term.

IV. OBJECTIVES

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

Promote greater cooperation and synergy between the consultative processes of the RCM and the SACM to address irregular migration and migration governance.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. Generate actionable commitments that contribute to migration governance between the RCM and the SACM to address migration from a bi-regional perspective.
2. Strengthen the technical knowledge and understanding of government officials from both regions regarding migration trends, policies, practices, tools and experiences in migration governance.

V. EXPECTED RESULTS

1. Identified topics for collaboration and joint work between the RCM and the SACM.
 - a. Indicator: Number of topics identified for joint work.
2. A roadmap for implementing actions in each of the topics identified.
 - a. Indicator: Number of roadmaps elaborated.
3. Identified migration trends, policies, practices, tools and experiences presented during the plenary meeting.
 - a. Indicator: Number of migration trends, policies, practices, tools and experiences.
4. Joint Communiqué

VI. MEETING STRUCTURE AND REPORT

To enhance collaboration between the RCM and the SACM, the V RCM-SACM Plenary Meeting was held from 10 to 11 October 2024, in Bogotá, Colombia. The meeting aimed to address critical regional challenges in migration governance, focusing on irregular migration, human trafficking, and environmental drivers of displacement. Member states endeavored to identify specific actions to promote regular migration, socioeconomic integration, and the protection of vulnerable groups while establishing concrete steps for joint cooperation between RCM and SACM.

The meeting was attended at the Vice-ministerial level, with delegations from the member countries of both RCM and SACM¹. Representatives from international observer organizations² and civil society³ were also present.

This document provides a summary of the topics discussed, including the main best practices, tools, and policies highlighted during the plenary sessions. Finally, the report outlines the key conclusions, validated roadmaps, and a joint statement summarizing the commitments made during the meeting.

¹RCM participating countries: Belize, Canada, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama and the United States.

²ICRC, ILO, IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF, SEGIB, SELA

³Two participants from the Regional Network for Civil Organizations on Migration (RNCOM): International Detention Coalition (IDC) and Independent Monitoring Group of El Salvador (GMIES).



Left to right: Fernando Medina, Chief of Mission, IOM; María Moita, Regional Director, IOM; Shannon-Marie Soni, Senior Director, Government of Canada; Debra Baptist-Estrada, Principal Director, Immigration Department of Belize, Pro Tempore Presidency of the RCM; Marcela Ceballos Medina, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Colombia, Pro Tempore Presidency of the SACM. Photo: IOM.

Shannon-Marie Soni, Senior Director, Bilateral and Regional International Engagement, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

Shannon-Marie Soni, Senior Director at Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, opened the meeting by expressing gratitude to the Government of Colombia for hosting the event and to the attendees for their participation. She emphasized the significance of the current migration context, marked by high migration levels and growing demands on immigration and humanitarian programs. Soni underlined the importance of collaboration between countries across the hemisphere to address migration and forced displacement challenges, noting that no single country can solve these issues alone.

She stressed the need for cooperation to strengthen local systems and maximize the positive impacts of refugees and immigrants. Canada continues to support the IOM and through it, the RCM's workplans for 2023 and 2024, including these joint meetings. She highlighted that through this meeting, countries have the opportunity to demonstrate the collective commitment to safe, orderly and regular migration – a

hallmark feature of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) and the LA Declaration on Migration and Protection.

Soni also announced Canada's new three-year project with the International Labour Organization (ILO) aimed at improving the socio-economic integration of women refugees and migrants in Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru, with a focus on labor market integration, especially for marginalized groups like women migrants and trans women.

Finally, she expressed hope that the meeting would lead to concrete actions to address irregular migration and enhance protection environments, and she looked forward to learning from participants' experiences. Soni concluded by stressing the importance of turning discussions into meaningful, collective actions for migration challenges in the region.

María Moita, Regional Director, Latin America and the Caribbean, International Organization for Migration

Maria Moita, IOM's new Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, highlighted the importance of the intergovernmental meeting that brings together the two key regional consultative processes of the continent. She congratulated the joint efforts of the RCM and the SACM, recognizing the leadership of the Presidencies Pro-Tempore of Belize and Colombia, as well as the support of the Technical Secretariats. She thanked the Government of Colombia for being the host country and the Government of Canada for its substantive support.

Moita underscored the significant challenges facing regional migration, such as the risks faced by migrants,

irregular migration, barriers to social inclusion and difficulties in the sustainable reintegration of returnees. She also stressed that migration is a cornerstone of sustainable development in the region, contributing to labour markets, economies and demographic trends.

IOM launched its Strategic Plan for the period 2024-2028, focused on saving lives, promoting solutions to displacement and facilitating regular migration. In this context, IOM was working on its regional strategy to strengthen support to member countries and migrants.

Finally, Moita reiterated IOM's commitment to continue supporting both regional conferences in their efforts to address the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities of migration in the region.



Left to right: María Moita, Regional Director, IOM; and Shannon-Marie Soni, Senior Director, Government of Canada. Photo: IOM.

Debra Baptist-Estrada, Senior Director, Bilateral and Regional International Engagement, Immigration Belize, Presidency Pro-Tempore of the RCM

The Government of Belize, as Presidency Pro-Tempore of the RCM, expressed the deep appreciation for the Government of Colombia, as Presidency Pro-Tempore of the SACM, for hosting the event and for its commitment to advancing migration governance. Belize also expressed

gratitude to the Government of Canada for its support in making the meeting possible.

Baptist-Estrada's opening remarks emphasized the importance of both the RCM and SACM in the architecture of migration management in the Americas. It highlighted the shared vision of governing migration in a safe, orderly, and humane manner. Recognizing the complexity of migration challenges, Belize called for a holistic approach that goes beyond isolated governance

and protection efforts, urging a critical assessment of current systems and bold reforms to address gaps.

She described the agenda for the meeting as ambitious and focused on exchanging information, sharing best practices, and deepening understanding of migration issues in the region. Baptist-Estrada's remarks stressed the importance of ensuring that policies protect the most vulnerable migrants—those fleeing violence, poverty, and climate-related challenges. She

underscored the need to close gaps in systems and uphold the rights and dignity of all migrants.

In conclusion, Baptist-Estrada addressed the need to operationalize the roadmaps developed through online surveys, ensuring they lead to meaningful impact for both migrants and host communities. The Government of Belize called for a productive and action-oriented meeting to make a lasting impact.



Marcela Ceballos Medina, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Colombia, Presidency Pro-Tempore of the SACM

As the host country, the Government of Colombia extended a warm welcome to the V Plenary Meeting between the RCM and the SACM, highlighting topics of interest in previous SACM dialogues on critical regional concerns, including:

- **Migratory Transit:** This issue was identified as a significant problem for South and Central America, particularly affecting children, adolescents, and vulnerable populations. The necessity for mechanisms to exchange information and protect human rights was emphasized.
- **Regularization of Migrants:** Discussions focused on regularization schemes, emphasizing the importance of identifying categories of permanence in the region with a focus on the protection of rights.. The need to strengthen coordination mechanisms between countries is highlighted.
- **Consular Cooperation:** The significance of cooperation between countries to ensure adequate consular

services and the issuance of documents in migration situations was highlighted.

- **Recognition of Professional Qualifications:** One of the challenges discussed is the homologation of professional qualifications in the region, which would contribute to improving labor mobility and expanding opportunities.
- **Situation of refugees and displaced persons:** Important figures were mentioned regarding the growing number of refugees, internally displaced persons and persons requiring special protection. An increase in asylum applications was also reported, particularly in Mexico, Spain and the United States.
- **Voluntary Return:** Finally, SACM dialogues have highlighted the importance of ensuring that the return of migrants is voluntary, dignified, and safe is underscored, with a call for cooperation between countries to guarantee suitable conditions for migrants.



INTRODUCTORY SESSION: MIGRATION TRENDS IN THE AMERICAS

IOM, UNHCR, and UNODC presented an analysis of migration trends within the Americas. It highlighted concerns about the rising number of missing migrants along perilous routes, particularly the Darien National Park, and underscored the necessity of expanding regular migration pathways to mitigate such risks and address labour market needs in destination countries.

The organizations also emphasized the significant role of remittances in promoting development and reducing inequality, in alignment with SDG 10. Remittances are vital for economic stability in migrant-sending countries. Furthermore, the session called attention to the increase in human trafficking, especially affecting women

and girls, stressing the importance of sustained, coordinated efforts to eradicate it.

The session also referenced the II Regional Review of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM) in Latin America and the Caribbean. It outlined how the United Nations Network on Migration (UNNM) will support member states in this process. As part of the preparatory work for the upcoming Regional Review, Member Countries acknowledged the contributions of the II Regional Forum of Champion Countries of the Americas: Good Practices for the Implementation of the Global Compact for Migration, held in El Salvador from 25 to 26 September 2024 within the framework of the RCM.

The objectives of the II Regional Review in Latin America and the Caribbean are as follows:

- Enable Member States and other relevant stakeholders to evaluate GCM implementation, identify opportunities to enhance regional and cross-regional cooperation, and address challenges and priorities identified during the first round of Regional Reviews and by regional processes and initiatives.
- Facilitate Member States and other relevant stakeholders in assessing progress, challenges, and opportunities in implementing the recommended actions set out in the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) Progress Declaration.
- Formulate key findings and recommendations to inform the 2026 IMRF.

Member countries recognized the roadmap towards the II Regional Review of the GCM, scheduled to take place in Santiago, Chile, from March 18 to 20, 2025. They acknowledged the pivotal role that both regional conferences play in reinforcing cooperation on international migration in all its dimensions, in accordance with the objectives and guiding principles of the GCM.



V RCM-SACM Plenary Meeting · Bogotá, October 2024 · Photo: IOM.



Left to right: Johanna Sáenz, regional advisor, UNDP; Rudi Maxwald, senior liaison officer, IOM; Minister Counsellor María Lourdes Boné, Consulate of Uruguay in Bogotá. Photo: IOM.



Left to right: Debra Baptist-Estrada, Principal Director, Immigration Department of Belize, PPT of the RCM; Marcela Ceballos Medina, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Colombia, PPT of the SACM; Eduardo Rojo, Executive Secretary, RCM; Josué Gastelbondo, coordinator CSM; Alejandro Guidi, IOM Office for Argentina with Regional Functions. Photo: IOM.

Colombia led the initial session on Migration Governance, emphasizing the challenges countries face in integrating gender and climate policies into their migration management strategies. Despite some progress, there remains a significant gap, particularly in effectively addressing human trafficking and displacement. Colombia highlighted its Feminist Foreign Policy and its National Policy on Climate-Induced Displacement, which primarily focus on internal migration.

The session also examined the socioeconomic integration of migrants, especially the transition from informal to formal labor markets. Many countries in the region are at different stages of policy development for reintegrating national returnees, but comprehensive frameworks are still lacking. Colombia shared its advancements in combating trafficking and smuggling through regulatory improvements but noted the persistently high rates of such crimes in Latin America, calling for stronger regional judicial cooperation.

Delegates stressed the importance of incorporating these strategies into migration policies and enhancing regional and international cooperation. Participants highlighted ongoing regional efforts to create lawful migration pathways and support governance. Recommendations included developing comprehensive migration policies, addressing the root causes of irregular migration, and improving interinstitutional and intersectoral efforts.

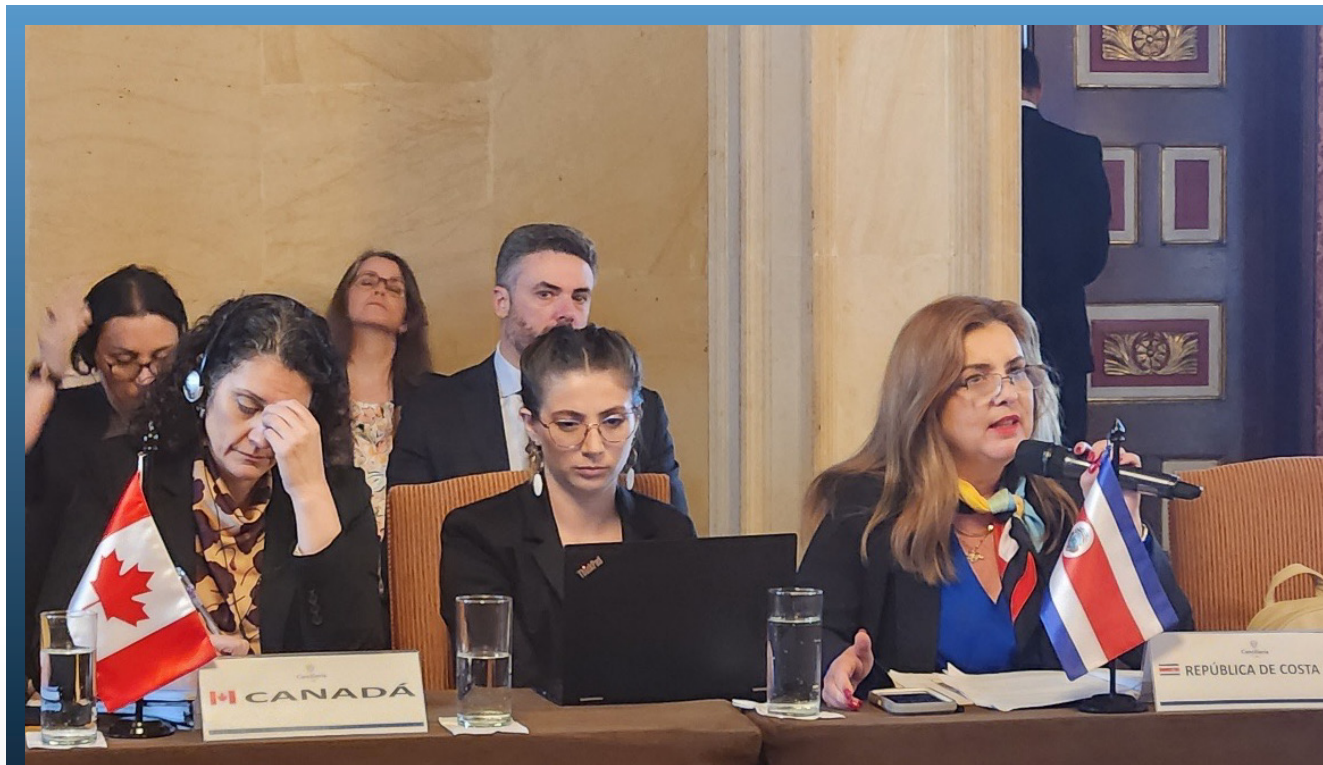
Tools shared during the session⁴:

- Labor Mobility Projects through support from the Safe Mobility Initiative/Western Hemisphere Program | Costa Rica; El Salvador; United States of America
- Ethical Labor Recruitment Program for Seasonal Workers | Belize
- Central America's successful inclusion of diverse actors into migration dialogues | RCM⁵
- Establishment of the Vice Ministry of Diaspora and Human Mobility | El Salvador
- National Policy on Displacement due to Climate Change | Colombia
- Intersectoral Commission for Rapid Response to Early Warnings (CIPRAT)⁶ | Colombia
- Feminist Foreign Policy | Chile; Colombia
- National Coordination Mechanism on Human Mobility | El Salvador
- Updating a toolbox for local governments | El Salvador
- New Migration Policy | Guatemala

⁴For all sessions of the dialogue between the two conferences, Member Countries shared good practices, policies and tools on Migration Governance. A list of best practices is included after the summary of each session (except for session 2).

⁵Dialogue spaces on assistance needs for migrant women Increasing participation of stakeholders from the labor world in the RCM

⁶ Comisión Intersectorial para la Respuesta Rápida a las Alertas Tempranas (CIPRAT)



Left to right: Shannon-Marie Soni, Senior Director, Canada; Marisol Aguilar, Technical Specialist, RCM; Marta Vindas Gonzalez, Director General of Migration and Foreigners, Costa Rica. Photo: IOM.

The second session, led by Costa Rica, focused on the challenges posed by irregular migration flows in the region.

Costa Rica highlighted the risks faced by migrants, including exploitation, human trafficking, smuggling, and dangerous natural disasters along migration routes. The presentation emphasized the necessity of addressing structural causes of irregular migration, such as economic instability, insecurity, and environmental degradation, while adopting a preventive approach centered on protecting human rights.

Education and awareness campaigns were recommended as crucial tools for informing potential migrants about the risks associated with irregular migration and the importance of pursuing legal pathways. Other proposed solutions included promoting sustainable development, combatting trafficking and smuggling, and enhancing regional cooperation

and the harmonization of migration policies, with an emphasis on prioritizing human rights and the protection of migrants.

In the subsequent dialogue, delegations expressed support for the proposed solutions, particularly coordinated efforts to combat trafficking and smuggling. Additional challenges identified included the issue of brain drain in the Caribbean, which necessitates policies in both origin and destination countries to facilitate lawful migration. Participants underscored the importance of addressing the root causes of migration, with proposals to reconsider blockades in the region, review regularization requirements and costs, expand humanitarian pathways, and adopt child-sensitive policies. There was consensus on continuing joint efforts to discourage irregular migration.



From left to right: Marta Bonet Guericabeitia, Director General of Consular Affairs, Immigration and Chileans Abroad; Pedro Hernández, Director of the Migration Division, Chile. Photo: IOM.

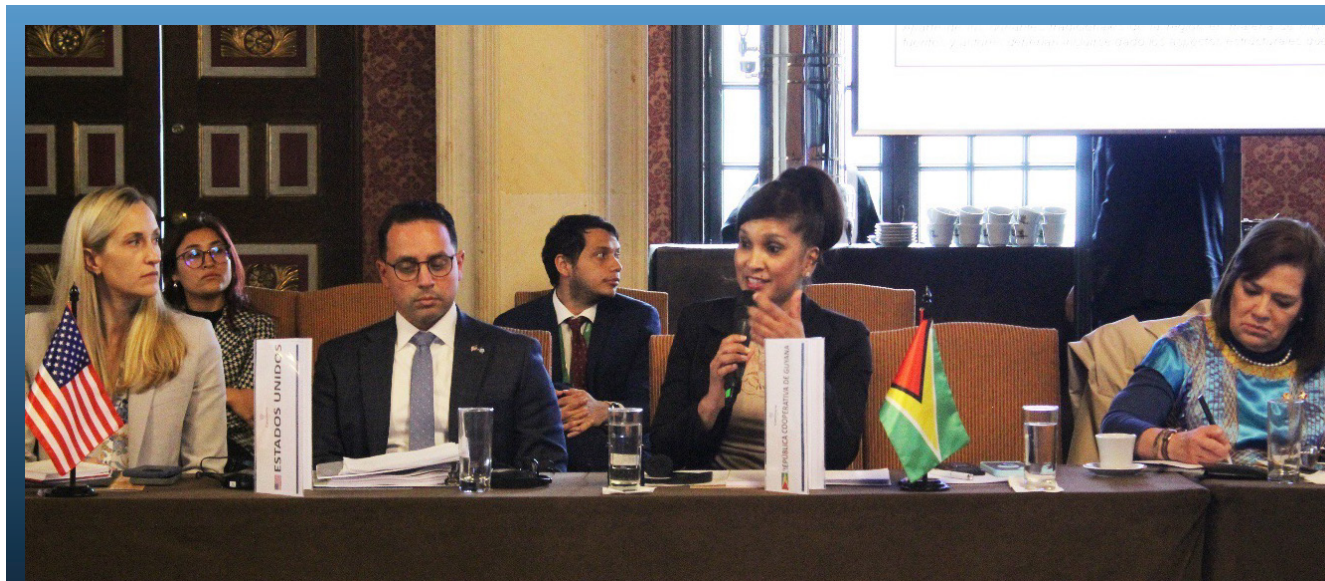
During this session, Chile emphasized the importance and advantages of addressing migration through a comprehensive strategy by establishing an Early Warning System (EWS), particularly for countries experiencing high influxes. Chile also offered to share its expertise with RCM member states and proposed data exchange to enhance prevention and anticipation efforts within the region.

While the benefits of an EWS were widely acknowledged, participants identified several challenges, especially concerning data privacy and the need for standardized migrant classifications

to ensure consistency in shared data. Participants mentioned that clear agreements on data privacy and the harmonization of legal and technical systems are crucial for the successful implementation of EWS across the region. Additionally, it was highlighted that policies must discourage irregular migration to protect migrants from perilous journeys, and there is a pressing need for interinstitutional technical platforms to collect qualitative data. This would aid in better understanding transit patterns and improving migration management.

Related best practices, policies and tools shared during the session:

- Issuance of safe conducts | Guatemala
- Early Warning System | Chile
- National Policy on Migration and Foreigners (Decree 181/2023) | Chile
- Central American Agreement on Free Mobility (CA-4) | Guatemala /El Salvador /Honduras /Nicaragua
- Regional Instrument for the Identification of Vulnerabilities of Migrants at Borders | RCM/ RNCOM



From left to right: Representative of the United States; Rosalinda Rasul, Head of the Diaspora Unit, Guyana; Martha Patricia Ruiz Anchondo, Ambassador of Mexico to Colombia. Photo: IOM.

In Session 4, Ecuador detailed its initiatives in regularization processes and legal pathways for migrant integration. Key programs were highlighted that provide both temporary and permanent residency to migrants, with a new cycle aiming to regularize 96,000 migrants over eight months. Ecuador emphasized that offering legal avenues helps reduce irregular migration and grants access to public services for vulnerable populations. The importance of digitalizing these processes and conducting awareness campaigns to inform migrants of their rights was also stressed.

Ecuador acknowledged ongoing challenges, including legal, financial, and political constraints, and called for enhanced regional cooperation to harmonize legal frameworks and mitigate the “pull effect,” which often exacerbates migration pressures. Key considerations for successful migrant integration included the recognition

of professional qualifications to facilitate labor market integration, fostering social cohesion, and ensuring international protections for migrants.

Participants agreed on the necessity of regional coordination but raised concerns about barriers to regularization, such as documentation costs and bureaucratic obstacles, advocating for reforms to improve accessibility. Several delegations underscored the importance of addressing economic instability in origin countries as part of a broader solution. The discussion also focused on combating xenophobia in host countries and the need for inclusive policies that protect vulnerable groups while ensuring that migrants contribute to the host economies.

Related best practices, policies and tools shared during the session:

- World Council of Cooperatives (WOCCU) Agreement | Ecuador
- Strengthening of public services of local governments | Ecuador
- Purchase with Purpose Initiative | Ecuador
- Regular Labor Migratory Flow | Costa Rica

- Migration Card Project | El Salvador/ Guatemala/ Honduras
- Government's granting of nationality to children and adolescents independent of parents' immigration status | Chile
- Establishment of Migration Law and Policy | Costa Rica
- Mercosur Agreement on Residencies for Partner and Associated States | Argentina
- Law 19.254 to fast-track permanent residence procedure for MERCOSUR citizens | Uruguay
- Migrant integration centers | Argentina
- Digital platforms for improving access to regularization services | Chile
- Operation "Migration in your neighborhood" | Chile
- Capacity building projects to support regularization and socio-economic integration of migrants in LAC | Canada



Belize led the session on trafficking and smuggling of migrants, discussing the changing tactics used by criminal networks and the importance of a comprehensive and coordinated response to these issues across the region. Belize outlined their relevant policies and shared its experiences of how these networks are identified within the country. Belize proposed establishing regional task forces and cross-border investigative teams, with an emphasis on smaller countries that may lack resources to combat these networks independently. They emphasized the need for victim-centered systems, especially for vulnerable groups such as children.

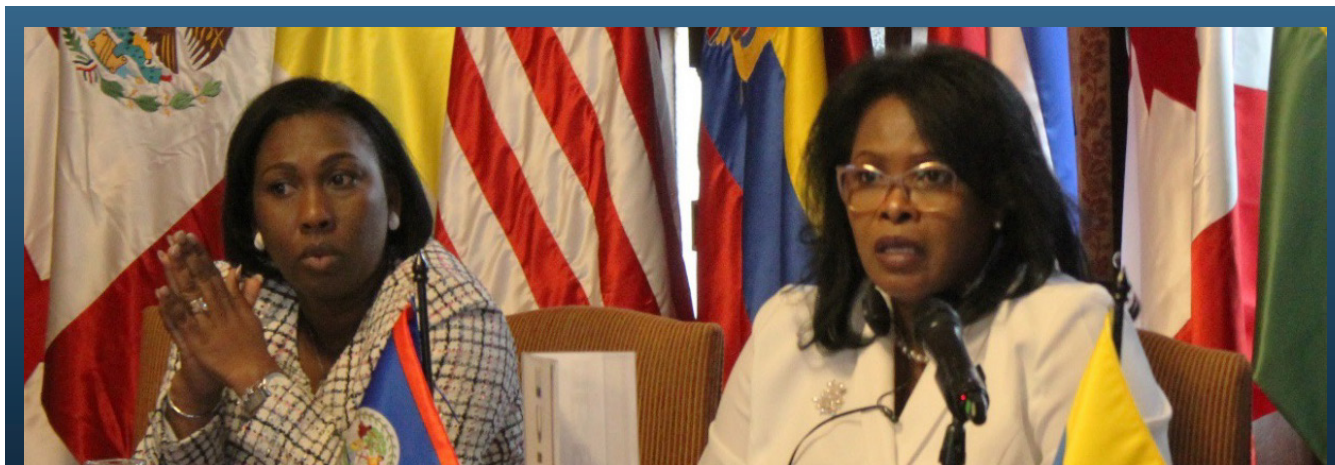
Several delegations supported the recommendations to establish cross-border investigation teams and enhance intelligence-sharing networks. There was also recognition of the importance of identifying trafficked persons and routes. Participants called for improved coordination between law enforcement agencies and the private sector to address the exploitation of vulnerable populations, and a revision of the protocols for Regional Platform Against Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants (PRETT)⁷ and Regional Coalition Against Trafficking in Persons and Migrant Smuggling (CORETT)⁸.

Related best practices, policies and tools shared during the session:

- Enhancing training of officials to support intelligence sharing | Guyana
- Consular coordination protocols for victim protection | Bolivia
- Regional cooperation and coordination against transnational organizations in trafficking | USA
- Capacity building projects to counter trafficking investigations in LAC | Canada
- Inter-Institutional Commission against Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking in Persons of Honduras (CICEST) | Honduras
- Intersectoral Protocol for Assistance to Victims of Trafficking in Persons | Chile
- Ill-Gotten Finances Act to disrupt trafficking networks | Belize

⁷ PRETT Members: Argentina, Bolivia, Brasil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Perú, Uruguay and Venezuela.

⁸ CORETT Members: Belize, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama.



Left to Right: Shanika Norales, Port Commander, Immigration Belize and Debra Baptist-Estrada, Principal Director, Immigration Belize. Photo: IOM.

Panama led the discussion on the intersection of migration and environmental factors, focusing on the Darien National Park, which has become a challenging transit route for migrants. To regulate this crossing, they announced the closure of all informal entries into the country. Panama outlined how smugglers promote it online, leading vulnerable individuals, including children, into risky situations involving criminal groups, difficult terrain, and environmental hazards. Emphasizing the need for managed entry points to prevent illegal crossings, safeguard human lives, and minimize environmental impact, including the 9,000 tons of waste left behind by migrants, Panama showed a documentary that shed light on the situation. Panama called for regional cooperation to ensure both public safety and environmental protection.

During the discussion, Panama's campaign message, «Darien is not a route, it is a jungle,» was introduced as an important awareness tool for migrants from approximately 92 nationalities. Delegates agreed that the humanitarian and environmental challenges in the Darien require shared responsibility and a comprehensive approach, combining migration management with local development strategies. Other recommendations included developing national adaptation plans with migration components and implementing early warning systems to anticipate displacement and improve decision-making. The importance of removing the stigma associated with the Darien, a region also recognized for eco-tourism, was highlighted.

Related best practices, policies and tools shared during the session:

- Climate Migration focus to develop a first of its kind climate migration report | USA
- Regulated entry points for migration through the Darien Gap | Panama
- Environmentally friendly humanitarian aid | USA
- National Plan for the Implementation of the GCM | El Salvador
- Regional Working Group on Migration, Environment and Climate Change | SACM
- Contingency for disaster in Migration Policy along with temporary protection status for migrants | Guatemala
- Tripartite Mechanism for addressing irregular migration and transit issues | Colombia
- Capacity building projects to develop targeted adaptation solutions and to better understand displacement exacerbated by climate change. | Canada



Cindy Mariella Portal, Vice Minister of Diaspora and Human Mobility (Center). Photo: IOM.

El Salvador's initial presentation focused on the significance of remittances for supporting development and the economic reintegration of migrants into their home countries. El Salvador shared its national strategy to promote investment from remittances, emphasizing the role of the Salvadoran diaspora in contributing to the country's growth. It underlined the importance of the diaspora, that with government support, have found the conditions to invest and reintegrate into their country of origin. The session also addressed the use of digital platforms to reduce the cost of remittance transfers and enhance financial inclusion for migrant communities.

Several delegations highlighted the challenges associated with high transfer costs, inadequate technological infrastructure, and exchange rate fluctuations, which often diminish the positive impact of remittances. They advocated for increased competition among remittance service providers, government incentives, and financial education for migrants to lower costs and maximize benefits for receiving households. It was also noted that regulating remittance channels is crucial to preventing funds from reaching trafficking networks.

Related best practices, policies and and tools shared during the session:

- Remittance-based development programs to boost economic reintegration | El Salvador
- "Return to Homeland" Plan | Venezuela
- National Plan for the Implementation Global Compact on Migration | El Salvador
- Human Mobility Policy with elements of protection for the diaspora | El Salvador
- Digital platform strategies to streamline remittance services | Dominican Republic
- "Governments on the Ground" Initiative to promote citizen participation | Chile



From left to right: Rafael Mendes Bernardes, Second Secretary of the Brazilian Consulate in Bogotá; André Veras, Minister, Director of the Department of Immigration and Legal Cooperation. Photo: IOM.

Peru and Brazil led a session on consular assistance for nationals in countries without diplomatic representation, discussing the challenges migrants face in accessing essential services such as health and education. Peru provided examples of virtual consular services, while Brazil highlighted the importance of bilateral agreements that enable neighboring countries to support each other's nationals in the absence of consular offices.

The discussion addressed the role of regional cooperation in ensuring consular assistance to migrants regardless of their location, with a focus on vulnerable groups, including those in conflict zones. Delegations considered other solutions

such as third-country mediation, mobile consulates for remote areas, and coordination to enhance consular legal capacities, particularly for document issuance.

Additionally, participants emphasized the need to activate the consular cooperation clause in the Andean Migratory Statute framework to expand the network, improve consular collaboration, and enhance services across the region. The consensus was that strengthened consular cooperation and innovative approaches are essential to addressing gaps in consular representation and assistance.

Related best practices, policies and tools shared during the session:

- Mobile consulates in remote areas | Guatemala
- Virtual consular services to support nationals abroad | Peru
- Care in the framework of the Pacific Alliance | Chile
- Bilateral agreements for consular cooperation | Brazil
- Mercosur residency agreements facilitating cross-border consular assistance | South America
- Protocol for the Management and Humanitarian Assistance of Salvadoran Nationals | Chile
- Andean Migratory Statute framework | South America
- Communication through digital documents for emergency cases | Costa Rica
- Bilateral agreement for the search of minors in Colombia | Colombia and Venezuela

The topics and key elements of the roadmaps were identified by Member Countries through an online survey and several working group meetings by the troikas prior to the RCM-SACM joint plenary. This collaborative approach enabled countries to share their perspectives on common migration challenges and develop regional cooperation strategies on three priority areas.

The participants recommended three roadmaps for implementation in 2025 to advance regional cooperation in favor of the protection of the rights of migrants and the interests of host communities through a comprehensive follow-up by each of the parties with technical and financial support by the international organizations present at the event.

Roadmap 1

Theme: Human Rights and Humanitarian Action at International Borders

Subtopics:

Cross-cutting: Differentiated care with a gender focus

1. Trafficking and smuggling of migrants
2. Combating xenophobia
3. Practices to combat statelessness

General Objective:

Strengthen the knowledge and capacity of border officials, especially first responders, of the countries that make up the RCM and SACM in the protection of the human rights of people on the move at borders and in response to the protection needs of migrants and refugees with a gender perspective, against xenophobia, statelessness, trafficking and smuggling of migrants.

Specific Objectives:

1. Carry out training aimed for border officials and/or those with public security tasks from the Member Countries of the RCM and SACM, addressing human rights, humanitarian action at borders.

Outcome Objective 1:

Skills, expertise, and overall effectiveness of border officials' of both conferences on human rights and humanitarian action including differentiated attention with a gender approach, combatting xenophobia, statelessness, trafficking and smuggling of migrants strengthened; and a knowledge product on the activity created and disseminated.

Indicators

1. Number of officials participating in the training.
2. Number of staff members who believe that the knowledge acquired can be applied in their work.
3. Knowledge product, which includes what is addressed in the training, in order to disseminate the scope.

Roadmap 2

Topic: Protection of migrants in vulnerable conditions, with emphasis on the comprehensive assistance of children and adolescents.

General Objective:

Learn about the experience of both regions in relation to the protection of migrants in vulnerable conditions, with an emphasis on comprehensive assistance of migrant children and adolescents, through the identification of common challenges, a dialogue with children and adolescents and the use of technical operational tools.

Specific Objectives:

1. To make a brief overview of the main steps that the RCM has taken to prioritize, position and develop specific products in terms of protection and comprehensive assistance to children and adolescents.
2. Present good practices of the Member Countries of each conference on the protection and assistance of children and adolescents in communities of transit, return and/or destination, in terms of education and psychosocial support.
3. Address the challenges and opportunities for improvement in the protection of migrant children, with special emphasis on differentiated care between children and adolescents, particularly with respect to the care of adolescents who are partners, and timely care in matters of addictions, among others.

Outcome Objective 1:

The Member Countries of the SACM are aware of the line of work and instruments that the RCM has developed for more than 10 years in the field of protection and care of children and adolescents in human mobility.

Indicators

4. Number of MBF countries that are aware of the history of RCM in this area for the first time.
5. Number of participants who recognize the RCM instruments as a contribution to the design and/or complement of public policies in favor of children.

Outcome Objective 2:

The participating countries share good practices on the protection of migrant children, focused on issues of education and psychosocial support in the communities of transit, destination and/or return.

Indicators

1. Number of good practices exchanged during the event.
2. Number of participants who indicate that they would replicate some of these good practices in their countries.
3. Number of voices of children and adolescents explaining their experiences.

Outcome Objective 3:

The participating countries reflect on the importance of addressing common challenges and opportunities for improvement through dialogue and regional joint work and of translating these efforts into operational tools.

Indicators

1. Number of challenges or opportunities for improvement identified during the event.
2. Number of recommendations shared to address challenges or opportunities for improvement.

Roadmap 3

Topic: Social and labor integration of migrants

General Objective:

Make available to the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM) the experience of the Member States of the South American Conference on Migration (SACM) in terms of socio-labor and cultural integration of migrants.

Specific Objectives:

1. Make available to the RCM the «Survey of agreements and declarations of the South American States in regional processes on migration on the axes of socio-labor and educational integration», a study that the SACM has published in 2024.
2. Promote the MERCOSUR Residence Agreement, the Andean Migration Statute, and the experiences of other regional mechanisms as key tools in the South American region that aim to provide a solution to the migratory situation of migrants. Both are binding instruments in two main stages: promoting freedom of movement and the establishment of residence. Likewise, since regularization is the first step for integration, it is proposed to promote good practices of social and labor integration: access to health and education, social security, recognition of degrees, among others.

Outcome Objective 1:

The analysis of the current regional regulations on socio-labor integration and education in the region is extended to the region covered by the RCM, as well as the status of implementation by both the countries covered by the SACM and RCM.

Indicators

6. Number of RCM countries that are aware of the «Survey of agreements and declarations of the States of South America in regional processes on migration on the axes of socio-labor integration and education»
7. Number of studies that analyze the current regional regulations and their implementation on socio-labor integration and education in the regions covered by the RCM and CSM, through agreements and declarations in regional blocks.
8. Number of studies that include a section that analyzes the status of implementation of the surveyed regulations.

Outcome Objective 2:

RCM Member Countries receive information on key instruments from the South American region that facilitates the free movement and residence of migrants, through a workshop given by government representatives of the Member States.

Indicators

1. Number of participants from the RCM and SACM in the Workshop.
2. Number of RCM participants who indicate that they are aware of the instruments for the first time.
3. Number of RCM participants who indicate which aspects of the instruments and good practices presented can be replicated in their region.





V RCM-SACM Plenary Meeting - Bogotá, October 2024. Photo: IOM.

The joint two-day meeting between the RCM and the SACM concluded with several key outcomes:

- Technical knowledge and understanding of migration trends, policies, practices, tools, and experiences in migration governance were significantly enhanced.
- Three roadmaps focusing on human rights, child and adolescent protection, and socioeconomic integration were validated and endorsed by Member Countries, establishing them as pivotal themes for future cooperation between RCM and SACM in addressing migration challenges across the region.
- Both conferences underscored the necessity of expanding legal migration pathways and harmonizing regularization processes to promote safe, orderly, and humane migration, emphasizing the importance of coordinated regional approaches.
- There was a strong emphasis on addressing the root causes of migration, such as poverty, insecurity, and environmental degradation, through cooperative efforts and sustainable development initiatives.
- Intelligence sharing and data collection were identified as crucial components in combating transnational crimes, including trafficking and smuggling.
- The protection of human rights, particularly for vulnerable populations, and the integration of climate change considerations into migration policies were highlighted as essential priorities.
- Continued collaboration between RCM and SACM was deemed critical, with an agreement to maintain regular joint plenary meetings and enhance capacity-building efforts to address shared migration challenges at the local level.



Joint Communiqué

Regional Conference on Migration (RCM) and the South American Conference on Migration (SACM)

V Plenary Meeting

Bogotá D.C. Republic of Colombia, October 10 and 11, 2024

In Bogotá, Republic of Colombia, on October 10 and 11, 2024, the V Plenary Meeting between the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM) and the South American Conference on Migration (SACM) was held. This event had the participation of representatives from 22 countries from North America, Central America, South America and the Caribbean. The meeting was co-chaired by Belize, as Presidency Pro Tempore (PPT) of the RCM, and the Republic of Colombia, as PPT of the SACM.

These consultative processes on international migration, which have the longest history in the hemisphere, are established on the basis of fundamental respect for the human rights of migrants and an understanding of the various structural and multidimensional causes that converge in both regions at different stages of the migration process. The conferences facilitate dialogue between governments, observer organizations, the Regional Network of Civil Organizations for Migration (RNCOM) and special guests.

The governments of both conferences, through the PPTs of the Republic of Colombia and Belize, prioritized issues of common interest, such as migration governance; irregular migratory flows; travel documents, early warnings; regularization and legal pathways for socioeconomic integration; international protection mechanisms; voluntary, dignified and safe return; and the fight against Human Trafficking and Smuggling.

Additionally, key topics such as migration, the environment and the potential impacts of natural disasters on the decision to migrate, the reduction of the cost of sending remittances, the assistance and protection of nationals in cases of absence of consular representation, as well as the trends in migratory flows in both regions were discussed and analyzed. All the aforementioned topics were discussed in the presence and with the participation

of the RNCOM and international organizations, whose perspectives and humanitarian work made significant contributions to the conversation.

The participants acknowledged the different roadmaps that can be implemented in 2025, so that this V Plenary Meeting advances multilateral cooperation with lines of work in favor of the protection of the rights of migrants and the interests of host communities ensuring comprehensive follow-up by each of the parties, with the support of the technical and financial capacity of the international organizations present at the event.

Both conferences also reaffirmed their commitment to recognize the contributions that migrant populations offer to the development of countries of origin, destination and return. In this regard, countries confirmed the need to promote the comprehensive exercise of the rights of migrants, as well as their full socio-economic and cultural integration throughout the migratory cycle, according with the national law of each country.

The States agreed to continue addressing migration between the two conferences, through follow-up meetings between Troikas of both mechanisms, with the intention of maintaining a substantive and fluid dialogue between them.

The participating countries and organizations extend their gratitude to the People and Government of the Republic of Colombia for their hospitality and for the efforts to hold the V Plenary Meeting of the RCM and the SACM. They also express their appreciation to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Government of Canada, the secretariats of the respective regional consultative processes, and the observer organizations that have collaborated and supported this event.







<https://bit.ly/CRM-CSM-2024>



