

Texto de intervención para el Foro Mundial de Refugiados

[ENG]

Ginebra 2021

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi,

National delegates:

It is an honor for Costa Rica to co-host this event. Our country has had a tradition of international protection and respect and human rights. This tradition continues due to the country's geographical characteristic as a transit and destination country and as a haven for thousands fleeing their home countries due to terror or multiple social, political, or economic conflicts that put their lives, security, and liberty at risk.

Historically, Costa Rica has had strong public institutions. For instance, our Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) national chapter convenes 15 public institutions to coordinate at the highest level.

Notwithstanding, the pressure upon our national asylum system keeps increasing. Costa Rica is currently home to 145,000 asylum seekers, mainly from Nicaragua; this figure represents 2.6% of the total population and keeps growing every month.

Since the crisis in Nicaragua, asylum claims increased from 68 in 2017 to more than 23,000 in 2018 and more than 31,000 in 2019. In September 2021, this number reached 30,000 claims.

This means that there is pressure upon the national asylum system; in this scenario, international assistance becomes key to continuing with these actions and strengthening state capacities.

Notwithstanding, Costa Rica's commitment towards refugees and asylum seekers continues.

Since Costa Rica became a member state of the MIRPS, it has made concrete progress in strengthening its national asylum system and has made significant contributions to the full implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees.

The work achieved under Costa Rica's CRRF national chapter (MINARE) has been of paramount importance to fulfill and follow up the commitments adopted by the country at Global Refugee Forum.

To increase the protection mechanisms available, Costa Rica approved a special temporary complementary protection category for Venezuelans, Nicaraguans, and Cubans that have had their asylum claim denied but cannot return to their countries. This category protects them for two years, includes a non-restrictive work permit that can be renewable for two consecutive periods. It has been estimated that this measure will benefit 25,000 persons.

The state has granted access to the public health system to 10,000 asylum seekers who are in a situation of vulnerability or that have chronic health conditions through an agreement entered by the Social Security Bureau and UNHCR.

The Government included all refugees and asylum seekers into the national Covid-19 vaccination strategy, even reaching the remotest parts of the territory.

Costa Rica has made progress in the five commitments related to statelessness with the approval of Law 9710, which creates and regulates special procedures to grant trans-border indigenous persons full access to their nationality rights, improves the registry and identification services, and supports stateless persons get access to durable solutions.

Until now, 140 persons have been granted status of stateless, 49 of those have already been naturalized and others are in the process of naturalization.

As you can see, Costa Rica has made its part and has maintained an open border policy; however, it is time for the international community to decisively step up with more financial assistance to support the response to refugees and to link humanitarian action with the development of host communities.

Thank you very much.