



## **POSITION PAPER OF THE MESOAMERICAN CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE COMMEMORATION OF CARTAGENA +30**

**Panama, 2<sup>nd</sup> of July 2014**

We, the civil society organizations of Mesoamerica are celebrating and embracing the invitation of the States and UNHCR in the framework of the commemoration of the 30 years of the Cartagena Declaration. We appreciate the opportunity to share our proposals in order to strengthen the protection system in our region, which is currently very nowadays due to new challenges caused by the different situations of violence and the subsequent humanitarian impact on the population of some of our countries.

This is why the Cartagena Declaration, and the Mexico Plan of Action adopted in 2004, are not just still applicable and valid, but represent indispensable tools to protect people affected by the violence that occurs in our region.

During the last few weeks the humanitarian situation of non-accompanied minors at the U.S. border is being discussed, ¿but what about our women suffering all kinds of abuse and violence, or our young people being recruited against their will, or the citizens that feel threatened and deprived of their most basic rights? All of these groups deserve integrated protection both within their own territories as well as outside their territories, when they cross their borders seeking asylum.

It is in our organizations' interest to contribute with actions to achieve the effective protection of the people, and this is why we are interested in continuing with these tri-party mechanisms of observation and monitoring that involve participation from civil society, academia, UNHCR and the States. These mechanisms recognize the central role of these partnerships in fulfilling the rights of people in need of international protection.

Taking into account the important advances made in the area of protection in recent years, new and important challenges still exist for the region: forced displacement – internal and cross-border – caused by transnational organised crime and other situations of violence, the violation of human rights, circular cycles of a lack of protection – in the place of origin, transit, and the destination, and displacements caused by natural disasters and climate change.

Finally, we urge the states to carry out a progressive application of the 1951 Refugee Convention, the effective implementation of the Cartagena Declaration, as well as all of the international instruments in the areas of Human Rights, Humanitarian Law and the International Refugee Law, including Conventions on Statelessness. In addition, the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and other instruments of protection should also be included, which should be reflected practically in the Action Plan of Brazil 2015-2024.

## **A. FORCED DISPLACEMENT RELATED TO TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME AND OTHER SITUATIONS OF VIOLENCE**

Since 2009, new dynamics of displacement have occurred in Mesoamerica, mainly in the countries located in the northern triangle of Central America (NTCA), where people are forced to leave their place of origin due to the consequences of transnational organized crime activities (TOC) and other situations of violence (OSV<sup>1</sup>).

Due to an increase of the violence rates, the absence of the State services, the lack of access to the justice system and impunity there is widespread fear among the population, which provokes internal forced displacement and sometimes leads to affected people seeking international protection.

Being an invisible phenomenon, it is difficult for the States to recognise the phenomenon of internal displacement because there are no institutions or normative frameworks responsible for preventing it and/or to provide protection and assistance using a differentiated approach for distinct populations.

The people being forcibly displaced, whether at an internal or transnational level, in which there has been an increase of non-accompanied women, children and adolescents, are facing a series of vulnerabilities during their displacement cycle: in their departure, during transit and upon arrival, and in some cases on their return (whether it is voluntary or forced). Particular assistance needs to be placed on the lack of an integrated public policy for the people that are systematically deported back to their country of origin; unfortunately, stigmatization and penalization for these people still exists, reducing their opportunities to be reinserted into society.

To conclude, it is important to note that host States don't always value the causes and dimensions of the forced displacement phenomenon, and by not guaranteeing their protection they expose these people to situations where their freedom or lives are at risk.

### **Proposals**

1. Urge States from the region to acknowledge the phenomenon of forced displacement (internal or transnational) in the region caused by TOC and OSV in order to guarantee scenarios of prevention, assistance and protection with a rights-based approach.
2. Strengthen regional dialogue spaces such as the Central American Integration System (SICA), the Central American Parliament (PARLACEN), the Regional Conference for Migration (RCM), the Regional Parliament Committee on Migration (COPAREM), and the Central American Court of Justice, in coordination with civil society organizations and international organizations to guarantee fulfilment of the rights of the people that are forcibly displaced. These entities from the region should consider including a specific chapter on the prevention, assistance and protection of forcibly displaced people that involves the responsibility of all of the States.

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<sup>1</sup> The term Other Situations of Violence (OSV) is used to define civil disorder, disturbances, State-based repression, post-electoral violence, gang violence and demonstrations. These are situations in which authorities often use extensive military or police force to maintain or restore law and order. While these aren't classified as armed conflict, the humanitarian consequence can be as serious as those that arise from conflict (ICRC, 2011).

3. Generate a national and regional information and statistical records system, reporting on forced displacement in Mesoamerica, which allows for an understanding of the causes, and identifies profiles and needs of victims and considers the experience of the civil society in the documentation and assistance provided to these cases.
4. Establish legal frameworks, public policies and protocols about the phenomenon of internal displacement, which allows for the development of prevention, protection and assistance programs for victims. All branches of government should have an active role in the design and effective application of the mentioned programs to protect the displaced population. The role of local government can be developed by incorporating the topic of internal displacement in their public policies.
5. Strengthen national justice systems to guarantee access and avoid impunity, with effective judicial processes able to provide protection and guarantee rights. Likewise, it is necessary to offer guarantees of protection to those that operate the justice system so they can carry out their duties, as well as providing the same guarantees to victims and witnesses.
6. Incorporate into the Ombudsman's Offices (or the equivalent) from the region the topic of forced displacement in order to contribute to the strengthening of citizen protection, governance and the rule of law.
7. Allocate resources in training of migration officers agents in protection and human rights, focused on forced displacement caused by the phenomena of COT and OSV.
8. Implement strategies and programs for the reception of people that have been deported from other countries and returnees in order to avoid circular forced displacement caused by the absence of assistance, protection and reintegration mechanisms in their communities.
9. We call upon the international community to recognize the phenomenon of forced displacement and its humanitarian impact on the region, and to allocate resources for the prevention, assistance and protection of the victims.

## **B. SPECIFIC PROTECTION NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS**

During the last few years, children and adolescents from the NTCA and Mexico are being exposed to forced recruitment, extortion, threats and other types of aggression resulting in an alarming increase of children and adolescents that are forced to displace within their countries and even cross borders in the company of their parents, with other family members or alone.

Unfortunately most of them are deported, alone or with family members, to their countries or origin, where they are again exposed to violence and a lack of protection. In 2014 it is expected that there will be an estimated 60.000 unaccompanied minors in the USA from Central America and Mexico<sup>2</sup>.

Children and adolescents are especially vulnerable and during different stages of the displacement they run the risk of becoming victims of human trafficking, sexual or labour exploitation, suffering accidents or physical and sexual abuse. During their travel and arrival they also face difficulties in accessing basic services that guarantee minimum protection standards.

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<sup>2</sup> UNHCR, Children on the Run: Unaccompanied Children Leaving Central America and Mexico and the need for International Protection, March 13<sup>th</sup> of 2014

Upon their arrival to the transit or destination countries, many of these children and adolescents are detained in migratory shelters, where there are no minimum requirements so that they are accommodated in a dignified manner and have access to their basic rights. In addition, there are no alternatives for detention for this population<sup>3</sup>, not even for those applying for refugee status. This factor influences the decision made regarding their applications, given that the waiting time is very long and these places don't meet the minimum standards. There are no clear assistance or coordination protocols within the different State institutions responsible for attending to this vulnerable population.

The legal frameworks for migration and asylum in some countries of the region specifically refer to these groups and identify their particular protection needs and the principle of the superior interest of the child; however, in practice actions that contradict these laws and principles are common, and there are no operative mechanisms so that this population can fully access and exercise their rights.

## **Proposals**

1. Urge governments to review the application and harmonization of the Convention on the Rights of the Child within their legislation relating to migration and international protection, including an absolute compliance with the principle of the superior interest of the child.
2. Develop and implement public policies and protocols in the area of childhood, especially for unaccompanied and/or separated children and adolescents, victims of human trafficking and migrants smuggling that require international protection, involving competent authorities and respecting the superior interest of the child and the principle of family reunification. Ensure that a differential approach in the provision of assistance is applied with this population.
3. Provide alternatives to the detention of children and adolescents, guaranteeing their protection, respect for their rights and the provision of legal, psychosocial and health assistance, and also ensuring permanent communication with their parents or family when it is requested.
4. Ensure the correct detection and reference of unaccompanied children and adolescents in need of international protection. Guarantee effective access to the procedure to determine their refugee status.
5. Allocate sufficient resources for the integrated assistance and protection of children that are victims of forced displacement, especially for the unaccompanied minors.
6. Strengthen coordination between the competent authorities and civil society organizations assisting this population in origin, transit and destination countries.
7. Strengthen consular protection policies, especially those directed at providing assistance to the population of unaccompanied children and adolescents with the goal of guaranteeing due process and accompaniment in cases in which they are returned and/or deported.
8. Reinforce programs for the integrated prevention, assistance and integral compensation/reparation of children and adolescent victims of forced recruitment caused by different actors from TOC and OSV, including the coordination of different state institutions (education, health, housing and security, among others).

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<sup>3</sup> Understanding detention as imprisonment or confinement within a closed place in which the person is not able to leave at will (UNHCR, 2012).

9. Generate conditions for the provision of reception, assistance and protection in the countries of origin, avoiding the re-victimization of children and adolescents and guaranteeing non-return to places where their lives, human dignity and freedom are in danger.
10. Promote protection mechanisms and/or the regulation of migratory processes for unaccompanied children and adolescents that for different reasons cannot return to their countries of origin.
11. Waive documentation costs for children and adolescents and their families who are in vulnerable conditions due to the humanitarian situation that the region is currently facing, guaranteeing the fundamental rights of these people.

### **C. MIXED MIGRATION FLOWS**

The migratory movements from the Mesoamerican region are characterized for being very complex, due to the multiple causes that are generating forced displacements. Also because of the high levels of vulnerability experienced by these people, whether they are internally displaced, asylum seekers or refugee applicants, victims of human trafficking, pregnant women, unaccompanied children or adolescents, people with diverse sexualities, people with distinct capacities, from other continents, from indigenous populations and others. Within this context, a person could comply with two or more profiles and have more than one protection need.

The trend for reducing the causes of migration in the region to a merely economic matter has resulted in the invisibility of forced migration and the displacements caused by OSV, TOC, natural disasters, climate change, mega projects, etc.

In situations of war and generalized violence, people can be forced to flee due to well-founded fears of persecution, as established in the definition of refugees in the 1951 Convention as well as in the definition from the Cartagena Declaration. As a result, these circumstances require the development of an integrated and updated understanding of the challenges related to international protection that the region is facing.

The border areas of the region continue to be complex scenarios where States haven't provided an appropriate response. This has caused the development of precarious conditions that affect the population who transits between these countries, with some of these people in need of international protection.

The border areas, migration control points and migratory routes in which mixed migration flows transit have become drug, human and arms trafficking routes, as well as scenarios of general crime that generate violence due to the presence of illegal groups and criminals. The institutional presence along the borders is weak, with a strong focus on national security without providing sufficient assistance to guarantee and protect human rights.

The non-differentiated implementation of security and migration laws by border authorities, the lack of knowledge and non-provision of information on international protection or the possibility of applying for refugee status create significant risk for the population in need of international protection in these zones. There is a lack of knowledge or a lack of application of mechanisms that

allow an appropriate identification of the specific protection needs of the people in relation to the complex dynamics of migration flows.

In the area of people trafficking, while there has been an improvement in legislation and public policies in some countries such as Costa Rica, there is still a lack of resources for the provision of appropriate assistance to victims. For example there is no temporary accommodation available that would provide shelter and protection.

In some countries there are complementary protection mechanisms, such as humanitarian visas for people who have protection needs. However, these visa categories should not be used as substitutes or affect the provision of refugee status to those people that qualify as refugees.

The detention of the people requesting refugee status is still a common practice that is observed within the region. The use of different euphemisms (personal security, temporary custody, administrative detention) for being held against their will has negative effects on the recognition and defence of their right to freedom. This results in the normalization and social invisibility of being held against their will, increasing its repetition and excessive use.

## Proposals

1. Immediately adopt migration policies that respect human rights, and adhere to the *Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Peace Zone*, signed by the members of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) in January of 2014.
2. Transform the national security approach that States implement in their migration policies into a human security approach, which favours actions for the prevention, protection and assistance for asylum seekers, refugees, internally displaced people and migrants.
3. Establish public policies and procedures that strengthen the detection and referral of people according to their profile - asylum seekers, victims of human trafficking and smuggling, unaccompanied minors and others - in border areas and migration routes, guaranteeing access and exercising of their rights, including people detained in migration detention centres.
4. Guarantee the application of protection safeguards at borders and ports of entry, such as the principle of no-return, non-punishment for illegal entry, non-discrimination and the right to seek asylum. Train migration authorities in the border zones and ports of entry in best practices relating to the detection and treatment of asylum seekers through appropriate assistance and reference protocols. Provide permanent information at borders, ports of entry and migration stations/detention centres regarding the procedure to determine refugee status and people's rights in this situation. Strengthen the presence of State institutions and public services in border zones.
5. Implement liberation measures and alternatives to migratory detention that allow asylum seekers to live within the community with freedom of movement while their migratory situation is resolved, favouring the legal recognition of the principle of non-detention.
6. Apply the Regional Guidelines for the Preliminary Identification of Profiles and Referral Mechanisms for Migrant Populations in Vulnerable Conditions across the region, which were agreed upon in the XVIII Vice-ministerial Meeting at the Regional Conference on Migration

held in 2014, as well as the Guiding Memo on Refugee Status Determination related to Victims of Organized Crime.

7. Standardize the crime of people smuggling in national criminal law.
8. Ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families and the incorporation of the Brasilia Regulations Regarding Access to Justice for Vulnerable People within internal legislation.
9. Apply complementary protection measures when required, but not as a substitute or in detriment to the actual recognition of the need for international protection for those who qualify as refugees.
10. Encourage the States to identify and attend to the lack of birth registration, documenting the population to avoid the risk of statelessness, especially in border areas.

#### **D. PROCEDURES TO REFUGEE STATUS DETERMINATION**

In the last decade there has been significant progress in the protection of refugees in the Mesoamerican region with the recognition of the right to seek asylum in different legal national frameworks. However, there are still important challenges in strengthening the legal and institutional frameworks in order to consolidate Mesoamerica as a true protection space.

It is important to mention that some of the national legal frameworks or practices in the area of asylum are not always consistent with the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, and unfortunately they don't always include the broader definition of refugees included in the Cartagena Declaration. The procedures in place for the refugee status determination have several gaps related to the guarantee of due process. As a consequence, many of the people seeking international protection may not have their application approved, remaining in the host countries with no regular status and without access to protection mechanisms.

There is also a weak handling of the cases of asylum seekers in the borders and ports of entry – there is a lack of information and there isn't sufficient identification provided to applicants – and the principle of non-return is not always respected. In some cases the asylum seekers report rejection, unfair treatments, and extortion by security and migration authorities.

In many cases, administrative detention prevents people in need of international protection from accessing procedures. In some countries, when they apply for refugee status they are detained in migration stations for the duration of the procedure. Some countries criminalize and punish people in need of international protection for not having a regular migration status.

In some other countries there are no updated and reliable records or databases regarding the population that is in need of international protection, which makes the phenomenon invisible and creates difficulties for the planning of protection programs.

The centralization of the National Commissions responsible for the process of refugee status determination (CONAREs or their equivalent) represents an obstacle in accessing this procedure, whether applicants are located in border areas or other parts of the country. Finally, in several

countries we noted discrimination and stigmatization addressed to the refugee population by authorities and the general population.

The biggest challenges include:

- The strong national security approach that impedes investigations/information requests about applications, as well as the lack of information from countries of origin.
- The adherence to deadlines (or the absence of them) for responding to the applications to refugee status determination.
- The low existing rates of refugee status recognition in the region.
- The existence of pre-admission requirements that impede effective access to procedures to refugee status determination.
- The excessively short deadlines for submitting applications.
- The lack of representation and legal assistance for people that request international protection.
- The lack of appropriate reasons given for the decisions made.
- The high cost of documentation for asylum seekers and refugees in some countries.

## **Proposals**

1. Guarantee a progressive interpretation of the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol and incorporate and apply the extended definition of refugee in the Cartagena Declaration within national legislations in those countries where this has not yet occurred, providing guidelines for its correct application.
2. Make progress in the harmonization of legislation relating to asylum and statelessness across the region.
3. Adopt standards established by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in regards to asylum, statelessness and migration matters, and for all groups of people with protection needs in the context of human mobility. Ensure compliance with the regional and international commitments.
4. Establish – in countries where they don't exist – and strengthen Eligibility Commissions, including civil society members and UNHCR representatives, with the right to be heard and vote in these Commissions.
5. Each national government should create information and registration systems for asylum seekers and refugees.
6. Guarantee due process and access to justice:
  - Establishing more reasonable maximum deadlines for the refugee status determination and complying with them. Apply administrative exceptions in favour of asylum seekers when deadlines are missed.
  - Eliminate the pre-admission procedures that exist in some countries.
  - Ensure an integrated assistance system that include free legal assistance, translators, interpreters and psychosocial assistance.
  - Guarantee the equality, human dignity and non-discrimination during the refugee status determination procedure.



- Demand the reasons behind the decisions made by CONAREs or equivalent entities, to be able to guarantee the defence of asylum seekers.
  - Take into account local contexts of countries of origin in the analysis of the application, incorporating the principles of goodwill and guaranteeing the benefit of the doubt for applicants.
7. Ratify, in the countries where this has not yet occurred, the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.
  8. Generate and strengthen networks and mechanisms at a regional level between civil society organizations, to exchange best practice, share information, contribute to the defence of the cases and advocate for the respect of the human rights of this population.

## **E. LOCAL INTEGRATION**

In the area of local integration, progress and good practices have been observed during the last few years. It is important to note that Mexico is directly granting permanent residence to people recognized as refugees, and that Panama has adopted legislation to regulate population with Temporary Humanitarian Protection (THP). Panama is also granting permanent residence to those who have been resident in the country for at least three years. It is also notable that in some countries in the region there have been exemptions or the lowering of fees for the issuing of personal documentation for refugees, as well as the recognition of the right to family reunification.

Despite these advances, there are still multiple challenges in guaranteeing the integration of the refugees in Mesoamerica, and there are still no integrated strategies to promote the local, socioeconomic and cultural integration of refugees.

The main challenges include:

- Concern for the integration of the asylum seekers facing difficulties accessing to rights due to delays in the recognition of their status.
- Problems related to accessing employment, whether it is due to the lack of a work permit or because the documentation provided isn't recognised by the institutions involved in employment requirements (social security, banks, private sector), or because the word "refugee" causes discrimination. In addition there are difficulties in accessing the banking system.
- Difficult access to dignified housing, whether it is due to elevated costs of rent and/or due to difficulty in obtaining a stable income. The States do not have a housing policy that favours this vulnerable population. Refugees and asylum seekers are also excluded from national policies in the fight against poverty because they are foreigners.
- Difficulties in validating qualifications and accessing primary, secondary or higher education. There is also a lack of scholarships or professional training programs provided by the State.
- High costs in obtaining personal documentation and accessing naturalization procedures.
- Refugees are often subject to discrimination and stigmatization as a result of general stereotypes.

- Lack of access to psychosocial assistance that helps in overcoming the pain produced by forced displacement and in adapting to a new environment.

To conclude, there is no existing public policy that promotes and supports the local integration of refugees and there is a notable absence of political will to allocate resources and implement actions in this area. Discriminatory and xenophobic behaviour do not help to improve this situation.

## **Proposals**

1. States should assume their responsibility and allocate increased human and financial resources for the protection and assistance of asylum seekers, refugees and stateless persons, guaranteeing that resources planning and implementation is coordinated between: government, international agencies, civil society and the targeted population.
2. Guarantee the provision of documentation that is approved at a regional level to refugees, asylum seekers and stateless persons and guarantees the exercising of their rights, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, independent of their status.
3. Guarantee that the population subject to international protection has access and benefits from programs and government subsidies that have already been established (health, education, employment, housing etc.) under equal conditions.
4. Guarantee work permits for people applying for refugee status. Develop national employment programs, professional training and productive projects (including credit) that allow for the integration of asylum seekers and refugee population.
5. Combat employment inaccessibility, instability and exploitation, guaranteeing the rights of workers, independent of their migratory status, in accordance with Advisory Opinion 18/03 of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. We urge the governments to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families – or increase the existing legislation of Member States – and Convention 189 of the International Labour Organization.
6. Facilitate the mobility of people in need of International protection between countries in the region, promoting the feasibility of maintaining their rights (portability of refugee status), recognising the individual as a subject of rights.
7. Promote mass awareness raising campaigns directed at the general population, encouraging the creation of a culture of respect for diversity and solidarity with the asylum seekers, refugees and migrant population.
8. To develop measures that facilitate access of asylum seekers and refugees to the educational system, including specific actions that support the validation of qualifications and non-differentiation in the payment of education costs.
9. To promote participation and consultation processes with asylum seekers and refugees to create and develop public policies relating to integration.
10. Guarantee access to permanent residence and the possibility of accessing naturalization for those who wish to obtain citizenship through flexible and accessible procedures.

## **F. DISPLACEMENT DUE TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND NATURAL DISASTERS**

Mesoamerica is one of the regions with the highest probability of experiencing natural disasters – floods, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, landslides, droughts and others – that have the potential to generate displacements of populations at both local and cross-border levels. The impact of climate change can also generate displacements within the region.

Most of the Mesoamerican countries have achieved great success in the development of legislation, public policies and prevention and assistance programs for the population affected by natural disasters. However, it is necessary to identify gaps during the application of these policies to generate national and binational mechanisms that adopt a regional perspective to ensure the protection of displaced populations. As a result, we have observed challenges in providing shelter for people that have been displaced for these reasons.

Consequently, different mechanisms should be generated to recognise the protection needs of people displaced by these causes. Undertaking a risk analysis will improve understanding of the effects of these processes with the goal of mitigating these risks and attending to the affected population. These include attending to displacements caused by nutritional crises (starvation, malnutrition) that are the result of climate change. It is also necessary to generate awareness raising processes related to the provision of assistance and integration of these people at local and international levels.

Finally, it is important to mention the megaprojects and exploitation of natural resources carried out by governments and large companies that are generating a growing number of internally displaced persons as a consequence of those activities. It is concerning that when implementing these megaprojects the needs of affected communities are not taken into account. There hasn't just been an increase in social protests as a consequence of these initiatives but also a criminalization of the protestors and their human rights affected.

### **Proposals**

1. Establish concrete protection mechanisms for the population displaced by natural disasters, climate change and megaprojects both within a country as well as in cross-border areas.
2. Develop a “humanitarian protection visa in the case of natural disasters” that guarantees the documentation of people that are subject to cross-border displacement due to climate change or natural disasters, in compliance with regional and international standards..
3. Establish assessments, information systems and national action plans with regional perspective, generating specific protocols for the assistance and protection of the displaced population in short, medium and long term timeframes.
4. UNHCR should promote the study of this phenomenon and the possible responses, together with the States, the international community, civil society and the communities affected by these situations.
5. States should facilitate safe conditions for the coordination of the work of humanitarian organizations in the prevention and response to natural disasters in high risk zones.

6. Generate awareness raising processes with communities and authorities to adequately receive internally displaced populations.
7. States should guarantee the right to consultation and free, prior and informed consent of indigenous and native communities that will be displaced as a consequence of the implementation of mega projects. Truthful, transparent and appropriate information mechanisms should be created with the goal of informing the affected population about the real impact of these projects.
8. Guarantee that the diagnostics of the feasibility and social and environmental impact that are issued in the process of authorizing the mega projects are external and independent from the company that is implementing the project.
9. That the States, along with civil society organizations and the affected population, develop protocols and criteria to identify long-lasting solutions – return, relocation or integration – that occurs in safe conditions and is accompanied by monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

The Brazil Action Plan should include goals, responsibilities, timeframes and monitoring mechanisms. It is recommended that a tri-party accompaniment mechanism (governments, UNHCR and civil society) is established that would allow for the monitoring of the agreed commitments.

Panama, 2<sup>nd</sup> of July 2014

This position statement document is the result of a consultation process facilitated by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and undertaken in 8 countries in the Wider Mesoamerican Region: Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Panama. This process culminated with a regional meeting that took place in Panama on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> of July 2014, in which 24 civil society organisations, representing other civil society organisations from their respective countries, agreed on a regional position in the framework of the Cartagena+30 commemoration.

The civil society organisations that were present in the regional event were:

**Belize**

Help for Progress

**El Salvador**

IAES - Pares

SIMN (Scalabrinian Mission)

INSAMI

**Honduras**

CIPRODEH

APUVIMEH

CPTRT

**Costa Rica**

ACAI

CIDEHUM

CEJIL

**Guatemala**

Pastoral Human Mobility– PMH-CEG

ECAP

INCEDES

**Nicaragua**

CEPAD

Jesuit Migrant Service - SJM

Nicas Migrantes

**Mexico**

Sin Fronteras  
Mexican Commission for the Defence and Promotion of Human Rights (Comisión Mexicana Defensa y Promoción de DDHH).  
Refugee House Program  
CDH Fray Matías de Córdoba  
Instituto Ignacio Ellacuría de la Univ.Ibero de Puebla

**Panama**

Panama Red Cross  
Centre for Popular Legal Assistance (CEALP)  
Jesuit Refugee Service (SJR)

These organizations attended the meeting as representatives of the following civil society organizations, academic groups and Ombudsmen that participated in the national meetings, including:

**Costa Rica**

CONAMAJ  
Inhabitants' Ombudsman's Office  
ASTRADOMES  
ILCO  
Asoc. de Enlaces Nicaragüenses  
Proyecto de Trabajo Comunal. Univ. de Costa Rica  
CECAMMM  
Fidelitas University  
Univ. de Costa Rica – School of Social Work  
Univ. Nacional – School of International Relations

**Guatemala**

AGUND  
PCS  
Human Rights Inspector General's Office - PDH  
Univ. San Carlos de Guatemala  
Children's and Adolescents' Refuge  
Univ. Rafael Landivar -IIGP  
Social Protection Institution - IPS  
MENAMIG  
ODHAG  
ECPAT

**El Salvador**

GMIES  
Red Cross El Salvador  
Cáritas  
UCA  
UTEC  
PDDH

**Honduras**

FONAMIH  
RED COMIFAH  
Scalabrinian Monks –AHS  
CODEH  
Red Trans de Honduras

**Nicaragua**

Cáritas  
PIBM  
American Baptist Society  
Human Rights Inspector General's Office  
Evangelist Church

**Panama**

RET  
HIAS  
IDEN  
Fe y Alegría

**Mexico**

Settlement Centre CAFEMIN  
International Coalition Against Detention  
Estancia del Migrante González y Martínez AC  
Jesuit Migrant Service LAC  
Jesuit Migrant Service  
Doctors without Borders  
Working Group on Migration Policy (Grupo de Trabajo sobre Política Migratoria)