



PRESS RELEASE

The Commonwealth of The Bahamas - IOM - UNHCR Caribbean Regional Conference on the Protection of Vulnerable Persons in Mixed Migration Flows - Promoting Cooperation and Identification of Good Practices

Nassau/Washington, DC, May 22, 2013 -- Government officials from 19 Caribbean States and Territories, along with representatives from civil society and international and regional organizations, are gathering this week in Nassau, The Bahamas, for a Caribbean Regional Conference organized by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

In the Keynote Address, marking the opening of the Regional Conference today, the Honourable Philip E. Davis, M.P., Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs & Immigration and Deputy Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas articulated that, "Due to the unique archipelagic nature, The Bahamas is continually challenged to identify the most effective means which can be employed to address and confront the complex and unabated migratory flows which finds its way to the shores of The Bahamas. The Government of The Bahamas in its quest to systematically mitigate the adverse effects of irregular migration is conscious of the fact that the issue of migration is a complex one. As a consequence the Government being mindful of international obligation is committed to ensuring that persons who fall within the definition of vulnerable migrant population i.e. potential trafficking in persons victims or asylum seekers are afforded the necessary protection and care."

The two-day event, beginning Wednesday, 22 May, aims to promote regional cooperation and dialogue, to identify good practices in managing mixed migration flows in the Caribbean and to examine the protection of those traveling within mixed flows. Such flows often consist of asylum-seekers, refugees, victims of trafficking, unaccompanied minors, and economic migrants who use the same travel methods and routes, whether originating from within or outside the region.

"In the Caribbean as elsewhere, migrants are increasingly moving from, through and within the region. The new complexities of these flows require innovative and collective approaches to migration management while protecting the most vulnerable" noted Mr. Robert Paiva, IOM Regional Director for Central and North America and the Caribbean.

UNHCR
Communications and Public
Information
www.UNHCRwashington.org
@UNHCRdc

1775 K Street, NW
Suite 300
Washington, DC

Brian Hansford
T 202-243-7623
M 202-999-8253
hansford@unhcr.org
@B_Hansford



The Conference will focus on a range of mixed migration issues of common concern such as the collection of data and analysis of migration profiles within the context of natural disasters and mobility; protection-sensitive entry systems; rescue at sea operations, interception and disembarkation; identification and protection of victims of trafficking and other vulnerable groups; and solutions for refugees and other vulnerable groups, including voluntary return and reintegration.

The Conference's panelist presentations and plenary discussion offer participants a forum to exchange information, experiences and good practices in responding to the challenges nationally and regionally. Lastly, through the Conference's discussions, it is expected that participants identify country-specific initiatives that assist Governments in responding to these challenges in a protection-sensitive manner with the support of IOM, UNHCR, and other international partners and donors.

"There is a positive spectrum of good practices relating to the protection of vulnerable persons in mixed migration flows in countries in the Caribbean worthy of highlighting. It is our hope that these practices will be further developed and replicated throughout the region" stated Mr. Shelly Pitterman, UNHCR Regional Representative for the United States and the Caribbean.

For more information, please contact:

For the Government of The Bahamas – Ms. Natasha Turnquest, Acting Head, Legal Affairs Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Immigration
Tel: 1-242- 502-9533; 1-242-356-5956

For UNHCR - Brian Hansford, Senior Regional Information Officer at:
+1 202 243 7623; Mobile: +1 202 999 8253; hansford@unhcr.org

For updates, follow UNHCR Regional Representative Shelly Pitterman on Twitter@ShellyPitterman

For IOM - Niurka Pineiro, Senior Regional Media and Communication Officer and Spokesperson, Western Hemisphere Tel: +1.202.8621826 Ext. 225; Mobile: + 1 410 487 4950; Email: npineiro@iom.int or media@iom.int