

# Welcome, Integrate, and Grow

Colombia's policies regarding  
migration from Venezuela

Iván Duque Márquez  
**President of the Republic of Colombia**

---

**Editorial Direction**

Felipe Muñoz Gómez

**Editorial Management**

Patricia de Narváez Cano

**Content Management**

Ana María Moreno Sáchica  
Andrés Felipe Segura Arnaiz  
Angie Paola Montenegro Alvarado  
Camilo Buitrago Hernández  
Carlos Bustos Cortés  
Carlos Santamaría Nieto  
Darlin Rodríguez Guerra  
Gabriela Ricardo Aaron  
Henrique Sosa Machado  
Jaime Polanco Barreto  
Johanna Saenz Bojacá  
José Duarte García  
Luis Otero Coronado  
Nezly León Monsalve  
Victoria Arciniegas Gómez

---

**Editorial Board**

Patricia de Narváez Cano  
Andrés Felipe Segura Arnaiz  
Fernando Cárdenas

**Editorial Production**

Círculo Cuadrado SAS  
[www.circulocuadrado.co](http://www.circulocuadrado.co)

**Editorial Producers**

Fernando Cárdenas  
Jairo Iván Orozco Arias

**Design**

Orlando Valencia Sarmiento  
Jairo Iván Orozco Arias

**Layout design**

Alan Rodríguez  
Jairo Iván Orozco Arias

**Cover design**

Orlando Valencia Sarmiento

**Photo credits**

Hanz Rippe for USAID/Colombia  
Muse Mohammed for IOM  
© Bancamía  
© World Bank, Greta Granados  
© ACNUR, Deiner Gil, Andrew McConnell,  
Vincent Tremeau, Olga Sarrado, Nicolo  
Filippo Rosso, Reynesson Damasceno

**Translation from Spanish to English**

Bill Frederick  
Patricia Beltrán  
Felipe Saiz  
Juana Cristina Resek

**Printing**

La Imprenta Editores

**ISBN**

978-958-18-0474-0

First edition

December 2020

Bogotá, Colombia

© Presidency of Colombia

[www.presidencia.gov.co](http://www.presidencia.gov.co)

---

This book is made possible thanks to the support of the United States through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID); to the European Union and to the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The content of this book is an exclusive responsibility of its author and does not necessarily reflect the opinions of USAID, the United States Government, the European Union or the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

---

Reproduction of all or part of this publication for educational or other non-commercial purposes is authorized provided the source is cited.

---

# Welcome, Integrate and Grow

Colombia's policies regarding  
migration from Venezuela



El futuro  
es de todos

Gobierno  
de Colombia



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	9
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	11
THE POLICY OF OPENING WITH REALISM	29
MIGRANTS IN COLOMBIA: A PLURAL POLICY WITH A VISION FOR THE FUTURE	35
REGULATORY FRAMEWORK	43
International Treaties	44
Constitutional framework	46
Regulations in response to the migration from Venezuela	46
Legislative projects	48

CONPES 3950 .....	51
General follow-up to CONPES 3950 action plan with cutoff at December 31, 20199.....	58
MIGRATION FROM VENEZUELA AND THE EVOLUTION OF MIGRATORY POLICY .....	61
The commitment to regularization .....	62
Guarantees of international protection: refugee status applications .....	67
Returning Colombian population and migrants with the right to nationality .....	71
Prevention of child statelessness .....	75
Knowing to welcome and integrate: the characterization of the migrant, refugee and returned population .....	76
SOCIAL SERVICES FOR MIGRANTS, REFUGEES AND RETURNEES .....	81
Strategy to guarantee the right to health.....	82
Education for Venezuelan children and adolescents is a right in Colombia .....	91
Family welfare focused on migrant girls, boys and adolescents .....	96
Habitability: access to housing and basic services .....	100
Differentiated care for vulnerable populations .....	105

THE HARMONIZED WORK: COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ACTORS	115
National initiative, local effort: the coordination with the regions	116
Economic inclusion and income generation for the migrant population	131
Civil society takes up the challenge	146
The world offers a helping hand: the role of international cooperation	160
A safe, calm and harmonic migration: the advances in citizen security and cohabitation	200
The impact of the covid-19 pandemic	213
Eyes on the process: The role of control bodies	217
BALANCE AND CONCLUSIONS	227
Migration Costs	228
Conclusions	233
ANNEX - REGULATIONS MIGRATORY PHENOMENON	239









# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When preparing and editing this document, we incorporated the efforts of many people and entities that have believed migration is positive for Colombia. This is not limited to serving a group of people that decided to leave their home to create a better future. It also includes welcoming them and creating ways for them to integrate, so that together we can create a better future for our children and grandchildren, regardless of their origin.

As this project advanced, we found more people to thank. We tried to include them, in one way or another, in this book:

The institutions of the Colombian government that have given protection to the migrant population without discrimination.

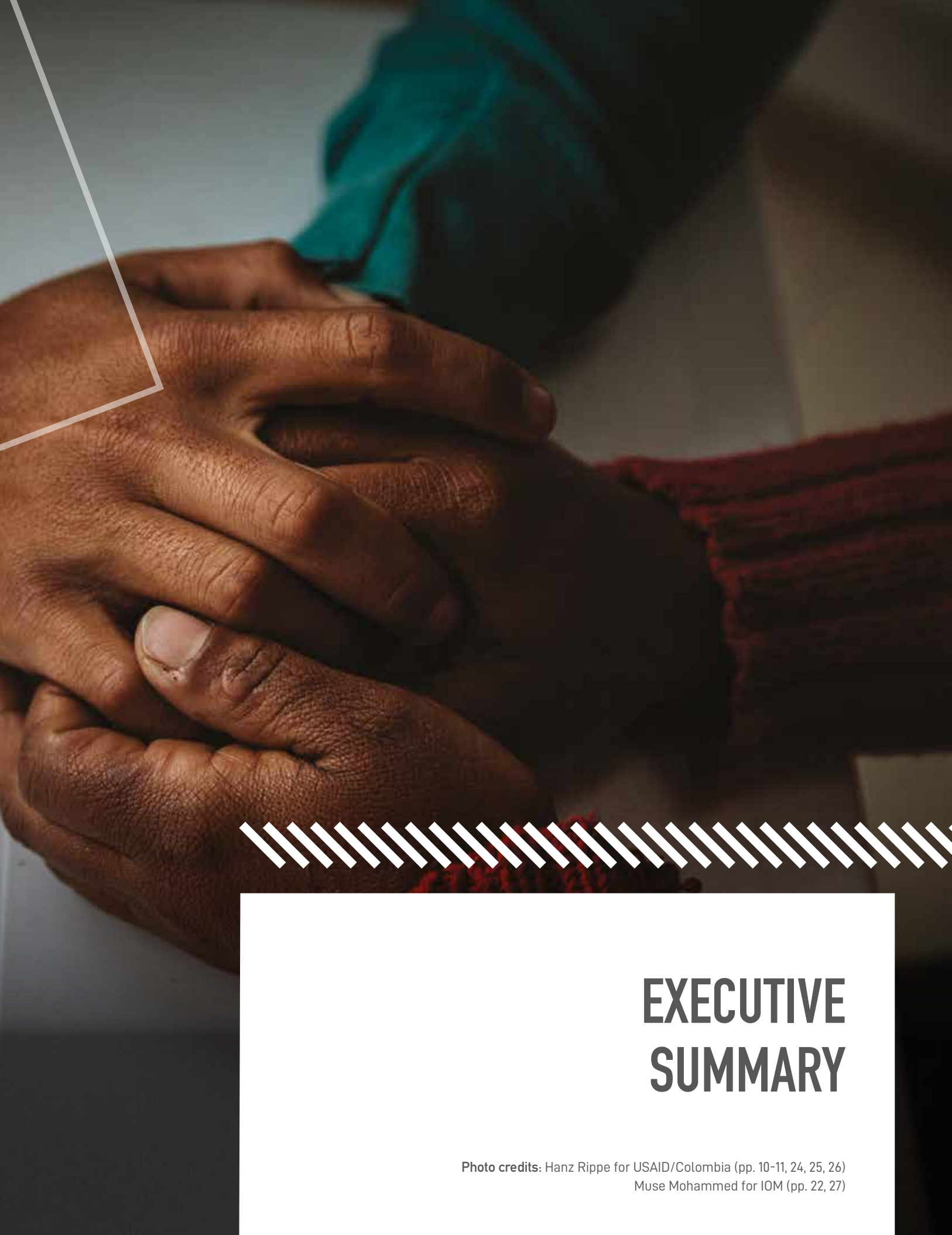
It is worth highlighting the role of the Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia, which coordinates the actions and responds to the concerns of all those who in one way or another have worked to respond to one of the greatest challenges in Colombia's history.

The regional and local authorities, which have the responsibility of implementing many of the measures designed to effectively integrate the migrant population.

Donors and international organizations, the vast majority of which are part of the Interagency Group for Mixed Immigration Flows (GIFMM), and others who used their experience and skills have been fundamental allies to give the greatest help to migrants.

Regulatory agencies that ensure appropriate and organized efforts are made and have a positive impact on the lives of both migrants and host communities.





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

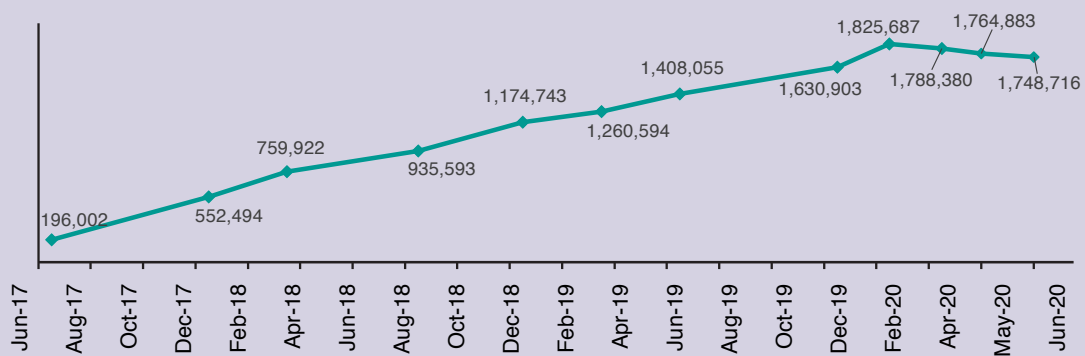
Photo credits: Hanz Rippe for USAID/Colombia (pp. 10-11, 24, 25, 26)  
Muse Mohammed for IOM (pp. 22, 27)



**Colombia, has historically been a country of origin for migrants.** Due to the deteriorating social, economic and political conditions of what was once the richest country in Latin America, over the last five years Colombia has become a country of transit and the main destination for immigrants from Venezuela. Knowing the ethical duty we have towards our neighboring country, which in the past received Colombians seeking better conditions, and understanding that properly managed migration is a development opportunity, the Colombian government and society in general have welcomed Venezuelans as well as Colombian returnees. They have also made huge efforts towards their effective and comprehensive integration into society.

In 2015, when Venezuela first decided to close the border and expel 22,000 Colombians living there, Colombia was home to 31,471 Venezuelan immigrants. Those numbers quickly began to rise, and by early 2017 there were already 403,702 Venezuelans in Colombia. Due to the acceleration of the economic and social crisis in Venezuela, just one year later the immigrant population had more than doubled to 1,174,743 migrants (Graph 1).

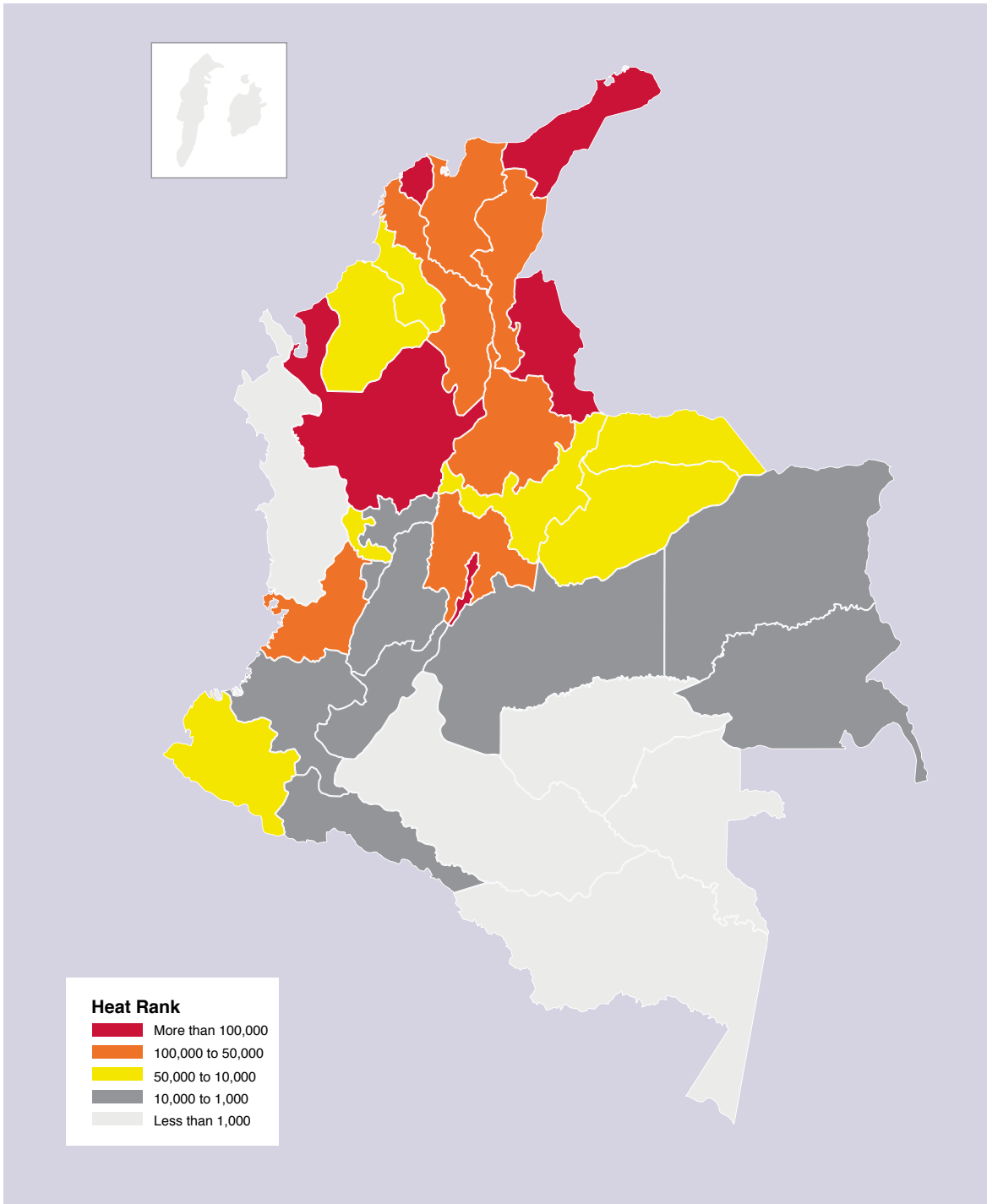
**Graph 1. Historic evolution of Venezuelan migrant population that remains in Colombia (2017-2020)**



Source: Migración Colombia (June, 2020).

As of April 2020, Migración Colombia estimated a total of 1,748,716 Venezuelan immigrants in Colombia. Of those, 762,857 have official immigrant status (44%), and 985,859 have irregular immigrant status (exceeded the permitted length of stay or entered through an open border). Immigrants wishing to stay in Colombia settled principally in urban areas (96%): Bogotá (20%), Norte de Santander (11%), Atlántico (9%), La Guajira (9%) and Antioquia (9%) (map 1, Table 1).

Map 1. Number of Venezuelans in Colombia by department



Source: Migración Colombia (June, 2020).

Table 1. Venezuelans in Colombia by department

Department	Total	%
Bogotá D.C.	343,169	19.62%
Norte de Santander	197,979	11.32%
Atlántico	161,313	9.22%
La Guajira	153,937	8.80%
Antioquia	153,600	8.78%
Santander	108,614	6.21%
Cundinamarca	94,498	5.40%
Valle del Cauca	90,457	5.17%
Magdalena	89,280	5.11%
Bolívar	82,272	4.70%
Cesar	55,977	3.20%
Arauca	45,296	2.59%
Sucre	23,072	1.32%
Casanare	21,699	1.24%
Risaralda	20,370	1.16%
Boyacá	16,489	0.94%
Córdoba	13,929	0.80%
Nariño	13,826	0.79%
Tolima	9,697	0.55%
Quindío	8,700	0.50%
Cauca	8,027	0.46%
Meta	7,573	0.43%

Department	Total	%
Caldas	7,178	0.41%
Guainía	6,323	0.36%
Huila	4,863	0.28%
Vichada	3,912	0.22%
Putumayo	3,434	0.20%
Amazonas	962	0.06%
Chocó	788	0.05%
Caquetá	682	0.04%
Guaviare	366	0.02%
Archipiélago de San Andrés	360	0.02%
Vaupés	74	0.00%
Total	1,748,716	100.00%

Source: Migración Colombia (June 2020).

The document entitled CONPES 3950, published in November 2018 by the National Council for Economic and Social Policy, is the roadmap that guides the process of receiving and integrating Venezuelan immigrants and Colombian returnees, as well as supporting host communities. This is the first public policy document that diagnosed the migration phenomenon and established the government's goals to welcome and integrate the immigrants, as well as assigning responsibility to government entities for acting on them.

Receiving and welcoming Venezuelan migrants and Colombian returnees means first ensuring they have access to basic social services that guarantee their well-being. These services focus on granting immigrants official status, access to health services,

family welfare and early childhood support services, education, and specialized care for vulnerable populations. Emphasis was given to populations that recognize themselves as indigenous and immigrants who arrived on foot.

To respond promptly and efficiently to the exponential increase of Venezuelan immigrants in Colombia in that short time period, the Special Permit of Permanence (PEP) was established in 2017. This identification document grants the holder temporary stay in Colombia for two years and allows access to all institutional health, education, and work services and guarantees attention to children and adolescents at the national, departmental and municipal levels. This PEP led to the rapid regularization of 762,857 Venezuelans (as of June 2020).



## CONPES 3950 (DNP) - Expected results for 2021

- Care of **344,461** children and pregnant women
- Re-establishment of rights to **100%** population with PARD (Administrative Process to Re-establish Rights)
- **4** temporary migrant care centers to aid **62,400** people
- **22,455** returning Colombians helped through diverse programs
- **40,000** complementary training opportunities at SENA, the public national learning center for higher education
- Strategies to develop civic skills implemented in **100%** of educational establishments



In addition to the influx of Venezuelan migrants, there has been a significant increase in the number of Colombians who migrated to Venezuela in the past and now decided to return, as well as their descendants and relatives who, although born in Venezuela, have the right to the Colombian nationality. Starting in August 2016, the National Civil Registry launched an exceptional process to facilitate issuing birth records for people who are now in Colombia and were born in Venezuela to a Colombian parent. This measure has been granted to 264,998 people over 18 years of age and 263,334 people under 18 who entered Colombia from Venezuela between January 2015 and March 2020.

In addition to efforts to legalize Venezuelan migrants and identify Colombian returnees, the Colombian government guaranteed the rights of the growing number of children born in Colombia to Venezuelan parents, and in September 2019 granted Colombian nationality to all children born in Colombia to Venezuelan parents since January 2015. As of June 2020, 45,467 minors had received Colombian nationality.

To guarantee health care for all residents of Colombia regardless of nationality or immigration status, the Ministry of Health reaffirmed the right to free emergency care. As of February 2020, the Ministry of Health had provided over 7.2 million services to Venezuelan citizens. These services focused on care

for children and pregnant/lactating women, as well as measures to combat malnutrition, communicable diseases and gender-based violence. To care for the needs of the immigrant population and returning Colombians and protect the health and well-being of host communities, the Ministry established epidemiological barriers to prevent the spread of communicable diseases and supplied 19 million vaccines. Health care has increased the government's debt to the network of public hospitals, which as of February 2020 amounted to more than 555 billion Colombian pesos,

## National Civil Registry

- Under the Childhood First Strategy, **45,467** children born in Colombia to Venezuelan parents were recognized as Colombian citizens (January 1, 2015, to June 2020).

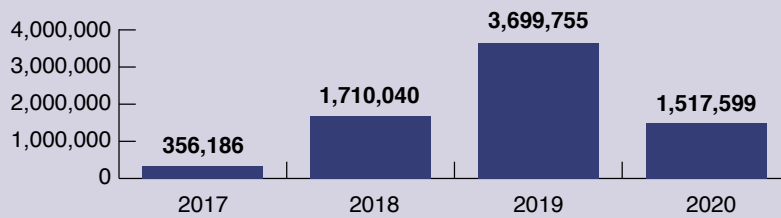


## Ministry of Health

- **7,283,580** health care services provided
- **+19 millions** of medical prescriptions
- **+145,000** pregnant women received services
- **245,197** people affiliated to SGSSS, the social security health system
- **COP 557,423,482,910 (USD 148,239,915)\*** in health services provided to immigrants



As of June 2020



Accumulated number of health care services provided, 2017 - June, 2020.

\*The exchange rate used throughout the text is COP 3,758= USD 1, unless otherwise indicated.

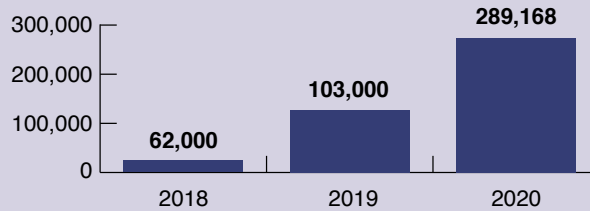


As of June 2020

## ICFB - Colombian Institute for Family Welfare

- **289,168** children and adolescents benefited from services between 2015 and June 2020
- More than **9,000** pregnant women received care in 2019
- **1,003** processes to re-establish children's rights

### Care for children and adolescents



USD 148 million. One strategy to increase health care availability to migrants and reduce costs is to increase the number of migrants registered in the social security health system. As of April 2020, 216,285 Venezuelan immigrants were affiliated. This number represents 35.5% of PEP affiliates and 13.9% of Venezuelan migrants wishing to remain in Colombia.

To ensure family welfare, all migrants regardless of nationality or migration status have the right to the services of the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare (ICBF). The ICBF focuses on early childhood care (0-5 years) and pregnant/lactating women by providing food and nutrition services, care services, foster homes, and rights restitution. The ICBF –Colombian Institute for Family Welfare– provided care for 289,168 children from 2015 to June 2020.

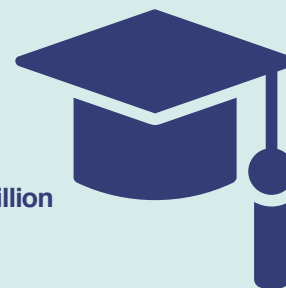
The right to education for Venezuelan children has also been guaranteed regardless of their migration

status. The number of Venezuelan students increased more than 900% in just over a year. In November 2018 there were just over 34,000 Venezuelans enrolled, but by June 2020 there were more than 351,000. This puts additional pressure on educational institutions to adapt their physical spaces, classrooms, educational strategies and teaching materials, in addition to strategies to ensure the well-being of students and their permanence in school. Indeed, 92% of Venezuelan immigrants are enrolled in public schools, requiring additional resources to provide quality public education.

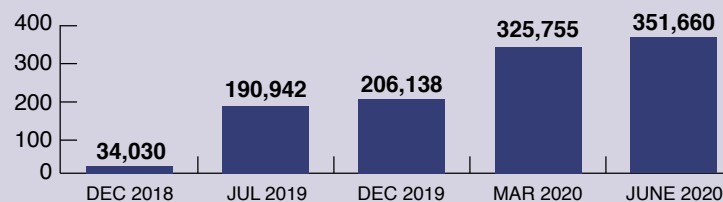
Integrating the migrant population, however, requires more than providing basic services. It requires the collaboration of numerous sectors of the central government and state, society in general, and the international community to promote the welfare and integration of immigrants into Colombian society and to create the necessary conditions so they can contribute to the development of the country.

## Ministry de Education

- **351,660** Venezuelan students enrolled in Colombian schools
- **80%** have irregular status
- Migrants present in **1,000** municipalities
- Humanitarian corridors for students at the border cost **USD \$4 million**
- Cost of education services for migrants in 2019: **COP 464,204,480,575 (USD 123,494,438)**

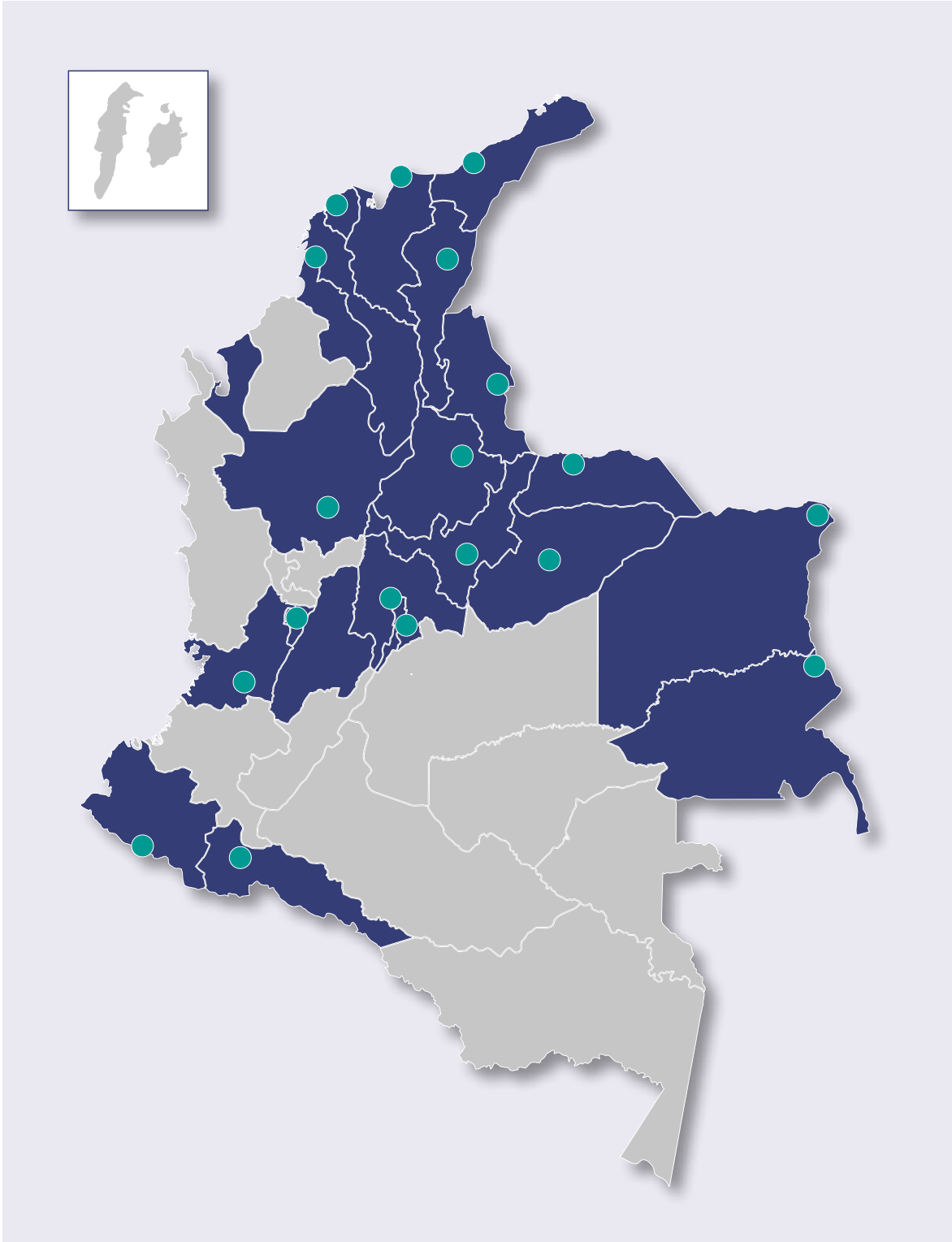


Cutoff:  
June, 2020



Historical levels of enrolled Venezuelan students

## Map 2. Migratory Roundtables



Mayors and governors have made the commitment to work together to respond to this immigration phenomenon, which has been fundamental to reaching a coordinated and comprehensive solution that responds to the specific needs and challenges of each area. To this end, migration roundtables and unified points of command have been created to bring together relevant actors in the national and local government, state entities, cooperation agencies, and civil society to discuss the needs and coordinate response plans. To date, 19 departmental working groups have been held in La Guajira, Norte de Santander, Arauca, Bolívar, Santander, Atlántico, Cundinamarca, Guainía, Vichada, Cesar, Valle del Cauca, Nariño, Magdalena, Antioquia, Caldas, Quindío, Casanare and Risaralda. Also, 4 sub-regional working groups have been established at the Venezuelan border, 2 in La Guajira and 2 in Norte de Santander, and 5 other municipal border roundtables in Riohacha, Uribia, Cúcuta, Pasto and Mocoa.

Training for local authorities who took office in January 2020 included how to approach migration issues in their development plans. This can result in a real diagnosis of the migration phenomenon and the impact it has on the region, including roadmaps and response objectives. Support has included training for mayors and governors, the development of territorial planning kits to sensitize and guide authorities on inclusion of migration approaches in development plans, and working with international cooperation agencies to accompany the creation of development plans for mayors and governors experiencing the greatest migration impact.

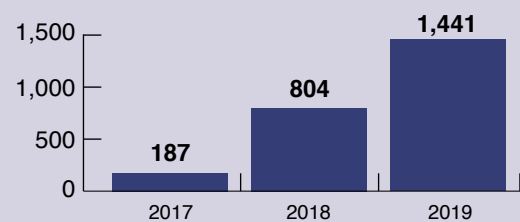
The Colombian government has also prioritized the economic integration of Venezuelan immigrants and Colombian returnees as a fundamental pillar to guarantee their well-being and their contribution to host communities. Government, private sector, and civil society organizations have joined forces to facilitate and promote registration and legalization. Thus, migrants have access to formal employment, skill certification and validation of foreign diplomas, job training, assistance in finding formal employment, support for companies developed by migrants and returnees, and local economic development to strengthen the entire economic system of host

communities. This initiative has also included mobilizing and raising awareness in the private sector to highlight the benefits of hiring immigrants, identify gaps in labor supply and demand that migrants can fill, and define the skills that immigrants and returnees bring to the Colombian economy, as well as other proposals.

The private sector as well as academic and civil society are essential to turn the challenge of migration into a development opportunity for Colombia. For

## Ministry of Labor

- Integral actions were implemented in **7 cities** with a total of **8,316** participants
- **7,049** people participated in income-generation planning
- **1,124** PEP-FF (regularization permit for undocumented migrants with a formal employment offer) issued until June, 2020
- **67,874** people signed up in SISE– Public Employment Services– and SENA –National Learning Services–, **36,263** received orientation and **2,927** found employment (as of 2017).
- **67,507** people contribute to PILA –Public Social Security–



People certified by SENA, 2017-2019

this reason, dialogue with Venezuelan associations, social foundations, academia, and think tanks is also key for the government. Not only the government, but all of Colombian society, needs to hear from migrants themselves to understand their needs and contributions to the community, as well as receive and integrate knowledge from the academic sector. This leads to creating public policies based on complete and updated information and the resolve to act together, convinced that integrating migrants is indeed a strategic axis.

The hard work of the Colombian government and society has been complemented by the support of the international community, which has provided resources, technical assistance, and mobilization of various international organizations to address the migration phenomenon. Several countries, led by the United States, Canada, and the European Union, have generously responded to the Colombian government's call for funding to effectively respond to this new immigration challenge. From 2018 to July 2020, a total of USD 487,118,362 was donated

for the Venezuela immigration crisis in Colombia. Of this figure, USD 350 million have already been disbursed, while USD 137 million are pending. Despite the positive impact of these donations, they are not enough to cover the basic needs of migrants or a significant percentage of the fiscal costs assumed by the Colombian government, which are estimated to be between 0.19% and 0.42% of the total annual GDP, between USD 633 and 1,400 million.

Most of the resources donated by the international community are channeled through United Nations agencies and other international NGOs. Coordinating the migration response also led to creating a platform for coordination and the Interagency Group for Mixed Migration Flows (GIFMM) was created with the aim of ensuring greater articulation in response to the Venezuelan migration crisis. The GIFMM operates under the joint leadership of the Office of the Resident Coordinator, IOM, and UNHCR, and coordinates the actions of 17 UN agencies, six Red Cross movements, and 48 NGOs, with a total of 71 members as of June 2020. The GIFMM's various sectorial and territorial



working groups and their joint effort with national and local governments and other key actors has resulted in a positive exercise of coordination and interaction between the numerous actors that have responded to the call to help migrants, returnees and host communities.

Integrating Venezuelan migrants into Colombian society also means working to promote social coexistence. Although there is no study that shows a relationship between immigrants and crime, it is undeniable that a greater number of immigrants leads to more immigrants who commit crimes, and that the perception in some sectors of society is that migration generates insecurity. To improve security and citizen coexistence, the government created the Integrated Center for Monitoring and Analysis of Migration Information (CI2M), which started an identification process to prosecute migrants who commit crimes and has led to the development of the Comprehensive Citizen Security and Coexistence Plans, in addition to creating a detailed action plan. The government also worked with key actors to promote integration and prevent, mitigate, and fight against discrimination and xenophobia.

State agencies have focused on promoting and protecting the rights of migrants and refugees in Colombia. The Ombudsman's Office of Colombia is the institution responsible for promoting human rights for the inhabitants of Colombia and Colombians abroad. Since 2016, it has cared for migrant/refugee populations that need international protection using four main axes: i) Promotion and dissemination of rights; ii) Advice, guidance and assistance; iii) Formulating protection measures and mechanisms; and iv) Defense Research.

The General Procuracy, for its part, has worked to protect the rights of Venezuelan migrant and refugee children and adolescents, in particular preventing statelessness of children born to Venezuelan parents in Colombia. It has also organized public citizen hearings to eradicate human trafficking and sexual exploitation of migrants, has emphatically spoken out against xenophobia, and strives to prevent and mitigate discrimination against migrants.

Congress has also played a vital role in monitoring the response to the migration phenomenon that focuses on promoting dialogue between the Congress of the Republic of Colombia and different sectors. Its work includes special monitoring of the Colombian government's commitment to tackle the immigration phenomenon and to coordinate all institutional actions related to the Migration Law as well as creating a comprehensive migration policy.

Progress in response to migration and efforts to coordinate governmental and non-governmental actors and the public policy mechanisms that govern migration have been remarkable, especially considering the limited experience Colombia has in welcoming and integrating migrants. The rate of migration and the high degree of vulnerability in which migrants and refugees arrive in the country contribute to the challenge. However, the challenge continues to be significant, and the Colombian government's political decision to welcome and integrate migrants and to use migration as a growth and sustainable development factor for the country and all its residents remains firm.



# Timeline

## 2015

- **August (20):** Nicolás Maduro closed the border with Colombia. +22,000 Colombians were expelled from Venezuela.
  - Colombia keeps its borders open and created a humanitarian corridor → students and people requiring medical attention.

### VENEZUELAN CITIZENS LIVING IN COLOMBIA:

31,471



## 2016

- **August:** The Border Transit Migration Card was launched (predecessor to the Border Mobility Card).
- **August (13):** Nicolás Maduro reopened the border between Venezuela and Colombia.
- **August:** Exceptional procedures were initiated to facilitate birth records to persons born in Venezuela to a Colombian parent (National Civil Registry)
  - 528,332 people had benefited until March 2020.
- **August:** Additional migration control points were opened in Norte de Santander, Cúcuta, Puente Francisco de Paula Santander, and Puerto Santander
  - Total: Seven open crossing stations between Colombia and Venezuela
- The Interagency Group on Mixed Migration Flows (GIFMM) → IOM and UNHCR co-leadership
  - Articulates and coordinates the response to the migration phenomenon by United Nations agencies, Red Cross organizations and NGOs.

### DECEMBER: VENEZUELAN CITIZENS LIVING IN COLOMBIA:

53,747



# 2017



- **August:** The Special Permit of Permanence (PEP) was created
  - Mechanism to regularize the immigration situation of Venezuelan citizens who reside in the country without proper permits.

**DECEMBER: VENEZUELAN CITIZENS LIVING IN COLOMBIA:**

# 403,702

# 2018

- **Creation of Migratory Working Groups**
  - Governmental strategy to coordinate local authorities in departments that have a high number of Venezuelan migrants.
- **February:** Second phase of PEP issuance.
- **April:** Administrative Registry of Venezuelan Migrants in Colombia (RAMV).
  - Socio-demographic characterization of Venezuelan population with irregular status in Colombia → 442,462 Venezuelan citizens are registered
- **May:** Decree 866 of 2017 guarantees co-financing of emergency attention of Venezuelans in the public network (Ministry of Health).
- **August:** Third version of PEP → PEP-RAMV:
  - For Venezuelan citizens registered in RAMV.
- **September:** Quito Declaration on the movement of Venezuelan citizens in the region.
- **October:** Creation of the Single Registry of Foreign Workers in Colombia (RUTECC).
- **November:** CONPES 3950 (national government) was presented.
  - Establishes public policy guidelines to respond to the Venezuelan migration phenomenon.

# 2018

- **November:** The Inter-Institutional Unit for International Cooperation on the Migration Crisis was created and co-led by the Presidency, the Ministry Foreign Affairs, and the Presidential Cooperation Agency (PCA).
- **December:** Fourth phase of PEP.
- **December:** The Temporary Transit Permit, a document for foreign citizens who enter Colombia transiting to other countries, was created.

## DECEMBER: VENEZUELAN CITIZENS LIVING IN COLOMBIA:

# 1,174,473



# 2019

- **January:** Health sector response plan to the migration phenomenon created.
- Information on Venezuelan migrants began to be collected and published in the Great Integrated Household Survey (GEIH) - (DANE).
- **February:** Venezuela cuts off diplomatic relations with Colombia.
- **March:** The Integrated Assistance Center (CAI) in Maicao opened.
- **July:** Bill to establish a Colombian immigration policy introduced in Congress.
- **July:** *Income Generation Strategy for the Migrant Population from Venezuela and Host Population* created (by the Presidency of the Republic with UNDP support)
- **July:** Guidelines published to provide training services, skill certification, employment management, and entrepreneurship services to Venezuelan citizens and other foreigners (SENA).
- **Agosto:** Colombian nationality granted to children born in Colombia to Venezuelan parents and who were at risk of statelessness.
  - As of June 2020, 45,467 minors were granted Colombian nationality.



- **October:** International Solidarity Conference on the Venezuela Refugee and Migrant Crisis held in Brussels (Belgium).
  - Organized by the European Union, UNHCR and IOM.
- **November:** Special tax regime ZESE (Special Economic and Social Zones) in La Guajira, Norte de Santander, Arauca, Armenia and Quibdó
  - Attracts national and foreign investment, improves living conditions, and generates employment.

#### DECEMBER: VENEZUELAN CITIZENS LIVING IN COLOMBIA:

1,771,237

# 2020

- **January:** Fifth version of the PEP.
- **February:** Special Permit of Permanence to Foster Formalization (PEP-FF).
  - Granted to irregular migrants who have formal job offers.
- **March:** The number of Venezuelan children and adolescents enrolled in the educational system increased by 50% in just 3 months.
  - December 2019: 206,225
  - March 2020: 308,027
- **March:** Declaration of a state of health, economic, social and environmental emergency as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **March:** Border closed due to the emergency created by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **March:** Guidelines issued to prevent, detect and manage COVID-19 cases in the migrant population in Colombia (Ministry of Health).
- **May:** International Donors Conference in solidarity with Venezuelan refugees and migrants coled by the Government of Spain and the European Union.
- **May:** Institutional action for the voluntary return of Venezuelan migrants to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela
  - 71,000 Venezuelan migrants returned home due to the health and economic crisis triggered by the pandemic (June 4, 2020).

#### JUNE: VENEZUELAN CITIZENS LIVING IN COLOMBIA:

1,748,716

# MIGRACIÓN

MINISTERIO DE RELACIONES EXTERIORES



OIM OIM OIM OIM OIM OIM OIM OIM



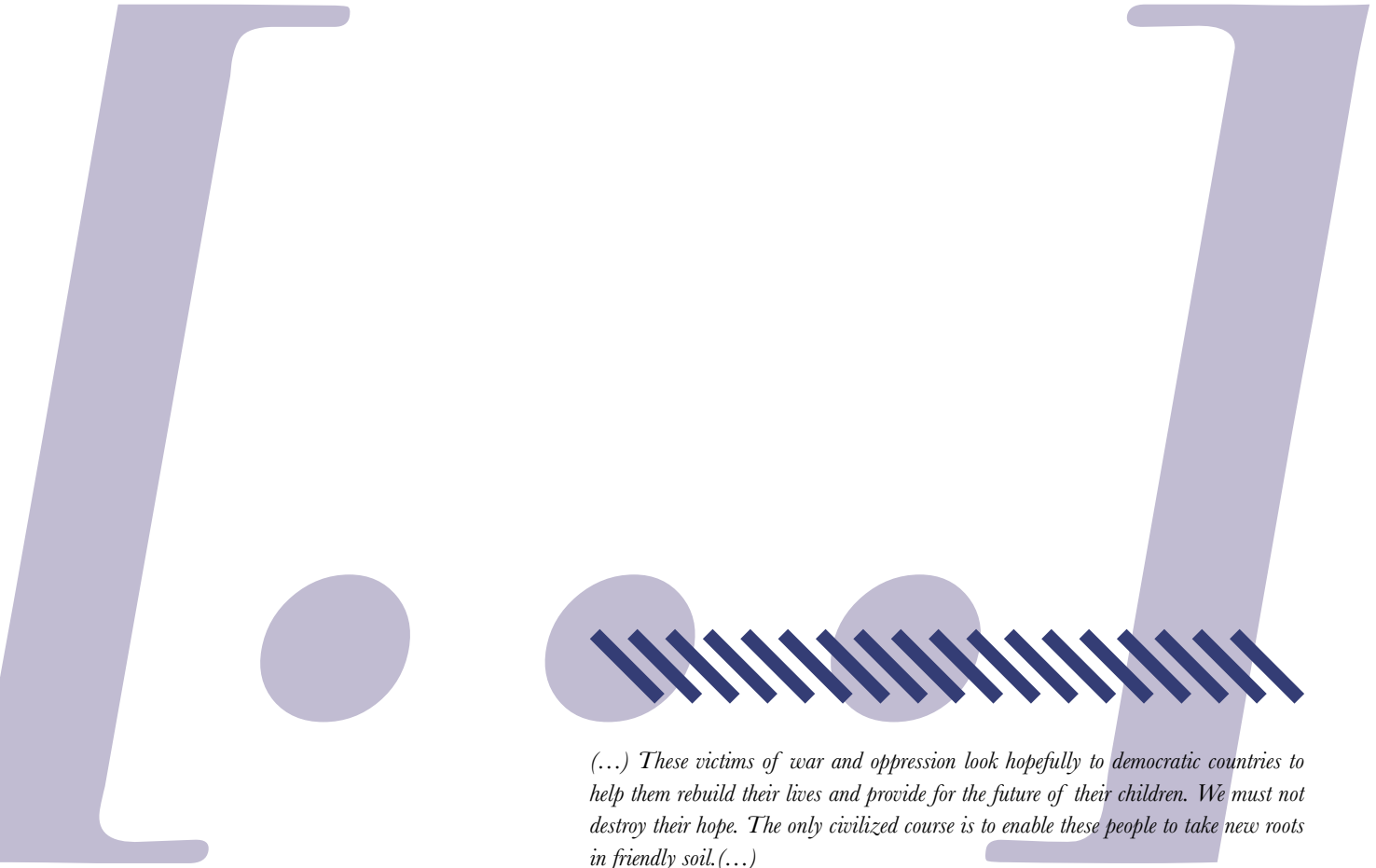


# THE POLICY OF OPENING WITH REALISM

**Iván Duque Márquez**

President of the Republic of Colombia 2018 - 2022

Photo credits: Muse Mohammed for IOM (pp. 28-29, 31, 33)



*(...) These victims of war and oppression look hopefully to democratic countries to help them rebuild their lives and provide for the future of their children. We must not destroy their hope. The only civilized course is to enable these people to take new roots in friendly soil.(...)*

*We are dealing with a human problem, a world tragedy. Let us remember that these are fellow human beings now living under conditions which frustrate hope; which make it impossible for them to take any steps, unaided, to build for themselves or their children the foundations of a new life. They live in corroding uncertainty of their future. Their fate is in our hands and must now be decided. Let us join in giving them a chance at decent and self-supporting lives.*

Harry S. Truman  
Special message to Congress on  
the admission of displaced persons, 1947

**Venezuela is experiencing the largest migratory** and humanitarian crisis that our continent has seen in recent history. More than five million of our Venezuelan brothers and sisters have left their homeland, at least one sixth of the population of that country. Comparing it globally, this is the second largest crisis after the one in Syria, where about 6.2 million people left their country.

Throughout the region, we have assumed the commitment to support a people who are victims of a regime that has destroyed the social fabric of Venezuela, plunging it into a scenario of constant food and medical shortages, the noticeable persecution of its people due to ideology, and an economic crisis that is an unparalleled debacle. Therefore, using all the political and international tools that international legislation offers us, we will not rest in furthering the search to reestablish democracy in Venezuela.

The history of Colombia is one of resilience. Although we have fiscal limitations and our annual per capita income is less than USD 8,000 (much lower than that of European countries facing immigration crises), we know how to transform fraternity into a feeling of solidarity.

Colombia has welcomed about 1.8 million migrants, a figure that is equivalent to about 4% of the Colombian population. That number far exceeds past records of foreigners in our country, and we have no precedents that prepare us to deal with this situation.

As a nation, Colombians have assumed the responsibility of integrating this population that has decided to leave home to seek a better future for their families. We recognize that the ties that unite us with our Venezuelan brothers and sisters are much stronger than the borders that divide us, and we remember how Venezuela welcomed millions of Colombians who made Venezuela their home in the past.



Likewise, in Colombia we have recognized that migration is an opportunity to build a better future, just as it has happened elsewhere around the world. Immigrants bring diverse experiences and knowledge, as well as their drive, and when these values are integrated into our society it can be a motivating force for development.

Based on these principles, Colombia has developed a comprehensive strategy to welcome and integrate the immigrant population from Venezuela. We have been implementing this strategy as a nation for over two years, which we present in this document.

We have learned numerous lessons; the importance of making non-discrimination the central axis of all public policies designed and executed to manage this phenomenon, as well as the success we have seen in ensuring that children of Venezuelans do not become stateless and have access to Colombian nationality. Additionally, we have developed legislative innovations to legalize hundreds of thousands of immigrants so they can work and obtain social benefits in Colombia.

Similarly, we need to recognize the difficulties and challenges which we strive to overcome in order to truly welcome the Venezuelan population. It is vital to set limits to deter those who want to take advantage of this situation to negatively affect the immigrants, and together create an environment that helps everyone develop their full potential.

This book is an opportunity to recognize and praise the tremendous work done by various actors who have joined us in this challenge and with whom we have walked the path of integration.

Donors and international organizations have been the main support for the migrant population, thanks

to their experience in similar phenomena around the world and their operational capacity. Likewise, the knowledge that society in general has of different communities has helped us make a greater impact. State coordination at regional and local levels and control agencies have helped make this an enriching experience. Due to all these efforts, Colombia has improved its ability to provide a comprehensive response to the needs of everyone in the country.

Of course, this story has not yet ended. Colombia has much to do and learn. This document sets out the challenges that Colombia will continue to work on and for which we need more support. Especially now that the COVID-19 pandemic has imposed new obstacles on the entire world, we have new perspectives on how to create a better environment for all people.

Venezuela's recovery is a long-term goal, and all our efforts must be developed with sustainability in mind. This book provides a space for reflection, a pause along the way to review what has been done and what we still need to do. It also opens the way for constructive conversation that will help us find better solutions to the challenges we face. Furthermore, this document recognizes everybody who has dedicated part of their lives to mold the immigration crisis into an opportunity for all, and a clear manifestation of the Colombian people's commitment to support our Venezuelan brothers and sisters when they need it the most.

Colombia has shown the world that the path of xenophobia is the wrong path. That segregating a brother in need is the wrong way. That in today's world we need to stand tall and defend fraternity by the way we confront times of crisis.









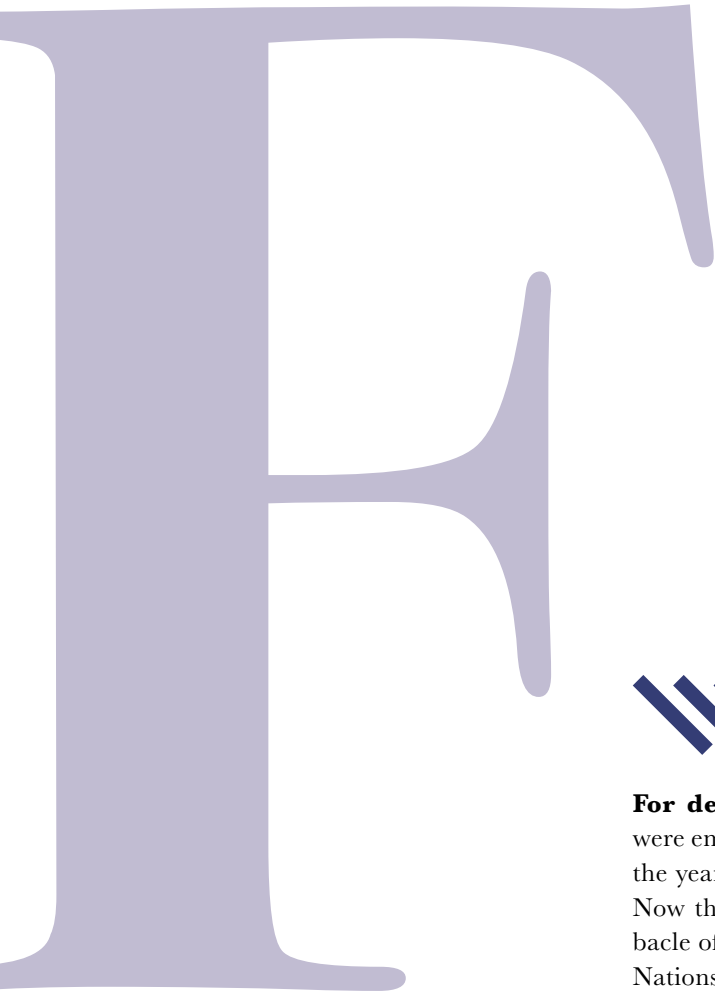


# MIGRANTS IN COLOMBIA: PLURAL POLICY, WITH A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

**Felipe Muñoz Gómez**

Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from  
the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia (2018 - 2020)

**Photo credits:** Greta Granados for the World Bank (pp. 35-36)  
Hanz Rippe for USAID/Colombia (pp. 38, 40)



**For decades Colombia was** a place that many people left. We were emigrants. About 4.7 million Colombians made this exodus over the years, with Venezuela being one of the most receptive countries. Now the story has changed. The political, economic and social debacle of our neighbor is of such magnitude that according to United Nations reports, there are more than 5.2 million Venezuelans who have fled their country in the last four years, or between 15% and 18% of its population. About 1.8 million of them permanently live in Colombia.

No country is prepared for an influx of this magnitude, least of all Colombia. Five years ago, Colombia was home to a total of 140,000 foreigners, and in just four years the number of immigrants has multiplied by 12. Added to this number is the return of more than half a million Colombians who lived in Venezuela, or second or third generations. There are traffic flows (about 1.1 million in the last two years) and migrants who daily cross the border. On an average day before the pandemic outbreak around 40,000 people entered and left the country by crossing the Simón Bolívar Bridge in Villa del Rosario.

This saga began in August 2015. The Maduro regime mercilessly expelled 22,000 Colombians under false accusations. The reaction of our government at that time was immediate, and we began to welcome and integrate the population from the other side of the border, people who

were forced by circumstances to seek new horizons, knowing that we would see an unprecedented migration to Colombia.

However, it was in 2016 and into 2017 that the flow increased as social conditions deteriorated in what had once been the richest country in the region. The first legalization and humanitarian assistance measures were taken, and when President Duque took office, many measures were continued or reinforced.

According to the understanding of the government, the immigration phenomenon was assumed as one of the most important challenges of this century. Planning and coordination have been the guiding principles in the work the Colombian government has led. This endeavor has involved regional and local authorities, international organizations, control agencies, and of course, civil organizations.

To meet this challenge, we make decisions based on evidence and the necessary pragmatism so that differences between the actors involved do not deviate from our commitment to serve this population that arrives in vulnerable conditions, and then assist them as they integrate into Colombian society.

Presently, there are few who think this is a temporary issue. This immigration is permanent. Due to this situation, I was invited by the Presidency of the Republic to lead the efforts of all those who with open arms decided to work to make this process an opportunity for the development of Colombia.

This book will deliberate on the impact immigration has had on different sectors of Colombia and will review the issues on which the government has provided a response. This includes the processes of regularization, granting nationality, providing health care, public education, economic inclusion, protection of vulnerable populations, and challenges to social and economic integration.

This book is a testimony of that journey and an account of the progress made, the challenges encountered, and the tasks still to be achieved. It also aims to be a voice to compile the experience of national and local government agencies, control entities, Congress,

international donors, cooperation agencies, civil society, and academia. This book compiles the numerous contributions made from various places and different perspectives.

Today, the international community views Colombia with admiration for its attitude towards this challenge. Despite the fact that these issues are sometimes not popular, the president has maintained a policy of generous openness that all the other actors mentioned here have supported.

We have a historical debt with Venezuela; our response is an ethical imperative towards a population fleeing from a catastrophe and it is an opportunity for our country if we can integrate this young workforce into the economy.

The borders will remain, binational families will subsist, and binational trade that once reached almost six billion dollars will return with greater dynamism.

The history of Colombia and Venezuela is a shared one, and the way we face migration is an ethical testimony that will be rewarded in the future. This documentary effort is a contribution to this purpose.

My role in the last 28 months, the most stimulating experience of my life, has been to support the leadership of the government, the efforts of mayors and governors, and the tasks of other agencies.

All this has been done within the framework of a general, strategic and forward-looking policy. As difficult as the path may seem, this is the correct decision and this evaluation will allow us to see what we need to adjust in order to continue on this path. To everyone who has been part of this journey, thank you.

## Context and causes of migration from Venezuela

### Francesca Ramos

Director of the Observatory of Venezuela,  
Faculty of International, Political and  
Urban Studies of the Universidad del Rosario.

Venezuela, a rich country with the largest oil reserves in the world, has twice as much oil as Iran and Iraq, four times more than Russia, and eight times more than the United States, along with important mineral reserves such as gold and coltan. In recent years, it began to suffer a serious socio-economic crisis and a democratic deterioration that has only worsened over time.

Due to these conditions, out of the approximately 30 million citizens in Venezuelan, about 5.1 million have migrated. The combination of economic, social and political reasons, other than those of an armed conflict or a natural disaster, have made the Venezuelan case the second worst immigration crisis worldwide after that of Syria.

The mass exodus began in 2016 when emigration expanded beyond specific groups, such as investors, professionals and students, into a collective wave that included a majority of vulnerable people.

Before 2016, the main reasons for Venezuelans to emigrate were related to the need to diversify businesses, reduce economic and financial risks, and seek employment and educational opportunities in safer and less politicized contexts than those in their country. Their chief motive was a growing mistrust that started when Hugo Chávez rose to power with a revolutionary and nationalist project, and that grew as long-standing evils in the country's political culture deepened, such as the cult of personality, a rentier state, and militarism. All of this drove different sectors of Venezuelan society who had more economic or relational means to emigrate in search of new horizons.



However, massive emigration began in 2016 and continued to increase, uninterrupted, in the following three years, generating an immigration crisis whose epicenter has been South America, which received 4.4 million Venezuelan migrants, and in particular Colombia with 1.8 million.

Venezuela has suffered a multidimensional crisis unprecedented in the modern history of a Latin American country. It is the result of political and economic situations and decisions taken at the onset of the Bolivarian Revolution and which ruined the Venezuela economy.

Hugo Chávez promoted a Marxist economic vision and a highly interventionist state supported by oil revenues, which favored the growth of hundreds of inefficient public companies. Similarly, he set up a parallel institutional framework to facilitate the distribution of income and support the social programs and subsidies that also won him an electoral foundation. This was possible due to the oil boom from 2003 to 2012, with a gradual and sustained rise in the average price of a barrel of oil from USD 28 to USD 109. In this context, the government implemented price controls, intervention, nationalization, and expropriation of private companies with negative effects on both the country's core and productive capacity.

Political conditions such as Chávez's repeated re-election and resulting organic laws led the executive to legislate in various spheres of national life. Plus, control over parliament and an abundance of resources made it possible for the government to change, use, and abuse institutions that had discretionary and uncontrolled management of oil funds to use them for the populist purposes of the Revolution. Social missions, the flagship programs of Chavismo, initially improved the social condition of Venezuelans and their access to rights, but later disappeared due to the country's socioeconomic crisis.

By the time the economic and social crisis began when oil prices fell in 2013, and particularly in 2014, the situation in Venezuela was that of a country that depended on oil revenues and

imported goods and services, with less diversified production and a higher level of external public debt. Additionally, there was a distorted and unbalanced macroeconomic management with a shortage of international reserves. From then on, the Venezuelan economy entered a recession that continues to this day.

This fall in oil prices brought a 50% drop in income from 2013 to 2017. This was a critical situation, since oil made up 96% of the country's exports. Likewise, imports of goods reached 76% from 2012 to 2016<sup>1</sup>, which generated a permanent shortage that continued in subsequent years. Worsening living conditions in 2016 led to a massive migration of Venezuelans searching for food and medicine. To illustrate the dimensions of the shortage and the decrease in government resources from oil, the average barrel price went from USD 107.46 in 2012 to USD 26.5 in 2016<sup>2</sup>.

In addition to this decrease in resources, there was the pressure to pay interest on the huge debt and the effects of financial fines. This led to protests and governmental opposition in 2014 and 2017, which was repressed by the government and ended in fatalities. Discontent among the population increased, as did government repression. Many did not see the light at the end of the tunnel in the form of political change, and the increase in hardships forced them to emigrate.

The destruction of the production apparatus also affected the backbone of the Venezuelan economy: the oil industry. Lack of investment, intellectual drain, corruption, and U.S. sanctions also led to a decline in production, which in 2017 reached the lowest level in nearly three decades.

<sup>1</sup> Banco Central de Venezuela (BCV) [Central Bank of Venezuela] (2018). Available at: <http://www.bcv.org.ve/estadisticas/comercio-exterior>

<sup>2</sup> Annual evolution of the average price of crude oil set by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries [OPEC] from 1960 to 2019. Available at: <https://es.statista.com/estadisticas/635114/precio-medio-del-crudo-fijado-por-la-opec/>





The following economic and social indicators show some of the reasons why thousands of Venezuelans took the decision to leave their country. In a five-year period (2013-2018), the economy decreased by 50%, and hyperinflation pulverized the incomes of Venezuelans, which significantly increased poverty. Poverty levels reached 87% in 2017, which meant that 9 out of 10 households did not have the resources to access minimum basics, which increased malnutrition levels<sup>3</sup>.

Nevertheless, food insecurity is not the only explanation for emigrating. The collapse of public services, electricity and drinking water, particularly in certain regions of the country, has been a reason for displacement within Venezuela, as well as migration to other countries or daily crossing the Colombian border.

Within this array of reasons is the severe public health crisis with a shortage of medical equipment and supplies, and countless health

professionals who emigrated<sup>4</sup>. Similarly, levels of insecurity in recent years have made Venezuela the most violent country in Latin America, with the emergence of criminal groups and general social decomposition<sup>5</sup>. Finally, political reasons have led some to seek refuge from the persecution of an authoritarian regime.

The impossibility of envisioning future options and the restricted living conditions have led young people in particular to lose their place in a society that apparently offers neither a present nor a future. They also support an older generation, or those with health limitations, who rely on income from the younger generation to help them find alternatives. This situation is now compounded by the coronavirus pandemic that will aggravate the existing and complex humanitarian crisis that Venezuela has been going through for the last five years.

---

<sup>3</sup> National Survey on Living Conditions in Venezuela (Encovi) (2018). Available at: <https://www.ucab.edu.ve/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/02/ENCO-VI-2017-presentaci%C3%B3n-para-difundir-.pdf>

---

<sup>4</sup> Human Rights Watch (2018). *El éxodo venezolano. Urge una respuesta regional ante una crisis migratoria sin precedentes*. Available at: [https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report\\_pdf/venezuela0918sp\\_web.pdf](https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/venezuela0918sp_web.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Venezuelan Observatory of Violence. *Informe anual de violencia 2017, 2018, 2019*.





# REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Photo credits: Muse Mohammed for IOM (pp. 43-44, 47, 49)



**The Colombian state is committed to guaranteeing** the rights of immigrants and refugees and to make those rights effective with interinstitutional coordination. Colombia's action on immigration from Venezuela is framed within international conventions that ratify Colombia's commitment to immigrants within national legislative structure, in addition to sectorial policies that have been developed to guarantee compliance with the rights of immigrants.

## International Treaties

To have a broad and comprehensive vision of the normative advances in immigration, we must review the international normative framework that governs Colombia, in consideration of the jurisprudential notion of the block of constitutionality, and the constitutional provision that contemplates the primacy of human rights treaties within our internal order. Thus, in terms of the Constitutional Court, "(...) international human rights treaties ratified by Colombia have provided a guarantee of rights that must be extended to foreigners, refugees or immigrants(...)"<sup>6</sup>.

---

<sup>6</sup> Constitutional Court, Sentence T-025 of January 29, 2019.M.P. Alberto Rojas Rios

A first reference in the matter of protecting the rights of immigrant populations in the Universal Human Rights System is found in the following documents: *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* of 1948, the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* of 1976 and the *Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* of 1966, which contemplate the rights of everyone to free movement. Similarly, recent precedents include the 2016 *New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants and the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration*, adopted by Colombia in 2018, which establishes a comprehensive framework for migration and constitutes “The first global agreement of the United Nations to establish a common understanding on migration worldwide and in all its dimensions, a non-binding instrument based on the values of sovereignty of states, shared responsibility, non-discrimination and Human Rights”<sup>7</sup>.

Similarly, within the framework of the Universal Human Rights System, the protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, which complements the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, the “Palermo Protocol,” stands out. Ratified by Colombia in 2004, it aims to “effectively prevent and combat human trafficking, especially women and children, considering that although there are several international legal instruments that contain practical standards and measures to combat the exploitation of persons, there is no universal instrument that addresses all aspects of human trafficking”<sup>8</sup>.

At a regional level, among the most relevant instruments on rights in favor of migrants are the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man of 1948 and the American Convention on Human Rights or Pact of San José de Costa Rica of 1969, of which the Colombian state is a party, and which establishes in Article 1 the obligation of State Parties

to respect the rights and freedoms recognized therein, without distinction of race or nationality.

On the other hand, in the matter of labor migration, the *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Their Families* of 1990, which Colombia adhered to in 1995, is singled out and considered an essential tool to defend the fundamental rights of migrant workers and members of their family nucleus. Similarly, *Decision 545 of the Andean Community (CAN)* of June 25, 2003, “Andean Labor Migration Instrument,” establishes norms that allow the free intra-regional movement and permanence of Andean nationals for labor purposes. In the area of international protection, noteworthy documents signed by Colombia in favor of refugees are: *1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees and 1967 Protocol*, the *Cartagena Declaration*, whose importance lies in broadening the conventional definition of refugee, and the *Global Compact on Refugees* of 2018, which establishes a “framework for a predictable and equitable distribution of burden and responsibility, recognizing that a sustainable solution to refugee situations cannot be achieved without international cooperation”<sup>9</sup>.

In addition to the above, documents on statelessness, ratified by Colombia, stand out: the *American Convention on Human Rights* (Pact of San José de Costa Rica), which provides in Article 20.1 the right of every person to nationality, as well as a safeguard to prevent statelessness; the *1989 Convention on the Rights of Children*, ratified by Colombia in 1991, which in Articles 7 and 8 establishes the right of all children to acquire a nationality and the obligation of State Parties to guarantee the right to nationality, “especially when the child is otherwise stateless”; the *Convention on the Status of Stateless Persons* of 1954, to which Colombia acceded in 2014 and the *Convention to Reduce Cases of Statelessness* of 1961, agreed to by Colombia in 2019, which establish the framework of protection and rights of stateless persons, as well as the obligation of State Parties to prevent statelessness by guaranteeing the right to a nationality and reducing the causes that give rise to situations of statelessness.

<sup>7</sup> United Nations (s. f.). *Intergovernmental Conference for the Global Compact on Migration*. Available at: <https://www.un.org/es/conf/migration/global-compact-on-safe-orderly-regular-migration.shtml>

<sup>8</sup> United Nations (s. f.). *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*. Available at: <https://www.unodc.org/pdf/cld/TOCebook-s.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> ACNUR (s. f.). *Global Compact on Refugees*. Available at: <https://www.acnur.org/pacto-mundial-sobre-refugiados.html>

## Constitutional framework

In the constitutional setting, various regulations cover migrant populations. For example, Article 13 regarding the right to equality recognizes that all people, without distinction of origin or nationality, enjoy the same rights, freedoms and opportunities, and Article 100 establishes the guarantee that foreigners enjoy the same civil rights that are granted to Colombians. Similarly, the set of fundamental rights enshrined in the Political Constitution have had a jurisprudential development in favor of immigrant populations.

In applying these provisions, the Constitutional Court in several of its pronouncements established criteria to defend the right to equality between nationals and foreigners, the protection of the right to a dignified life and physical integrity<sup>10</sup>, the scope of the right to health care of immigrants, and the minimum obligations of the Colombian state<sup>11</sup>, the right to due process in favor of foreigners<sup>12</sup>, the right to nationality and the rights of children<sup>13</sup>, among other issues.

Similarly, Article 93 is relevant because it establishes the prevalence in the internal order of “human rights treaties ratified by Colombia, as well as the interpretation of constitutional rights and duties in accordance with said instruments.”

From the legislative point of view, different norms for the protection of migrants stand out, among which are: the norms of the Penal Code that typify the crime of immigrant smuggling, human trafficking, trafficking of children and adolescents (among others); Law 1465 of 2008, which creates

the National Migration System and establishes regulations to protect Colombians abroad; Decree 1239 of 2003, by means of which the Trans-sectorial Migration Commission was created; Law 1565 of 2012, which is aimed at creating customs, tax and financial incentives for returning Colombians; Law 1873 of 2017 or the Budget Law, which contemplated the need for a comprehensive humanitarian assistance policy to address the social emergency on the Venezuelan border; Law 43 of 1993, amended by Law 962 of 2005, regarding the acquisition of Colombian nationality, recently amended by Law 1997 of 2019, which establishes the presumption of residence for Venezuelans in a regular or irregular migration situation, or refugee applicants, in order to grant Colombian nationality by birth for children born in Colombia, and to prevent statelessness. Law 1588 of 2012, through which the Statute of Stateless Persons of 1954 and the convention to reduce cases of statelessness of 1961 were approved.

## Regulations in response to migration from Venezuela

A notable precedent of the current immigration regulations framework adopted by the Colombian government in favor of the immigrant population from Venezuela was recorded in September 2015, when thousands of Colombians were deported, repatriated or expelled due to border closure measures adopted by the Venezuelan government in the state of exception decreed on August 21, 2015.

As part of the measures adopted to avert the crisis, it was established that Venezuelan citizens, spouses, or permanent companions of Colombians who were deported, expelled or returned from Venezuela could process a Special Permit of Entry and Permanence, valid for 180 days, an immigration card, and then request Colombian nationality through an exceptional procedure, which was contemplated in Decree 1814 of September 14, 2015.

In this sense, although the “Entry and Permanence Permits” (PIP) were already established in Decree 1067 of 2015, granting this permit to Venezuelan

<sup>10</sup> Constitutional Court, Judgment SU-677 of November 15, 2017, M.P. Gloria Stella Ortiz Delgado

<sup>11</sup> Constitutional Court, Sentence T-197 of May 14, 2019, M.P. Diana Fajardo Rivera

<sup>12</sup> Constitutional Court, Sentence T-500 of December 19, 2018.M.P. Diana Fajardo Rivera

<sup>13</sup> Constitutional Court, Sentence T-006 of January 17, 2020.M.P. Cristina Pardo Schlesinger

nationals set a precedent so that in 2017 the government could issue Resolution 5797 of 2017, which created the Special Permit of Permanence, (PEP), as a transitory mechanism to legalize immigration of Venezuelan citizens.

As established in the resolution, the PEP was initially conceived as an immigration measure to solve a temporary situation, but which, due to the crisis in Venezuela, was in time extended. Proof of this are the 11 phases of PEP issuance starting in June 2020 (eight in a new issuance phase and three in renewal authorization), which have been adapted to the needs of immigrants and the context of immigration.

Within these different issuance phases there are currently three phases of renewal of the original version

of the PEP. These are due to the government's decision to extend the initial two-year term foreseen for the PEP, which expired in 2019. Then, a response to the migration phenomenon in the medium and long term is underway using durable solutions.

However, it was when CONPES 3950 of 2018 (see page 51) was issued that a strategy to respond to the needs of migration from Venezuela was specified, which constitutes the main public policy reference to fully respond to the immigration challenge in Colombia.

Thus, in developing the main objectives outlined in CONPES 3950 and regulations in the National Development Plan, different sectors have issued specific regulations directed at the immigrant population.



These are contained in decrees, resolutions, circulars and internal regulations and constitute an entire normative body of public policy on immigration, unprecedented in Colombia and which has gradually adapted the existing institutional framework to respond to the migration challenge.

Of these sectorial efforts, different modalities of the Special Permit of Permanence promoted by the government through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Special Administrative Unit Migration Colombia stand out as novel expeditious mechanisms in favor of legalizing immigrants. By June 2020, 762,857<sup>14</sup> Venezuelans, that is, 44% of the estimated total of immigrants with intention to remain in Colombia, have legal immigration status through one of these mechanisms<sup>15</sup>.

Similarly, worth mentioning in this regulatory aspect is the health sector decree of January 2020. This decree affiliated in the Subsidized Health Regime those Venezuelan immigrants that were poor and vulnerable with no capacity to pay, as well as their minor children, who settled in Colombia with a current PEP (as a valid identification document in the Social Protection System).

In the field of economic development, standing out among the regulatory advances are the circulars of the Financial Superintendence issued in 2017 and 2018, which establish the validity of the Special Permit of Permanence for opening and/or contracting financial products and services, and in this way, promote the financial inclusion of immigrants and their socioeconomic integration in the country.

On the other hand, in August 2016 the National Registry of Civil Status launched an exceptional procedure to facilitate the issuance of birth records for people born in Venezuela to a Colombian parent who migrated to Colombia. Between January 2015 and March 2020<sup>16</sup>, 264,998 people over 18 years of age and 263,334 people under 18 benefited from this measure and were issued birth certificates, registered as Colombians by birth, and issued Colombian identification documents.

On the other hand, from a humanitarian point of view, regulatory advances made to eradicate and reduce cases of statelessness in Colombia are striking, particularly in the case of children of Venezuelan parents born in Colombia at the risk of being stateless and who were automatically granted Colombian nationality by birth in compliance with international commitments acquired by Colombia in the area of human rights. To date, more than 45,000 children have been recognized as Colombian by virtue of Resolution 8470 of 2019 and Law 1997 of 2019, which extends the application of this measure until 2021, and which guarantees their right to nationality and other fundamental rights that are violated in the absence of a nationality.

## Legislative projects

The immigration bill underway in the Congress of the Republic, co-authored by the national government and Congress on July 24, 2019, is a normative milestone. This bill seeks to establish “the general guidelines and institutional spaces to coordinate Colombia’s immigration policy within the framework of the Political Constitution of Colombia, international

<sup>14</sup> This figure does not include holders of Border Mobility Cards, issued to migrants who cross the border daily, or holders of Special Transit Permits, granted to migrants who cross Colombia to other countries. This figure also does not include Colombians returning from Venezuela.

<sup>15</sup> Visas or residence permits, Special Permits of Permanence (PEP), are for people who are within the period authorized to stay in Colombia without a visa or PEP.

<sup>16</sup> Source: National Registry Office of the Civil Status (as of March 18, 2020)



instruments on human rights and other regulations in force on the matter.” This joint effort provides the country with the necessary public policy instrument to manage the migration phenomenon.

This bill includes principles and definitions in relation to the rights and obligations of immigrants, immigration procedures and services, violations of immigration regulations, terms of international protection for foreigners in the country, and Colombian nationality.

Finally, Bill 231 is an initiative of the national government and the House of Representatives that establishes a special regime for the townships, municipalities, departments and border regions of Colombia in order to: (i) promote the development of these territories; (ii) improve their ties to national and territorial entities, and (iii) strengthen the organizations located in said territories, seeking to improve the quality of life for border inhabitants in comparison to the rest of the country, strengthening framework regulations regarding development and border integration to bring them in line with the current reality and needs in those territories.

This bill has four chapters related to i) purpose, scope of application and definitions; ii) economic border regime; iii) institutional strengthening and iv) border crossings (specifically the National Border Centers (CENAF) and Binational Border Centers (CEBAF)).

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, through the Directorate for Border Development and Integration, has led the coordination and served as Technical Secretariat for the review and comments on the Border Law Project. The bill was approved in the first debate on June 10, 2020.







# CONPES 3950

Photo credits: Muse Mohammed for IOM (pp. 50-51)  
Hanz Rippe for USAID /Colombia (p. 54)



**The migratory phenomenon from Venezuela** developed in a short period of time to huge dimensions. This unleashed a humanitarian crisis of immigrants in significantly vulnerable conditions that required an immediate response by independent initiatives in each sector.

However, understanding that this is a long-term phenomenon that has the potential to generate socio-economic growth, the decision was made to create a national public policy that would allow the government to respond in a coordinated way to care for and integrate the immigrant population into Colombian society.

Thus, at the end of 2018 the document CONPES 3950 Venezuela Migration Attention Strategy was issued<sup>17</sup>, which has two distinct goals:

- i. The care and integration of migrants:** health measures; education; children, adolescents and young people; access to humanitarian care services; housing; water and sanitation; employment; self-identified ethnic population; Colombian returnees; and security and social conflicts.
- ii. Strengthening of institutional capacity for joint response:** actions to improve coordination and management of institutional

---

<sup>17</sup> The National Department of Planning (DNP) (November 23, 2018). Conpes 3950. Available at: <https://colaboracion.dnp.gov.co/CDT/Conpes/Econ%20-%20C3%B3micos/3950.pdf>.

offer; immigration flexibility mechanisms; and improving statistical information.

This book, which includes the first in-depth governmental diagnosis in terms of characterizing this phenomenon, was developed under the leadership of the Directorate of Justice, Security and Government of the National Planning Department (DNP), the Advisor to the Presidency for the Colombian/Venezuelan border, and with the support of other technical departments and each sector involved in

the care of migrants from Venezuela. The document was approved in November 2018 by the National Council for Economic and Social Policy. At the time, the country estimated a total of 1,102,886 migrants from Venezuela and a rigorous monitoring and control methodology has been developed by the DNP, which has a long history and experience in monitoring public policies.

CONPES has 69 actions, and the following can be highlighted in each specific or sectorial need:

**Table 2. Duties of CONPES 3950**

Specific or sectorial need	Duty
1. Improve health care.	1.4 Define and communicate protocols to border countries to obtain basic information on migrant health.
2. Provide improved education.	1.17 Implement a leveling strategy for immigrant children and adolescents, recognizing the learning differences in the educational systems.
3. Strengthen the care of children, adolescents and youth.	1.18 Prepare orientation document for work teams on childhood, adolescence and family unification with an aim to protect, integrate and provide comprehensive care.
4. Facilitate access to humanitarian care services, housing, water and sanitation.	1.32 Adapt Transitory Immigrant Care Centers to serve the population from Venezuela with intent to stay in Colombia and to serve the transitory population.
5. Improve the employment situation.	1.36 Certify educational and labor expertise of immigrants from Venezuela.

Specific or sectorial need	Duty
6. Create a service path for the self-identified ethnic population to respect human rights.	1.47 Define guidelines that facilitate institutional access for migrants who self-recognize as indigenous and ROM in Venezuela.
7. Improve care for returning Colombians, with special attention to victims of the armed conflict.	1.52 Identify the needs of the victim population returned from Venezuela, for the restoration of rights.
8. Define the impact of immigration on citizen safety and coexistence.	1.56. Define a working group between the Foreign Ministry, Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of the Interior to establish the relationship between organized crime and migration from Venezuela.
9. Improve institutional coordination and management.	2.2 Create a strategic institutional coordination to advise the national government in defining guidelines for the care and integration of migrants.
10. Define flexible immigration mechanisms to guarantee a successful integration of the population.	2.6 Define new flexible immigration mechanisms to integrate the migrant population through institutional regulatory adjustments regarding legalization.
11. Harmonize and improve statistical information on migration issues.	2.8 Install an immigration statistics working group to initiate coordination of information-producing entities.

Source: CONPES 3950.



According to the CONPES 3950 Action and Follow-up Plan (PAS), the following table shows the main results expected by 2021.

**Table 3. CONPES 3950 Action and Follow-up Plan**

Initiative	Entity	Cost (in millions)	Impact by 2021
Early childhood care: migrant and returnee girls, boys and pregnant women from Venezuela.	Colombian Institute for Family Welfare (ICBF)	COP 344,461 USD 91.6	44,375 children and pregnant women cared for in early childhood care.
Re-establishment of the rights of immigrant children and adolescents or returning Colombians who are threatened or vulnerable.	Colombian Institute for Family Welfare (ICBF)	COP 27,989 USD 7.4	Re-establishment of rights for 100% of the population and start administrative process.
Provide humanitarian care to the immigrant population that has the intent to remain in Colombia and migrant population.	National Unit For Disaster Risk Management (UNGRD)	COP 15,819 USD 4.2	Four Transitory Care Centers for Migrants operating to assist 62,400 people.
Orientation and referrals for returning Colombians; humanitarian assistance, strategies for productive labor, and dissemination of the law and CONPES strategies for returning Colombians.	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	COP 10,930 USD 2.9	22,455 people cared for in strategies for returning Colombians.

Initiative	Entity	Cost (in millions)	Impact by 2021
Complementary training programs to update and improve immigrant labor skills of the migrant population.	National Training Service (SENA)	COP 5,307 USD 1.4	40,000 complementary training quotas granted
Design strategies to develop civic and socio-emotional competencies to prevent xenophobia and other situations that affect educational coexistence and generate discrimination.	Education Ministry	COP 2,405 USD 0.6	Strategies implemented in 100% of targeted educational establishments

Source: CONPES 3950.

On the other hand, an estimation of financing needed for activities of each entity in the PAS was made and is represented in the following table, in peso values for 2018.

**Table 4. Funding estimate for CONPES 3950 activities**

Entity	Cost (in millions)			Total (millions)	
	2018	2019	2020	2021	
Ministry of Education	COP 38 USD 0.01	COP 2,911 USD 0.8	COP 2,842 USD 0.8	COP 748 USD 0.2	COP 6,539 USD 1.81
Ministry of Labor		COP 320 USD 0.09	COP 330 USD 0.09	COP 339 USD 0.09	COP 989 USD 0.27
National Learning Service (SENA)		COP 3,737 USD 1	COP 2,302 USD 0.6	COP 2,114 USD 0.6	COP 8,153 USD 2.2
Public employment Service Unit		COP 400 USD 0.1	COP 412 USD 0.1	COP 423 USD 0.1	COP 1,236 COP 0.3



Entity	Cost (in millions)			Total (millions)	
	2018	2019	2020	2021	
Victims Unit <sup>18</sup>	COP 410 USD 0.1	COP 421 USD 0.1	COP 434 USD 0.1	COP 447 USD 0.1	COP 1,712 USD 0.5
Ministry of Health and Social Protection <sup>19</sup>	COP 193 USD 0.05	COP 641 USD 0.2	COP 402 USD 0.1	COP 422 USD 0.1	COP 1,657 USD 0.4
National Institute of Health [INS]		COP 41 USD 0.01	COP 42 USD 0.01	COP 43 USD 0.01	COP 126 USD 0.03
Colombian Institute for Family Welfare (ICBF)		COP 122,479 USD 32.6	COP 126,154 USD 33.6	COP 129,942 USD 34.6	COP 378,576 USD 100.7
Ministry of Mines and Energy	COP 28 USD 0.007	COP 213 USD 0.06	COP 213 USD 0.06	COP 213 USD 0.06	COP 667 USD 0.2
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	COP 185 USD 0.05	COP 2,150 USD 0.6	COP 2,150 USD 0.6	COP 2,150 USD 0.6	COP 6,635 USD 1.8
Ministry of the Interior		COP 376 USD 0.1	COP 256 USD 0.07	COP 38 USD 0.01	COP 670 USD 0.2
National Unit For Disaster Risk Management [UNGRD]		COP 15,819 USD 4.2			COP 15,819 USD 4.2
Total	COP 854 USD 0.2	COP 149,508 USD 39.8	COP 135,537 USD 36	COP 136,881 USD 36.4	COP 422,779 USD 112.5

Source: CONPES 3950.

Up to June 2020, progress on axis 1 of the policy was 67% of the total; on axis 2, it was 72%<sup>20</sup>. The results show the creation of inter-institutional working groups to coordinate the response to diverse national and territorial needs; the creation of an income generation strategy with routes to generate employment and promote entrepreneurship; studies developed to define the relationship between coexistence, citizen security, and migration; guidelines issued regarding the

self-identified migrant indigenous population; and the generation of sectorial service routes.

Finally, it should be noted that the National Development Plan 2018-2022 *Pact for Colombia, Pact for Equity* establishes the social and economic integration of the migrant population<sup>21</sup> from Venezuela as a priority and proposes strategies in the Pact for Legality (Line - Colombia in the Global Scene), which include:

<sup>18</sup> This cost is estimated for the population that returns from Venezuela and is included in the RUV.

<sup>19</sup> Not included: cost of affiliation of the subsidized regime, payment for the provision of services, additional actions carried out for health management in the prevention of events of interest in public health.

<sup>20</sup> DNP. SisCONPES. Available at: [Sisconpes.dnp.gov.co](http://Sisconpes.dnp.gov.co).

<sup>21</sup> In that sense, in March 2019, the Advisory Committee for the Fiscal Rule, considering that migration from Venezuela implies higher costs in the short term and macroeconomic benefits in the long term, enabled an additional deficit to finance the response to this phenomenon during the period 2019-2023.

## The Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

The Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration is the first global agreement led by the United Nations that establishes a common understanding on migration worldwide and in all its dimensions, based on the values of sovereignty of states, shared responsibility, non-discrimination and guarantee of human rights. It recognizes that cooperation instruments are necessary to optimize the benefits of migration for the development of migrants, their families, and their communities of origin and destination, as well as to mitigate the risks and challenges of individuals and communities in countries of origin, transit and destination.

Colombia adopted the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration on December 10, 2018, with the understanding that no country can deal with the immigration phenomenon, and a global phenomenon alone, such as migration, needs a global response as well. Recognizing that Colombia is the country of origin, destination and place of transit for migrants, Colombia affirmed its political will in favor of cooperating to manage migration and to fully favor migrants, compatriots who return, and their host communities.

Although the compact is not binding, the Colombian government has been consistent with its commitment, and efforts to respond to migration from Venezuela are aligned with the 23 objectives established in the Global Compact on Migration, with emphasis on the objectives that promote regularization, identification and social and economic integration of migrants in their host communities.

- i.** A new immigration policy that considers strategies for the comprehensive care of three categories of migrants: Colombians abroad, returning Colombians and foreigners in Colombia.
- ii.** Comprehensive and long-term strategy, not only to manage immigration flow, but also to economically and socially integrate migrants from Venezuela, with special consideration for returning Colombians.
- iii.** New strategy to combat human trafficking.

## General follow-up to CONPES 3950 action plan

CONPES 3950 continues to be the main benchmark for public policy to fully respond to migration from Venezuela. The policy documents approved by the National Council for Economic and Social Policy (CONPES) are subject to biannual monitoring, the results of which can be openly consulted on the Sis-CONPES platform ([www.sisconpes.dnp.gov.co](http://www.sisconpes.dnp.gov.co)) that shows charts and graphs of goals achieved, as well as a matrix of Action and Follow-up Plan (PAS).

The compliance period of CONPES 3950 is from 2018 to 2021. Therefore, at the time this document was prepared, three compliance reports relative to activities had been created: i) Second semester of 2018 (with activities during December of that year); ii) First semester of 2019; iii) Second semester of 2019; iv) First semester of 2020.

In the table below, the accumulated progress is presented for each sector in the CONPES document as of June 30, 2020. It is vital to take into account that the percentages of progress of goals indicate the average of what has been achieved in each sector up

to June 2020, to reach the final goal in 2021. The same applies to financial progress, where only what is reported until June 2020 is presented. The policy will be in effect until 2021; almost one-and-a-half years are still left to meet all goals.

**Table 5. Progress made in each administrative area**

Sector Area	Goals	Resources (in millions)	
	% of progress in 2018-2021 goals at 06/2020	Total estimated resources necessary for the fulfillment of the actions under its charge	Accumulated financial progress as of 06/2020
Commerce, Industry and Tourism	98	0	0
National Defense	100	0	0
National Education	40	COP 6,540 USD 1.7	COP 210,150 USD 55.9
Finance and Public Credit	100	0	0
Social Inclusion and Reconciliation	89	COP 380,280 USD 101.2	COP 136,770.4 USD 36.4
Statistical information	100	COP 5,5 USD 0.001	COP 5,5 USD 0.001
Interior	60	USD 670 COP 0.2	COP 49,6 USD 0.01
Mines and Energy	37	COP 667 USD 0.2	COP 2,935 USD 0.8
Presidency of the Republic	54	COP 15,819 USD 4.2	0
Foreign Affairs	71	COP 6,635 USD 1.8	COP 784.8 USD 0.2
Health and Social Protection	76	COP 1,784 USD 0.5	COP 839.6 USD 0.2
Labor	59	COP 10,378 USD 2.8	COP 3,944.9 USD 1
Housing, City and Territory	100	0	COP 51,204 USD 13.6
TOTAL	63	COP 412,400.5 USD 110	COP 351,534.5 USD 93.5

Source: DNP, SisCONPES, up to June 2020

Note: Some actions have multiple responsible entities. This table lists the sector of the leading entity that reports progress.





# MIGRATION FROM VENEZUELA AND THE EVOLUTION OF MIGRATION POLICY

Photo credits: ©ACNUR, Deiner Gil (pp. 61-62); Muse Mohammed for IOM (p. 70)  
Hanz Rippe for USAID/Colombia (p. 72); ©ACNUR, Andrew McConnell (p. 74)



## Committed to regularization

**Until 2015, in terms of immigration** Colombia was considered a country of emigrants rather than immigrants. According to estimates made by the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE) using indirect models taking into account the evolution of migration stocks since 1985, by 2005 there were 3,378,345 Colombians permanently residing abroad. By 2015, based on projections made from consular records, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs estimated there were around five million Colombians living abroad. However, according to the 2005 Census, the number of foreigners in Colombia was 109,971 and according to estimates by Migración Colombia for 2015 there were 147,774 long-term immigrants in Colombia, which represented 0.3% of the total population of Colombia.

Given this scenario, foreigners had not represented a public policy concern or challenge. Furthermore, before 2015, the only regularization exercise that had been carried out in the country took place in 2008, in which Decree 3970 of that year established the regularization of foreigners in Colombia. This measure benefited foreigners who had entered the country before April 1, 2008. As of May 2009, once the regularization process had been completed, data provided indicated that a total of 1,914 foreigners had registered, of which 35% were from China, 34% Ecuador, 14% Peru, and the remaining 17% were from Cuba, Argentina, Venezuela, Brazil, Costa Rica, Spain, or another country.

As of 2015 the scenario changed dramatically. Colombia began to receive significant flows of migrants from Venezuela, the vast majority with intentions to stay for the long term. Even when a Venezuelan enters the country through an immigration checkpoint and their passport is stamped, they can only remain in Colombia for six months without a visa. As time passed, migrants continued to enter Colombia, and they stayed and exceeded the allowed time of permanence and incurred in irregular immigration status.

However, studies and provisions led by international organizations consider the process of regularizing migrants as a step towards humanitarian care and welcoming policies, which give access to basic services, and a mandatory step towards social and economic integration of immigrants in the destination country.

Considering the growing and sustained entrance and permanence of Venezuelan migrants, and aware that regularization is a mechanism that reduces the vulnerability of migrant populations, in keeping with the logic of orderly, regular and safe migration policy, and to respect the rights of Venezuelan migrants, in 2017 the Colombian government decided to implement a mechanism that would regulate immigration: the Special Permit of Permanence (PEP).

This instrument was conceived as a valid identification document for Venezuelan citizens in Colombian territory. It allows them to temporarily have legal immigration status and to access institutional health, education, employment and child care at the national, departmental and municipal levels, authorized to carry out any activity or legal occupation in the country. This includes those carried out by virtue of a relationship or employment contract, without prejudice to the requirements established in the Colombian legal system for the exercise of regulated activities.

To apply for the PEP, a Venezuelan migrant should be in Colombian territory, have entered the country through an immigration control post, have his/her passport stamped, have no judicial record or hold any current expulsion measure. The procedure is simple: it is requested free of charge via the official website of Migración Colombia and received by email.

The measure was issued under three assumptions: first, given the requirements and that it was free of charge, it was an exceptional measure; second, that it was temporary, since it was granted only for a period of two years while its holder could request a visa; and, finally, that it would not have a pull effect, promoting Venezuelan migration towards Colombia.

In April 2018, and after two phases of the Special Permit of Permanence had already been issued, it became clear that a large part of the Venezuelan nationals who entered Colombia did not do so through immigration checkpoints at the border but through irregular entry points. This led the government to implement the Administrative Registry of Venezuelan Migrants (RAMV), which was administered by the Unit for Risk and Disaster Management (UNGRD) and applied through the national Ombudsman Offices. 442,462 people registered in the RAMV. Based on this important gathering of information, the decision was made to issue a phase of the PEP that would benefit these people: Phase III, also known as PEP-RAMV.

Seven phases of the PEP were issued from July 2017 to January 2020. The following are the issue phases of the Special Permit of Permanence (PEP) and the start and ending issue dates:



**Table 6. Special Permit of Permanence (PEP) phases**

Phase of PEP and Resolution of Ministry of Foreign Affairs [MRE]	Deadline to have been residing in Colombia	Initial Date of Issuance of PEP	Final Date of Issuance of PEP
Phase I. Resolution 5797 of July 25, 2017	July 28, 2017	August 3, 2017	October 31, 2017
PHASE II. Resolution 740 of February 5, 2018	February 2, 2018	February 7, 2018	June 7, 2018
Phase III. Resolution 6370 of August 1, 2018. Regulates PEP-RAMV	August 2, 2018	August 2, 2018	December 2, 2018
Phase IV. Resolution 10677 of December 18, 2018	December 17, 2018	December 27, 2018	April 27, 2019
Phase V. Resolution 2540 May 21, 2019. Regulates PEP – MILITARY	May 13, 2019	May 24, 2019	July 22, 2019
Phase VI. Resolution 3548 of July 3, 2019. Regulates New PECP	From August 19, 2015 to December 31, 2018 and possesses CONARE issue authorization	September 15, 2019	December 15, 2019
Phase VII. Resolution 0240 of January 23, 2020.	November 29, 2019	January 29, 2020	May 29, 2020



In June 2019 the term of the PEPs issued in Phase I ended, and it was apparent that few Venezuelan immigrants had made the transition from the Special Permit of Permanence to the visa. Thus, it was decided to

extend the PEPs for two more years (as they expire). At the time this book was written, the first two terms of the PEP had expired and had been renewed. Information on these renewals is listed below:

**Table 7. Phases of renewal of the Special Permit of Permanence**

Renewed Phase Of Pep And Resolution Of Ministry Of Foreign Affairs	Deadline to stay in Colombia	Initial Date of Issuance of PEP	Final Date of Issuance of PEP
Resolution 2634 of May 28, 2019. Regulates Renovation PEP-I.	Requirements Resolution 5797 of 2017	June 4, 2019	October 30, 2019
Resolution 0740 of February 5, 2018. Regulates Renovation PEP-II.	Have a PEP issued between February 7, 2018 and June 7, 2018	December 23, 2019	June 6, 2020

However, it has been a challenge to communicate the PEP among national public and private entities and include it in information systems. The government carried out extensive dissemination campaigns, invested its own resources, and requested support from international organizations to make these adjustments.

Recently, the regularization strategy for immigrants from Venezuela, although still based on issuing Special Permits, has now focused on implementing sectorial PEPs that respond to the needs of specific Venezuelan migrant groups.

In 2020, the government, through the Ministries of Labor and Foreign Affairs, implemented the PEP to

Foster Formalization (PEP-FF), an additional innovative regularization mechanism aimed at the irregular migrant population who have a formal job offer.

This permit seeks to reduce the level of labor informality in the Venezuelan migrant population and to provide a mechanism to avoid labor exploitation of irregular immigrants.

To additionally further multi-sector progress, the PEP draft decree for the education sector (PEP-E) and the PEP for Training and Recognition of Prior Learning (PEP-FR) are in process. These are a tool to help Venezuelan students access qualifications in education, training, or recognition of prior learning.

The PEP for the Education Sector (PEP-E) is a mechanism that will allow children and adolescents enrolled in educational institutions to regularize their immigration status and gain access to the Colombian educational system at the pre-school, basic and middle school levels, and subsequently to higher education programs.

Along the same lines, the government has taken steps to eliminate barriers faced by the migrant population when attempting to validate higher education degrees granted abroad by creating an alternative mechanism that makes the ordinary requirements more flexible.

## Alignment with the Global Compact for Migration

The Colombian regularization policy is aligned with the following objectives of the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration:

- **Objective 4.** Ensure that all migrants have proof of legal identity and proper documentation.
- **Objective 5.** Increase the availability and flexibility of regular migration routes.
- **Objective 7.** Address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration.
- **Objective 12.** Increase the certainty and predictability of migration procedures for proper background checks, evaluation, and referral.

On the other hand, the PEP for Training and Recognition of Prior Learning (PEP-FR) is aimed at regularizing the situation of immigrants who do not have a valid identification document in Colombia and that have been selected to participate in technical labor training programs, or that want to get recognition for prior training and get skills evaluated and certified.

## Challenges

The following three major challenges in terms of regularization should be noted. In the first place, in accordance with reports from important think tanks it is necessary to open a technical debate and begin to conceptualize unified and permanent regularization mechanisms. This implies a parallel evaluation of the impact of mechanisms implemented so far, including sectorial PEPs to assess the possibility of more flexible and longer-term regularization mechanisms than the present ones.

On the other hand, the challenge providing information regarding both the PEP and sectorial PEPs continues. Although the vast majority of the interested population is aware of these mechanisms, there are still important questions such as whether the PEP constitutes an identification document in itself.

In third and last place, the greatest and most important challenge would be to reach and maintain the goal of a minimum of 70% regularity among migrants.

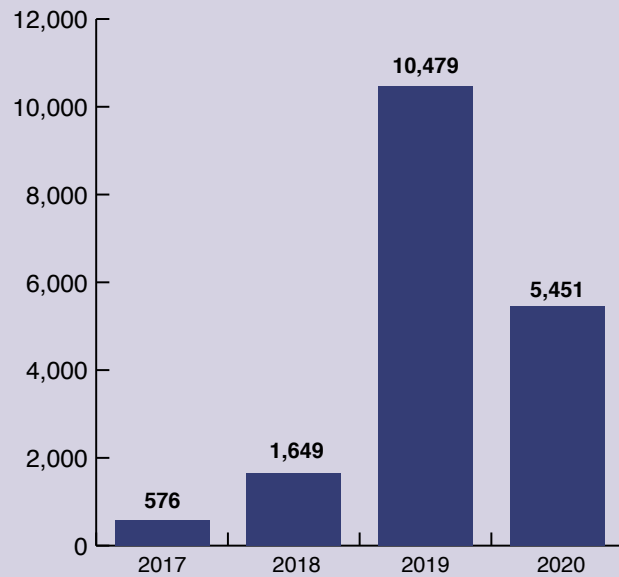
## International protection guarantees: refugee status applications

In addition to the efforts made in migration, the country has also been forced to care for the exponential growth of Venezuelan nationals filing applications with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs seeking refugee status and who allege risk in their country of origin and/or who lack national protection.

In 2017 there were only 576 applications from Venezuelans, but substantial increases began to be seen starting in 2018, when a total of 1,649 new applications were reported. This was followed by a steep rise in 2019, which closed with 10,479 new applications. As of June 30, 2020, 5,451 new applications had already been registered, which suggests that 2020 will close with a figure much higher than the previous year<sup>22</sup> (graph 2).

The aforementioned requests have been registered, are under study, and will be resolved in compliance with Decree 1067 of 2015, “By means of which the Single Regulatory Decree of the Administrative Sector of Foreign Affairs is issued”<sup>23</sup>. The aforementioned regulations outline steps that must be taken for each refugee application in order to establish whether the circumstances alleged by the foreigner correspond to the definition, and consequently if recognition of refugee status can or cannot be granted.

Graph 2. Refugee status applications (2017 - 2020)

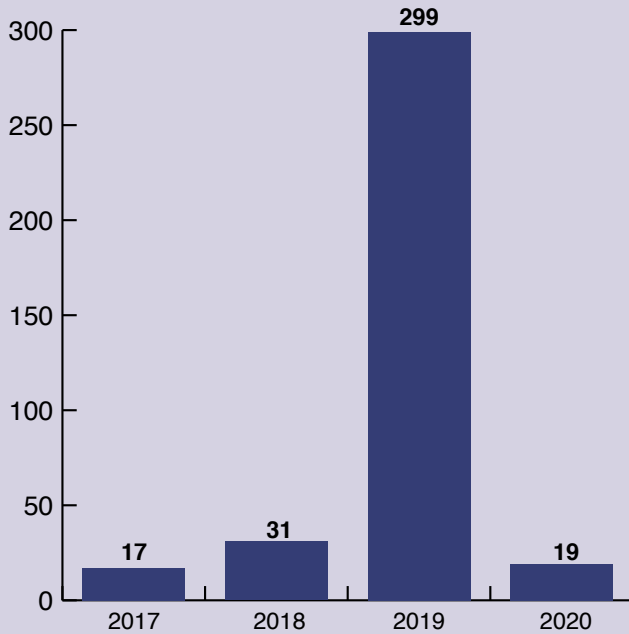


\* Note: statistics for 2020 as of June 30.

<sup>22</sup> According to estimates by the Organization of American States (OAS), it is expected that by the end of 2020 between 7.5 and 8.2 million Venezuelan citizens will have left their country of origin, of which approximately 70% would remain in the region and most of these in Colombia, with the consequent impact that this will have on the numbers of refugees and migrants, and inevitably on institutional capacities. (OEA (2020). OAS Working Group to Address the Regional Crisis Caused by Venezuela's Migrant and Refugee Flows available at: <http://shapersforvenezuela.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/OAS-Working-Group-to-Address-the-Regional-Crisis-Caused-by-Venezuelas-Migrant-and-Refugee-Flows.pdf>)

<sup>23</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Decree 1067 of May 26, 2015. Available at: [https://www.cancilleria.gov.co/sites/default/files/Normograma/docs/decreto\\_1067\\_2015.htm](https://www.cancilleria.gov.co/sites/default/files/Normograma/docs/decreto_1067_2015.htm)

### Graph 3. Recognition of refugee status



\* Note: statistics as of June 30, 2020.

The work done by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2018 and 2019 led to 366 Venezuelans being recognized as Refugees as of June 30, 2020. This corresponds to 2% of all applications (Graph 3). Many applications were terminated due to incomplete information or application withdrawals, and not to application approval or rejection.

The unusual increase in refuge applications in Colombia contrasts with the historical trend in terms of migration and refuge, as the country faced a rapid reverse from a tradition of emigrants to becoming a country that receives foreigners.

This change has resulted in numerous challenges for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Aware of national obligations and international commitments, it now puts into effect a large number of strategies to respond appropriately to this situation and prepare for a greater increase than thus experienced so far.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been called on to adapt an administrative apparatus prepared to receive just a few hundred requests before 2018 to now manage thousands of requests filed in just two years. This has implied, among other things, new facilities with the necessary electronic and logistical resources and adding technical and professional staff responsible for carrying out the aforementioned tasks.

Likewise, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, acting through the Advisory Commission for the Determination of Refugee Status (Conare) and its Technical Secretariat has adopted a series of measures to recognize refugees and to adapt – when appropriate – how regulations in the Decree on refugee matters are applied to the current situation described above. In this sense, Conare has determined, among other things:

- i. Implement an analysis strategy by profiles that leads to making the evaluation of the individual case more effective. In this regard, even when the individual evaluation mechanism is maintained, as required by the standard, use is made of methodological tools that favor the study of each request, based on the implementation of categories, thus seeking a reduction in the time used in the analysis stage, while ensuring a rigorous evaluation of each application.

- ii.** Extend the application of the family unity principle (initially reserved for the spouse and/or permanent partner and children) to older adults who, being parents or in-laws of refugee applicants, meet any of the following criteria: a) Not being able to submit an application for recognition of refugee status individually for health reasons; b) Be over 60 years old and/or; c) Be economically dependent on the foreigner who holds the status of refugee applicant.
- iii.** Strengthen the existing links with state entities that have jurisdiction in the refugee process, such as the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare (ICBF), in matters of representation and assistance for children and adolescents and applicants for recognition of refugee status.
- iv.** Although the regulatory Decree does not provide terms within which each of the stages of the refugee procedure must be fulfilled, significant efforts have been made to guarantee that applicants and their beneficiaries can receive the temporary permit of permanence for refugee procedures as quickly as possible. Temporary permits enable the applicant for refugee status to access health services provided under the Subsidized Regime of the General Social Security System and maintain legal status in Colombia until their request is resolved.
- i.** Preserve the status of refugee as a figure of international protection, without distorting it as a mechanism to legalize immigration.
- ii.** To continue with the pedagogical work with foreigners and even with other state institutions on the scope of the status of refuge, since this is a subject so rarely addressed until today.
- iii.** Continue with the administrative strengthening in terms of physical and human resources that allow, in turn, a reduction in response times to each of the requests filed to date.

Within the framework of measures that have been adopted in the region due to the crisis caused by Venezuelan migrants and refugees, one of the most frequent questions is why the number of refugee applications in Colombia is relatively lower compared to figures in other countries.

This could be explained, in part, by the migration regularization mechanisms that the government has decided to adopt, among which is the Special Permit of Permanence (PEP) and its extensions. In addition to the regular channels provided for in domestic legislation, this has made it possible to observe that beyond seeking international protection such as refuge, the real interest of many Venezuelan nationals is to opt for migration-type mechanisms to legalize their situation in the country.

## Challenges

Considering the circumstantial panorama within which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs must act with respect to a phenomenon that is novel for the country, and recognizing the overflow of institutional capacity to face it, the following stand out among the main challenges:





## Returning Colombians and migrants with the right to nationality

People who have lived outside their country of origin and then decide to return to their country are called “returnees.” In Colombia, Law 1565 of 20123 aims “to create customs, tax and financial incentives regarding returning Colombians and provide comprehensive support to those Colombians who voluntarily wish to return to the country.”

In Article 3 of this law, four types of returnees are mentioned:

- **Solidarity return:** is the return made by the Colombian victim of the internal armed conflict, as well as those who obtain classification as being in poverty. This type of returnee is processed under Law 1448 of 2011.
- **Humanitarian or special cause return:** is when a Colombian returns due to some force majeure situation or special causes. Special causes are those that put physical, social, economic or personal integrity and/or that of the family members at risk, as well as abandonment or death of relatives living with him abroad.
- **Return to work:** is when a Colombian returns to their place of origin to use skills, knowledge, trades and work experiences acquired abroad and in Colombia.
- **Productive return:** is the return made by a Colombian to co-finance projects linked to development plans of resettlement in their department and/or municipality using their own resources or subsidies for migrant reception.

To be a beneficiary of this law, they must meet the following requirements:

- Be of legal age;
- Accredited a stay abroad of at least three years;

- Not have current convictions in Colombia or abroad and not be convicted of crimes against public administration;
- Residing for less than 12 months in the national territory after having returned;
- Express interest in returning to the competent authority under Law 1565 of 2012.

To properly control and manage returnees to the country, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs-Chancery created the Unique Registry of Returnees (RUR), which reports 26,355 returnees to the country between 2013 and June 2020, of which 18,965 are from Venezuela, equivalent to 72% of the total number of returnee beneficiaries under the law.

This number of returnees is considered to be low compared to existing returnees. Firstly, according to the definition for returnees under Law 1565 of 2012, many applicants do not meet the requirements and their request is rejected. Secondly, many people who return do not register due to ignorance or lack of interest.

Non-compliance with the requirements is reaffirmed in the Evaluative Investigation on the Application of Law 1565 of 2012 between 2012 and 2018 for the International Organization for Migration and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A large part of the returnees surveyed returned with needs that do not meet requirements under the Law, since they belong to groups and families with unsatisfied basic needs, such as being in vulnerable situations or being illiterate.

The previous number of returnees contrasts with data estimated by Migración Colombia. The Great Integrated Household Survey (GEIH) by the DANE and the National Civil Status Registry estimate that there are more than 500,000 returnees.



Regardless of the number of returnees, it is worth highlighting the efforts made to serve this population.

The Foreign Affairs Ministry has the *Colombia Nos Une* (Colombia Unites Us) program, which aims to serve and connect Colombians abroad and make them subject to public policies, as well as guide and accompany Colombians who return to the country. This program has acted to face the Venezuelan immigration crisis in the following ways:

- Providing social and psychosocial professionals to facilitate the process of adapting to Colombian society in each national Reference and Opportunities for Return Center (CRORE). These centers seek to provide care, orient, and guide requests by Colombians and their families who return from abroad, and to provide guidance on Law 1565 of 2012 (the Return Law). CRORE are located in La Guajira, Atlántico, Bolívar, Norte de Santander, Antioquia, Santander, Risaralda, Bogotá, Arauca, Valle del Cauca, Nariño, Quindío and Vichada. These departments have a high concentration of migrants from Venezuela, and have served 57,337 returnees from 2014 to 2019.
- Carry out dissemination campaigns regarding the Unique Registry of Returnees and registration days in municipalities with a high concentration of returnees and no CRORE.
- Humanitarian assistance to more than 9,247 people by providing accommodation, food, health care, transportation assistance and psychosocial support.
- Assistance in implementing 186 productive units located in Nariño, Chocó, Norte de Santander, Valle del Cauca, Quindío, Caldas, Risaralda, Cundinamarca, Antioquia, Atlántico and Bolívar, from which 980 people have benefitted.
- According to developments in the Republic of Venezuela, starting January 1, 2015 the National Civil Registry Office and other state entities and international organizations designed new measures to register birth certificates for returnees and children of Colombians born in Venezuela.



Some actions implemented correspond to the following aspects:

*Registration in the civil registry of children of Colombians born in Venezuela:*

- Establish a special and temporary procedure for the extemporaneous registration of births that occurred in Venezuela, which only requires: Certificate or Civil Registration of Venezuelan birth (without apostille) and presenting of two qualified witnesses who declare having known directly the fact of birth; declaration of witness of birth in accordance with Article 2.2.6.12.3.5. of Decree 356 of 2017 and proof of nationality of at least one parent, which can be a citizenship card for those over eighteen years old, the identity card for those over fourteen years old and under eighteen years or the civil registration of birth for minors under fourteen, issued under the organization and direction of the National Registry of Civil Status, accompanied by proof of address when applicable.

- Seven circulars were issued to facilitate registration of minors and children over seven years of age in the civil birth registration with the right to nationality. The last circular was the Unique Circular of Civil Registration and Identification, which has been extended every six months and remains in force as of June 2020.

## Challenges

Despite efforts to register and provide comprehensive care for the returning Colombian population, many challenges remain and are summarized as follows:

- Modify the returnee law to expand the definition of returnees according to the characteristics, needs and particularities of a population who, in the case of Colombian returnees from Venezuela, does not have resources at the time of return.
- Adjust the registration process and form provided in the RUR in such a way that it allows identification and characterization of the returnee population.
- Define CRORE care protocols in order to implement standard care that is appropriate to the needs of the returnee population.
- Sensitize entities and officials in charge of implementing public-private programs in the country to the needs, care and rights of the returned population in the country.
- Allocation of resources to support the CRORE and other entities in terms of coverage, capacity and relevant care of the returned population.

## Alignment with the Global Compact on Migration

The Colombian Government's returnee policy is aligned with the following objectives of the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration::

- **Objective 4.** Ensure all migrants can prove their legal identity and have adequate documentation.
- **Objective 21.** Facilitate return and readmission in conditions of safety and dignity, as well as sustainable reintegration.



## Prevention of child statelessness

As a result of the massive flow of Venezuelan migrants to Colombia at the end of 2015, more children were born in Colombian territory whose parents, especially pregnant women, had migrated to Colombia with the expectation that their children would obtain nationality by having been born in Colombian territory. However, in reality, they could not obtain nationality because they were in an irregular immigration situation and did not comply with the residence requirement demanded by the Constitution for children of foreigners born in Colombia.

Aware of this problem, the national government began to monitor and analyze cases through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, applying an administrative procedure coordinated with the National Registry of Civil Status to grant Colombian nationality to minors whose nationality is not recognized by any state.

For this purpose, working groups were held with the Attorney General's Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Registry of Civil Status, Migración Colombia, the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare, the Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia and the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office with the aim of analyzing the cases of children born in Colombian territory who were at risk of statelessness because they were born of Venezuelan parents who did not legally reside in the country.

After reviewing the cases, by the end of 2018 it was noted that the Venezuelan parents of these children, despite having the right to Venezuelan nationality due to blood tie, in accordance with Venezuelan legislation on the acquisition of nationality, faced insurmountable obstacles to register their children as Venezuelans at the consular offices in Colombia. This required, among other difficult requirements, that they hold a valid Venezuelan passport and have legal status in Colombia.

The Venezuelan consular offices in Colombia were closed at the beginning of 2019, which aggravated the situation, since Venezuelan migrants could not register their children as Venezuelans.

All of the foregoing led the government to conclude that these children were not recognized as nationals of any state and, therefore, were at risk of statelessness. By April 2019, according to official figures from the Registry, there were 24,000 minors, born in Colombia, children of Venezuelan migrants, that did not have any nationality.

Aware of this serious situation, the Colombian government led the efforts of state entities involved as well as international cooperation agencies to create an exceptional measure that would protect these children and guarantee their right to nationality.

The problem of statelessness was solved by guaranteeing nationality. Thus, on August 5, 2019, the President of the Republic, Iván Duque, officially announced the measure *Primero la niñez* (Childhood First), in Resolution 8470 of 2019, by which the National Registry of Civil Status granted Colombian nationality by birth and automatically to all children that had a Venezuelan parent and were born in Colombia as of August 19, 2015, until the obstacles that prevent them from guaranteeing their right to nationality cease.

This measure was later included in Law 1997 of 2019, led by the Ombudsman's Office, which established a presumption of domicile for Venezuelan migrants, parents of children in a state of statelessness born in Colombia from January 2015 and up to two years from the issuance of the Law. This guarantees the recognition of Colombian nationality by birth.

The coordinated work of the Colombian government in applying "Childhood First" demonstrates the country's commitment to defending the rights of a vulnerable population.

Consequently, free Civil Registration and Identification sessions have been held for populations that are displaced, at risk of displacement, and/or vulnerable that live in remote, dispersed and difficult-to-access areas of Colombia, including indigenous communities, Afro-descendants, children and adolescents, and

others. These sessions are coordinated with the local governments and/or mayors in order to establish which communities need to be served, with the support of international agencies.

Since the 2019-2020 project *Primero la Niñez* (Childhood First) was implemented, 45,467 children born in Colombia to Venezuelan parents between January 1, 2015 and June 28, 2020 were recognized as Colombians. 29,337 civil birth records have the annotation “VALID TO DEMONSTRATE NATIONALITY.” From August 20, 2019, and June 28, 2020, another 16,130 children of Venezuelan parents born in Colombia were registered. They were granted Colombian nationality at the time they were registered.

National and international media and non-governmental organizations and agencies have noted the decision adopted by the Colombian government, which, in terms of a United Nations press release dated August 5, 2019, “constitutes a milestone in the prevention of statelessness worldwide”<sup>24</sup>.

## Challenges

The Constitutional Court ruled that the right to nationality of two stateless minors had been violated when they were denied Colombian nationality. The court recognized the validity of the Special Permit of Permanence (PEP), along with other facts, as evidence that establishes residence for a Venezuelan migrant and a way to overcome this barrier, which had been a legal vacuum, and that the Court sought to clarify through this decision.

Thus, the need to establish the scope and a clear criterion of the notion of the residence requirement of foreigners for the recognition of Colombian nationality by birth emerges as one of the issues that the state must resolve within its public immigration policy.

Finally, evidence emerges for the urgent need for a comprehensive legal framework on statelessness that

establishes procedures to determine the condition of stateless persons and guarantee their rights to international protection as the state resolves migratory public policy.

## Understand, welcome, and integrate: characterizing the migrant, refugee and returnee population

Characterizing the migrant population should be a priority to promote robust public policies regarding migration. A thorough understanding helps meet the needs of the population in a direct and structured way. In Colombia, an exercise to define migrants from Venezuela was developed in 2018, which sought to expand information on migration through the Administrative Registry of Venezuelan Migrants (RAMV) headed by the National Unit for Risk Management of Disasters (UNGRD), where more than 440,000 Venezuelan migrants were identified.

Similarly, it is important to highlight the work of the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE) in providing information on the migrant population since 2012. Starting in 2019, a specific exercise has been developed regarding Venezuelans that includes face-to-face contact and telephone monitoring of households with migrants, the results of which are periodically published in the Great Integrated Household Survey (GEIH).

Other efforts have been made to obtain more information on migrants. Here we list some:

<sup>24</sup> United Nations Country Team (5 August 2019). Press release.

Table 8. Migrant characterization studies

Entity	Title and Date	Objective
National Unit for Risk Management of Disasters – UNGRD	Administrative Registry of Venezuelan Migrants – RAMV. June 2018. Available at: <a href="https://www.refworld.org/es/pdfid/5b2957524.pdf">https://www.refworld.org/es/pdfid/5b2957524.pdf</a>	Expand information on the migration of Venezuelans in Colombia.
World Bank Group	Migration from Venezuela to Colombia. October 2018. Available at: <a href="https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/30651">https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/30651</a>	Determine the social, sectorial and economic impacts that migration from Venezuela has on Colombia, particularly in the main municipalities.
International Organization for Migration - IOM	Displacement Tracking Matrix - DTM. Periodically Available at: <a href="https://colombia.iom.int/dtm">https://colombia.iom.int/dtm</a>	Collect, process and disseminate information in a systematic way. Better understand the movements and needs of displaced and returnee populations in resettlement and migrant processes.
Jesuit Refugee Service	Report on Venezuelan mobility (I and II). Realities and perspectives of immigrants. June 2019. Available at: <a href="https://migravenezuela.com/web/articulo/informe-sobre-la-movilidad-humana-venezolana-en-colombia-/1581">https://migravenezuela.com/web/articulo/informe-sobre-la-movilidad-humana-venezolana-en-colombia-/1581</a>	Characterize Venezuelan people who migrate through the Norte de Santander border and intend to remain in the country.

Entity	Title and Date	Objective
Migración Colombia	Special Permit of Permanence [PEP] Renewal Surveys. Periodically Available at: <a href="https://www.migracion-colombia.gov.co/planeacion/estadisticas/243-resultados-encuestas/resultados-de-la-encuesta-renovacion-pep-1">https://www.migracion-colombia.gov.co/planeacion/estadisticas/243-resultados-encuestas/resultados-de-la-encuesta-renovacion-pep-1</a>	Know the benefits that migrants with PEP had access to, their intention to obtain a visa, their education level and field of work activity.
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees - UNHCR	Venezuelan population characterization project in Colombia. December 2017. Available at: <a href="https://www.refworld.org/es/pdfid/5ac7f0534.pdf">https://www.refworld.org/es/pdfid/5ac7f0534.pdf</a>	Gather quantitative and qualitative information on people from Venezuela settled in the departments of Arauca, Cucuta and Guajira, and in non-border urban contexts.
Autonomous University of Bucaramanga - UNAB	Characterization of the migrant population from Venezuela. Periodically Available at: <a href="https://www.unab.edu.co/publicaciones/iep-present%C3%B3-resultados-caracterizaci%C3%B3n-poblaci%C3%B3n-migrante-venezuela">https://www.unab.edu.co/publicaciones/iep-present%C3%B3-resultados-caracterizaci%C3%B3n-poblaci%C3%B3n-migrante-venezuela</a>	Investigate the reasons why migrants left their country, the academic and work skills they possess, and their economic conditions.
Rosario University	Alternate pilot census. Characterization carried out by female Colombian victims and returnees in commune 6 in Cúcuta, Norte de Santander Available at: <a href="https://repository.uro-sario.edu.co/handle/10336/21058?fbclid=IwAR3A-I3fvoSIFAemEdlb5l-KjBH550j07dO5GGL4YTHZY-h9G-GZSVADS2jaQ">https://repository.uro-sario.edu.co/handle/10336/21058?fbclid=IwAR3A-I3fvoSIFAemEdlb5l-KjBH550j07dO5GGL4YTHZY-h9G-GZSVADS2jaQ</a>	Identify and characterize the migrant population with intention to stay that is not registered in the RAMV in Cucuta.
Rosario University	Venezuelan population in Usme, characterization of migrants served by the Archdiocese of Bogotá. Available at: <a href="https://repository.urosario.edu.co/handle/10336/20413">https://repository.urosario.edu.co/handle/10336/20413</a>	Characterize the Venezuelan population located in Usme in order to understand their needs and to design effective care programs.
IMMAP	Rapid characterization of humanitarian needs. Newspaper. Available at: <a href="https://colombia.immap.org/caminantes/home.html">https://colombia.immap.org/caminantes/home.html</a>	Characterize the flows of migrants travelling on foot and identify the needs they claim to have regarding health care, food safety and nutrition, shelter, and more.

## Alignment with the Global Compact on Migration

The Colombian government's characterization efforts are aligned with the following objective of the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration:

- **Objective 1.** Collect and use accurate and disaggregated data to formulate evidence-based policy.

Despite the multiple characterization exercises carried out, two gaps persist in information on Venezuelans: i) A national characterization has not been done since 2018 with the RAMV, so information has lagged behind and, as the months go by, loses veracity. ii) The characterization of Colombian returnees and pendular migrants continues to be a challenge.

Consequently, it is necessary to implement characterization exercises on a regular basis that analyze necessary information to better understand human movement throughout Colombia, including migrants who intend to stay, pendular migrants and Colombians who made the decision to return.

To provide solutions to these obstacles, the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE) is organizing a survey of pendular migrants that captures detailed information about the movements of people who visit Colombia without the objective of settling down and better understand their needs.

Likewise, Migración Colombia is in the process of improving the migrant identification system using information technologies. Every Venezuelan citizen is expected to fill out a form in a mobile application specifying their location, level of education, and other information. Additionally, the application will use a photograph and fingerprint recognition to biometrically recognize the person. At the end of the process, the application will issue an electronic document received to the mobile phone with a barcode and other security elements that will serve as an identification document. This procedure will have a second in-person phase.

In line with this, the government is working so that all the data collected on the characterization of the Venezuelan migrant population, identification of their needs and the care provided by agencies, is available in a tool shared between the Presidency of the Republic and the National Planning Department (DNP), so that decision-makers in the Colombian public sector can view and consult it, with the final objective of supporting decision-making on the immigration phenomenon.

## Challenges

The main challenges currently facing the government to characterize migrants are: First, to establish a single data platform to exchange information, which each official agency periodically feeds, according to the criteria established by the Presidency and the DNP. Second, to define what mechanism will be used to collect information by official entities and which can be consulted from the Presidency, while safeguarding and respecting *Habeas Data*.









# SOCIAL SERVICES FOR MIGRANTS, REFUGEES AND RETURNEES

Photo credits: Muse Mohammed for IOM (pp. 80-81, 110, 112-113)

Hanz Rippe for USAID/Colombia (pp. 85, 87, 89, 94, 98)

© UNHCR, Vincent Tremeau (p. 101)



## Strategy to guarantee the right to health

**The Colombian state is committed** to guaranteeing the right to health of all its residents, regardless of their nationality or immigration status. For this, and due to the increase in demand by Venezuelan migrants for health care, the Ministry of Health and Social Protection and the sector as a whole have made adjustments to public policies and regulations that have allowed: i) to make healthcare viable for emergencies in the case of immigrants in an irregular situation, ii) provide insurance to a part of this population according to their immigration status and iii) strengthen the management of public health in the most affected territorial entities.

### i) Emergency Care

The Political Constitution of Colombia establishes the guarantee of right to health for all residents of the country. Colombian laws also guarantee the right to receive emergency care to anyone who needs it, regardless of their socioeconomic capacity. To guarantee emergency care to all migrants, Decree 866 of 2017 was issued to ensure national resources, which complements the economic effort of territorial health care agencies.

The effort of the Colombian state to guarantee access to emergency health care for Venezuelan migrants is reflected in the growing number of visits. In 2017, Colombia provided more than 350,000 health care services to the migrant population, while in 2018 and 2019 these increased to more than 1.7 million and 3.6 million, respectively, which indicates an increase of more than 900%<sup>25</sup> in three years. In 2020, more than 1.5 million health care services have been registered up to June (Graph 4). From 2017 to 2019, 813,890 migrants were treated and 7,283,580 medical consultations were performed (Graph 5).

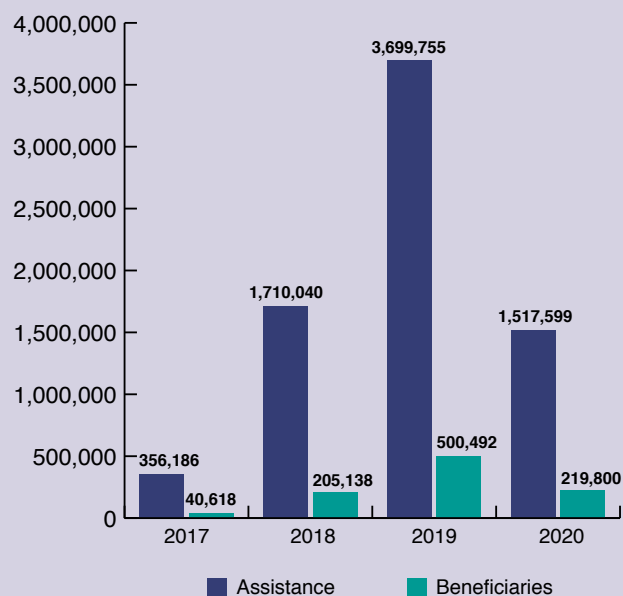
Of these health care services, 71.4% correspond to surgical and non-surgical health procedures; 12.6% correspond to consultations; 13.7% correspond to emergency care and 2.3% correspond to hospitalizations.

The biggest increase in emergency care is for expectant mothers, childbirth and postpartum care. On average, in 2017 there were 71 monthly births of children to Venezuelan mothers, while in 2019 the average was 2,182. As of May 2020, 11,636 births of Venezuelan mothers were registered, an average of 2,327 monthly births<sup>26</sup>.

## ii) Insurance

In Colombia, the migrant population can also access comprehensive health services through insurance under the contributory or subsidized regime of the General System of Social Security in Health (SGSSS)<sup>27</sup>. Insurance through the SGSSS can only be acquired if a person is duly identified and regularized, according to the criteria and considerations

**Graph 4. Health care for Venezuelan migrants (2017 - 2020)**



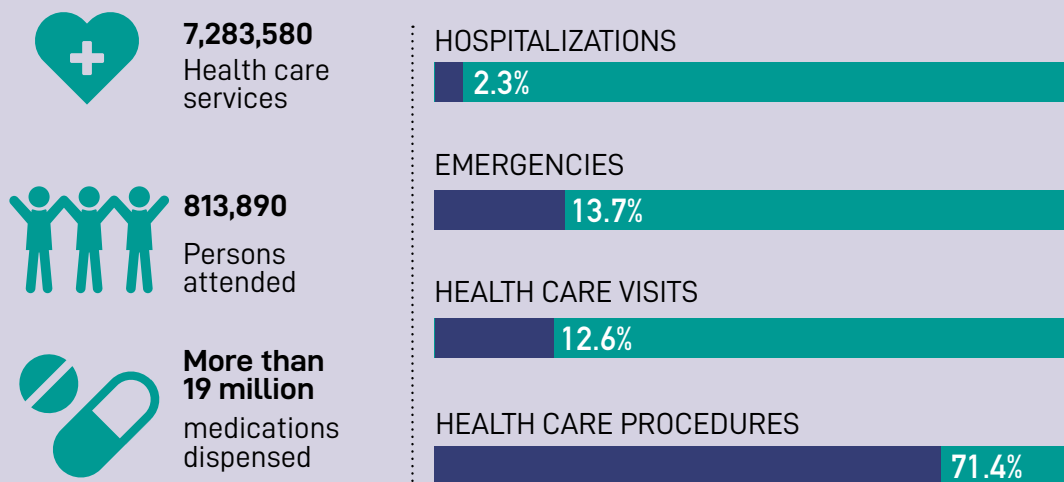
Source: DNP, SisCONPES (cutoff at December, 2019).

<sup>25</sup> DNP (November 23, 2018) CONPES 3050 “Strategy for Attention to Migration from Venezuela”. Available at: <https://colaboracion.dnp.gov.co/CDT/Conpes/Econ%C3%B3micos/3950.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> Ministry of Health (July 14, 2020). Notice 029.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibíd.*

## Graph 5. Health care visits for Venezuelan migrants (2017 - 2020)



\*Health care includes: i) health procedures, emergencies, hospitalizations and consultations; medication and vaccines are excluded

\*\*The total number of people does not correspond to the sum, because a person can get repeated health care.

Source: Individual Registry for the Provision of Health Services (RIPS) consulted April 2020. Ministry of Health and Social Protection. In relation to the data of Events of Interest in Public Health is the National Institute of Health.

of Resolution 3015 of 2017<sup>28</sup>, in which the PEP is included as a valid membership document.

In September 2018 only 3% of the migrant population was insured and, of the total estimated regular population, only 5% were affiliated with the SGSSS, 35,548 were migrants to the contributory regime and 7,589 to the subsidized regime. By June 2020, the figures had increased to 245,197 affiliated migrants. However, the coverage gaps are still large. Only 35.5% of PEP holders are insured, and only 13.9% of the total population of Venezuelan immigrants with intention to stay.

<sup>28</sup> Resolution 3015 of 2017. Consulted on 04/13/20. Available at: <https://www.minsalud.gov.co/sites/rid/Lists/BibliotecaDigital/RIDE/DE/DIJ/resolucion-03015-de-2017.pdf>

Migrants' lack of insurance hinders their access to comprehensive health service, and emergency care is more expensive for hospitals and the government. To reduce this gap, the Ministry of Health issued decree 064 of 2020 by means of which immediate affiliation is determined for those who are not affiliated when registration termination is imminent, when they request health services or when they are identified by the territorial agency. Every newborn is affiliated even if their parents are not, and the PEP migrant population is determined to be a priority affiliation population, targeted through territorial censuses. Additionally, the decree establishes the measures for affiliation in hospitals and territorial health ministries through the virtual Transactional Affiliation System (SAT).



### iii) Epidemiological surveillance and public health

Improving epidemiological surveillance to prevent the spread of communicable diseases begins with a policy of free vaccination for the entire population, regardless of their nationality or migration status. In 2017, 111,827 vaccination doses were provided and the number of doses grew by 890% to more than one million doses in 2019. In total, 2,130,932 vaccination doses were applied between August 2017 and June 2020.

Events of public health interest have increased in patients from abroad, including malaria, measles, gender violence, acute malnutrition in children under 5 years of age, HIV/AIDS, and tuberculosis. For example, in September 2017 there were 863 cases of public health events involving immigrants, while in the same month of 2018, 2,398 events were registered. In 2017 there were 882 cases of malaria in the immigrant population, while in 2019 there were 2,190<sup>29</sup>.

After four years without having a measles outbreak, in 2018 the first one occurred in Venezuelan immigrants and people who had contact with them<sup>30</sup>. To prevent and contain the spread of contagious diseases, the Ministry of Health and the National Institute of Health created an epidemiological strategy that effectively contained the spread of the outbreak.

<sup>29</sup> Weekly Epidemiological Bulletin, epidemiological week 52 (December 22-28, 2019). Accessed 04/13/20 - [https://www.ins.gov.co/buscador-eventos/BoletinEpidemiologico/2019\\_Boletin\\_epidemiologico\\_semana\\_52.pdf](https://www.ins.gov.co/buscador-eventos/BoletinEpidemiologico/2019_Boletin_epidemiologico_semana_52.pdf) and Weekly Epidemiological Bulletin, epidemiological week 52 (December 24 to 30, 2017). Accessed 04/13/20 - <https://www.ins.gov.co/buscador-eventos/BoletinEpidemiologico/2017%20Bolet%C3%ADn%20epidemiol%C3%B3gico%20semana%2052.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> DNP (November 23, 2018). CONPES 3050 “Strategy for the Attention of Migration from Venezuela”. Accessed 04/13/20 - <https://colaboracion.dnp.gov.co/CDT/Conpes/Econ%C3%B3micos/3950.pdf>

## Analysis of needs in sexual and reproductive health and estimation of costs for the care of Venezuelan migrants

As a host country in the Venezuelan immigration phenomenon, Colombia faces challenges to finance and implement comprehensive health care for migrants based on current institutional capacities and over-demand in some territories. One of these challenges is related to sexual and reproductive health care for both migrants and host communities.

The Profamilia study “Evaluation of the unmet needs in sexual health and reproductive health of the Venezuelan migrant population in four cities on the Colombian-Venezuelan border”<sup>31</sup> revealed the main needs, gaps and access barriers for the fulfillment of the rights of migrants to sexual and reproductive health, including access to family planning services, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, safe abortion and post-abortion care services, effective access to maternal and child health services, and comprehensive education and prevention of adolescent pregnancy.

To respond to these gaps in care, the Ministry of Health and Social Protection with the technical support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) carried out exhaustive work to respond to the needs in sexual and reproductive health, establish priorities and territories to intervene, as well as make an estimate of costs to respond to the sexual and reproductive health situation of migrants and the community affected by the phenomenon.

<sup>31</sup> Profamilia (s. f.). *Evaluation of the unmet needs in sexual health and reproductive health of the Venezuelan migrant population in 4 cities of the Colombian-Venezuelan border*. Available at: <https://profamilia.org.co/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/LIBRO-Evaluacion-de-las-necesidades-insatisfechas-SSR-y-Migrantes-Venezolanos-Digital.pdf>

### Prioritized interventions

The proposed interventions are aimed at supporting the country’s commitments regarding sexual and reproductive rights and the protection of life of all people, with the intent to reduce, among other things, the risks of maternal and infant mortality and morbidity. They also aim to prevent unintended pregnancy, HIV/STI infection and mortality, to prevent and reduce sexual violence and other gender-based violence, as well as minimize the long-term consequences of sexual violence and other gender-based violence (GBV). Among the interventions to prioritize are:

- i. **Contraception with long-term reversible modern methods and emergency contraception:** Available due to the ease of adherence, cost-effectiveness of the intervention, and the impact on unwanted pregnancy, adolescent fertility and a decrease in maternal morbidity and mortality.
- ii. **Prevention of unsafe abortion:** As a guarantee in the exercise of sexual and reproductive rights, aimed at reducing maternal mortality.
- iii. **STI/HIV care (Combined Prevention):** Aimed at containing the epidemic, which is increasing in immigrants.
- iv. **Maternal Health:** Care for pregnant women in response to greatest demand, protection of women’s lives, prevention of maternal and infant mortality and morbidity.
- v. **Sexual violence:** As a response to the risk of increasing cases in the humanitarian and immigration context, prevention and care to mi-

nimize the long-term consequences of sexual violence and other gender-based violence.

## Prioritization of municipalities

To prioritize municipalities, two special parameters were taken into account: the first was related to the highest concentration of migrant population by municipality, and the second was based on the concentration of cases reported to the Colombian Public Health Surveillance System (SIVIGILA) of: Maternal mortality, extreme maternal morbidity, gestational and congenital syphilis, gender violence and HIV.

Once these parameters were applied, the following municipalities were categorized, which had 70.5% of the total migrant population: Bogotá, Barranquilla, Medellín, Cúcuta, Cartagena, Cali, Maicao, Bucaramanga, Santa Marta, Arauca, Riohacha, Soacha, Soledad, Villa del Rosario, Valledupar and Yopal. Finally, taking into account the current immigration situation and the border context, Ipiales was included among the municipalities to be prioritized.

## Populations to attend

Taking into account the increase in public health events related to the sexual and reproductive health of the immigrant population, including a significant increase in maternal and perinatal deaths, low birth weight, newborns with congenital syphilis, the number of HIV cases/AIDS mortality and gender-based violence, it is necessary to use interventions that target adolescent and young women, pregnant women, women and men of childbearing age, and people living with HIV. Also, there is a need to take into account the gender approach that recognizes LGBTIQ populations with diverse sexual orientation and is provided within the framework of differential services with no barriers or discrimination.



For each prioritized municipality based on migrant population data, an estimate was made to determine: men and women of childbearing age, pregnant women, expected cases of HIV and sexual violence.

To determine the costs, and by recommendation of agencies that are part of the Sexual and Reproductive Health Sub-cluster, the calculation was made by activity taking into account the SOAT rate manual, which increased costs from the first exercise done. Once the individual cost was defined (Table 9), it was applied to the population estimate by intervention and by municipality, obtaining the cost per projected population of 54,183,525 USD<sup>32</sup>.

<sup>32</sup> Applying as a reference the average Market Representative Rate TRM of 2018 in 2,956 COP

**Table 9. Estimate of costs per line of intervention and prioritized Municipalities (USD)**

Municipality	Contraception	Maternal Health	HIV	Sexual Violence	SRR Promotion	Differential Spaces
Bogotá D.C.	1,467,130	5,301,663	5,646,645	631,666	3,833,678	37,229
Medellín	350,096	1,265,116	1,347,438	150,732	914,816	8,884
Cúcuta	519,523	1,877,365	1,999,526	223,679	1,357,539	13,183
Cali	228,669	826,326	880,096	98,453	597,524	5,803
Maicao	273,793	989,386	1,053,766	117,880	715,434	6,948
Barranquilla	420,320	1,518,880	1,617,714	180,967	1,098,315	10,666
Bucaramanga	177,715	642,196	683,985	76,514	464,378	4,510
Arauca	116,934	422,556	450,042	50,345	305,554	2,967
Soacha	103,420	373,721	398,039	44,527	270,241	2,624
Soledad	75,619	273,261	291,042	32,558	197,597	1,919
Riohacha	265,613	959,828	1,022,285	114,359	694,060	6,740
Villa del Rosario	170,790	617,170	657,330	73,533	446,281	4,334
Valledupar	130,355	471,053	501,705	56,124	340,623	3,308
Yopal	52,054	188,103	200,343	22,412	136,019	1,321
Cartagena de Indias	180,106	650,837	693,188	77,544	470,626	4,570
Santa Marta	166,658	602,239	641,427	71,754	435,484	4,229
Ipiales	4,637	16,758	4,819	1,997	12,117	118
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,703,432</b>	<b>16,996,458</b>	<b>18,089,390</b>	<b>2,025,044</b>	<b>12,290,286</b>	<b>119,353</b>

Source: Ministry of Health and Social Protection

This needs mapping and costs was presented to donors and cooperation agencies in order to jointly close the gaps in sexual and reproductive health care for immigrants and is in the financing and implementation process.





## Challenges

Despite these efforts and positive results, the Ministry of Health has identified specific challenges that must be taken into account to deploy the strategy over the next few years, which have been stated by various studies that have been published about barriers to a comprehensive health care for migrants and refugees. Profamilia also studied the gaps in health care for migrants, and points out that the deficiencies persist, especially in chronic diseases, sexual and reproductive health and mental health. Although the amount of care given to migrants has increased significantly, shortcomings persist<sup>33</sup>.

To fully cover these needs, one of the most important challenges is to increase the number of migrants affiliated with the social security system. Therefore, work will additionally be done to increase insurance for migrants in a differentiated way, considering the needs of different types of migrants. These strategies will include, among others, an intensive deployment of insurance for returnees, which must be implemented hand in hand with territorial agencies; the immediate affiliation of newborns of parents with irregular status; the creation of basic care packages with the public network for priority groups; and the proposal of a policy of coverage in basic health for in-transit and pendular migrants. This measure will also allow expanded and improved care for chronic diseases, one of the most important deficiencies at this time.

Another challenge is to strengthen mental health care for migrants, taking into account the difficulties generated by immigration grief and the pressure

on mental health caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Public Health Institute of the Javeriana University points out that although migrants who arrive at hospitals are given first aid in mental health, they are not given continuous treatment, and thus recommends psychosocial support to reduce emotional impact, rebuild trust, re-establish bonds of affection, identify and enhance coping resources and generate a perspective for the future and hope<sup>34</sup>. Profamilia data reveal that between 2018 and 2019 the use of services related to depression and anxiety increased for migrants by 108% and 224%, respectively<sup>35</sup>.

The Ministry will continue to lead a managed strategy to focus on public health management, improving health care, as well as financing and monitoring it. At the public policy level and as a cross-cutting strategy, it is expected to start working on formulating a health policy to care for immigration movements and adapting the health sector response plan to migration and its incorporation into Territorial Health Plans.

More specifically, the Ministry will work to obtain resources from specific sources to pay for individual care for migrants who do not have the ability to pay, and to support international cooperation to strengthen low-complexity and priority health care. This is key, since investments in health have exceeded the allocation of resources, leaving a deficit that as of February 2020 exceeds COP 557 trillion (USD 148.2) (Table 10).

<sup>33</sup> Profamilia (June, 2020) *Health inequalities of the Venezuelan migrant and refugee population in Colombia. How to improve the local response within the humanitarian emergency?* Available at: <https://www.profamilia.org.co/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Desigualdades-en-salud-de-la-poblacion-migrante-y-refugiada-venezolana-en-Colombia-Como-manejar-la-respuesta-local-dentro-de-la-emergencia-humanitaria.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> Montañaño Rozo, Ximena (December 17, 2019) "Venezuelan migration: a public health issue. Institute of Public Health of La Javeriana University". *Pesquisa Javeriana*. Available at: <https://www.javeriana.edu.co/pesquisa/migracion-venezolana-un-asunto-de-salud-publica/>

<sup>35</sup> Profamilia (June, 2020).

Table 10. Health care investments for migrant population \*

Resources	2017	2018	2019	2017 - 2019	USD
Investment in vaccines	COP 1,717 USD 0.5	COP 9,762 USD 2.8	COP 14,942 USD 4.4	26,431	7,7
Assigned Resources	COP 10,000 USD 3.1	COP 40,000 USD 12.2	COP 80,000 USD 24.5	130,000	39,8
Billing services	COP 557,423,482,910 • USD 148.3				163,9
Deficit as of November 2019	COP 427,423,482,910 • USD 113.7				125,7

**Nota:** \*Figures in Colombian pesos are in billions. Figures in US dollars are in millions.

## Alignment with the Global Compact on Migration

The Colombian government's health policy is aligned with the following objectives of the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration:

- **Objective 15.** Provide migrants with access to basic services

## Right for Education for Venezuelan children and adolescents

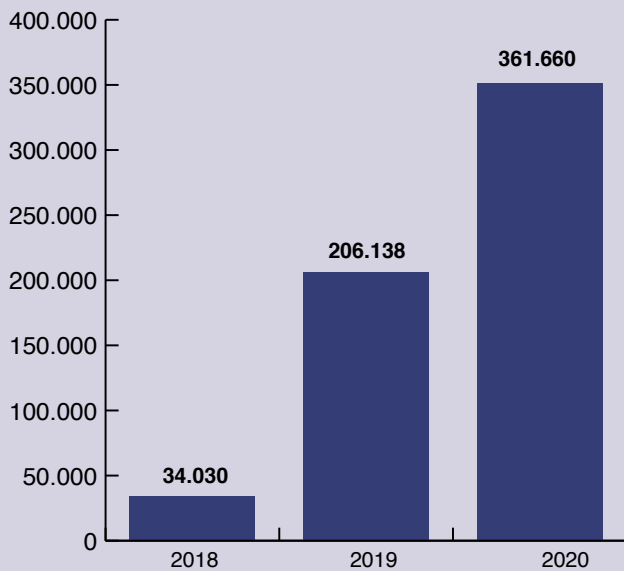
The National Ministry of Education has not been oblivious to the immigration crisis that the country has been facing since 2015, which has had a structural impact on the education sector given the permanent

increase in the flow of migrants, which has put pressure on the educational system by requiring an exponential increase in their capacities to guarantee access to education. Of the different groups that have arrived in Colombia from Venezuela, one of those that requires the greatest protection are migrant children and adolescents. Migración Colombia estimates that as of June 2020, 24% of the immigration flow corresponds to children under 17 years of age (8% between 0 and 4 years old).

However, despite the difficulties and complexity of the situation, the sector has created conditions to provide effective care for the entire population but faces new challenges in terms of well-being, educational inclusion, leveling, and school co-existence and harmony as crucial elements to achieve educational permanence for immigrants.

CONPES 3950 of November 23, 2018 created the directive for the Ministry of Education to improve conditions for immigrant children and adolescents in official Educational Institutions through actions that develop civic and socio-emotional skills. Also, it will design strategies to streamline the process of validation of basic and high school studies, as well as educational diplomas from Venezuelan higher education institutions.

**Graph 6. Venezuelan student enrollment (2018 - 2020)**



Source: Ministry of Education (data as of June 2020).

In response to the increase in the demand for educational services, the National Ministry of Education has maintained its commitment to guarantee the right for migrant children to study, regardless of their immigration status. This has resulted in 206,013 students of Venezuelan origin being enrolled by the end of 2019, and 96.3% (198,391) attended public sector schools, which represents a 605% increase compared to the 34,030 Venezuelan students enrolled at the end of the 2018 school year. By the end of June 2020, 351,660 migrant students of Venezuelan origin were enrolled, which is why a significant increase is expected at the end of 2020 compared to the closing figures for 2019 (Graph 6).

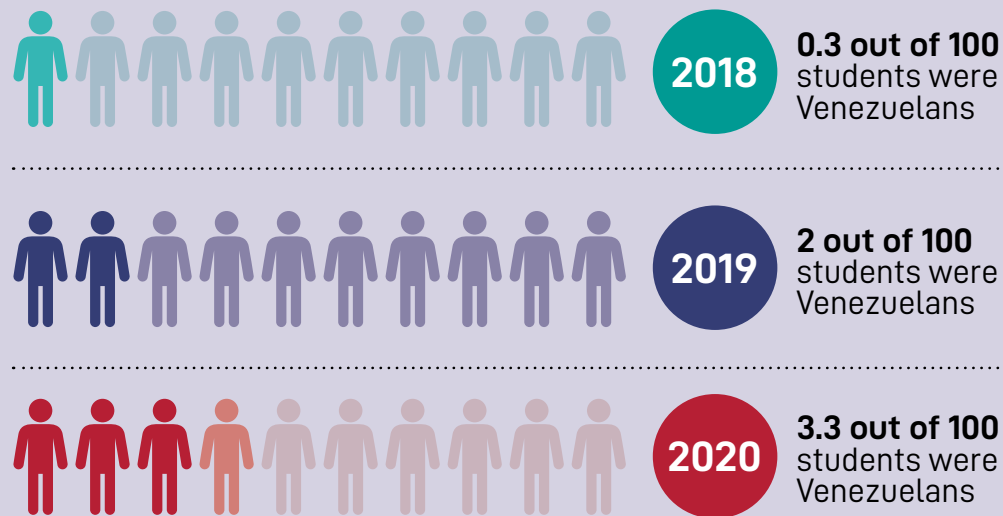
One of the challenges of integrating children and adolescents into the education system was documentation barriers. To eliminate this obstacle, Joint Circular No. 16 of 2018, issued by the Ministry of Education in conjunction with Migración Colombia, established instructions for the care of children and

adolescents from Venezuela in Colombian educational establishments. In this, the documentation requirements became more flexible so that the children and adolescent migrant population coming from Venezuela could more easily access education. This means they can enroll using a system of equivalences and validations, even when they lack a valid identification document, as long as there is a commitment from those responsible for normalizing the student's immigration status.

Venezuelan students without a valid passport or foreign identity card could not take the State High School Exit Exams and validate academic baccalaureate, which are respectively necessary for enrollment in tertiary education and an equivalent to a high school diploma. To remedy this obstacle, Resolution 284 of 2018 was issued which accepts the PEP as a valid document to present the state exams, Resolution 624 of 2019 and Resolution 675 of 2019 which allow Venezuelan students to use the Secretary of Education Established Number (NES) they registered with to present state exams and present any identification document with name and photo to validate their identity.

These resolutions represented an important regulatory advancement so that the requirements related to the type of document that Venezuelan students must present to take state exams are more flexible. However, requiring a valid Colombian identity document in order to

## Illustration 1. Venezuelan students enrolled



Source: Ministry of Education

claim the results limits the scope of these measures, since without the results adolescents and young people cannot access higher education. Therefore, since 2019 other sectors of the government have been working hand in hand to create the Special Permit of Permanence for the Education Sector (PEP-E) to regularize enrolled students in the educational system (preschool, primary and secondary). This will facilitate access, trajectory and promotion in the educational system for migrant students who do not have a valid identification document in Colombia.

This regularization mechanism will allow them to overcome the barrier of lack of documentation and will allow them to access not only education services, but also health and social protection services offered by the Colombian state.

Additionally, through coordination between the National Planning Department (DNP) and the Ministry of Education, the following lines of intervention were proposed to support the educational needs of the Venezuelan migrant population.

Firstly, access and reception promote educational access in conditions of well-being, equity and quality. Coverage is managed by analyzing information, frequently crosschecking large databases and administrative records, creating specialized variables to identify migrants and manage information from the territory to upload into the registration system. Likewise, population projection and cost analysis is used in a methodology that leads to anticipating the budgetary impact to cover the immigration phenomenon.

Second, well-being is a fundamental component in school permanence and integral development, with significant challenges in the migrant population in terms of dropping out and mobility. To promote student well-being, community awareness campaigns are created to increase educational inclusion, improve and adjust educational infrastructure, and prevent all forms of violence and discrimination.

Finally, the strategies that promote the permanence of this population in schools have been improved

through school food programs, transportation, clothing and school supplies. For example, the School Food Program (PAE) has been improved so that Venezuelan migrant students can access this program under the same conditions as Colombian students; the only requirement to be a beneficiary is that the educational institution and degree in which they are enrolled be selected by the Ministry of Education. This has made it possible to provide school meals to close to 170,000 Venezuelan students in the official sector's educational institutions, which corresponds to close to 50% of the total enrollment of migrant students of Venezuelan origin (as of June 2020).

In alliance with international cooperation, pedagogical activities are being used to prevent xenophobia, especially in border states. Didactic sequences are designed with playful material that can be used in the classroom. Children, young people and teachers from those regions participate in these activities. Additionally, support for coexistence committees in priority municipalities to review their school

coexistence plans and guide actions to prevent violence against Venezuelan and returning Colombian children and youth.

Taking into account that the educational systems in Colombia and Venezuela are different, measures taken to provide educational equivalencies for children were based on proposals of the Strategy for the Attention of Migration from Venezuela, established in CONPES 3950, and have allowed the Ministry of Education to advance on several fronts, such as designing tests and leveling processes.

Likewise, when Decree 1288 of 2018 was issued, accreditation strategies were developed for academic degrees. This decree established that Venezuelan children and young people may validate their degrees through evaluations or academic activities in the educational establishments where they have been located, at no cost. This process is allowed to validate grades from preschool, elementary and high school to 10th grade. In the case of 11th grade, the



process must be carried out before the Colombian Institute for the Evaluation of Education (ICFES).

Additionally, to advance school leveling processes the Ministry of Education signed an agreement with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to design and disseminate an orientation document with guidelines to conduct proficiency tests in the framework of the institutional evaluation system. It also promotes the design and implementation of a leveling strategy for migrant and returnee children and adolescents while recognizing the learning differences in the educational system.

The Ministry of Education has not only dealt with the population in Colombian territory, but also seeks to guarantee school access for those who engage in pendular criss-crossing migration in the border area, which includes approximately 8,000 students. With this population in mind, it designed the humanitarian school corridor, which since 2015 benefits more than 4,000 students who live in the border municipalities of Venezuela and daily attend educational institutions in border municipalities in Colombia. Since then, the Ministry of Education has led the necessary regulatory, technical, political and financial processes for the effective operation of the humanitarian corridor with resources from the General System of Participations (SGP-MEN). The sum of about COP 13 billion (USD 3,458,449) has been invested in the school humanitarian corridor as of late 2019.

## Challenges

The UNICEF study “Impact of Migration on Venezuelan Girls, Boys and Adolescents in the Colombian School System”<sup>36</sup> reveals that the massive arrival of migrants has shown some of the institutional, policy, program, budget and infrastructure weaknesses of Colombian education.

Other vulnerabilities in some host communities cause them to view the migrant population as competition for limited opportunities. Therefore, additional efforts must be made to disseminate and socialize access, requirements and educational services among the migrant population.

Even though the Ministry of Education has been working hard to respond to the situation of children and adolescent migrants in terms of education, there are still barriers that hinder the process, and even more so when the number of students enrolled in the education system continues to increase substantially and puts additional pressure on educational institutions to adapt to the growing demand.

On the one hand, the education sector faces needs, such as a lack of furniture to better manage coverage and guarantee adequate space for students. Likewise, there is the quantitative and qualitative deficit in the educational infrastructure to provide educational services in conditions of well-being, equity and quality. In addition, we find that the population faces barriers to access, promotion and permanence.

---

<sup>36</sup> UNICEF (April, 2020) *Impact of the migration of Venezuelan children and adolescents in the Colombian school system.*



Another problem is certifying superior studies in Colombia. Given the high mobility of the immigrant and refugee population, children and adolescent migrants can move several times to different Educational Institutes (EIs). In principle, the transfer from one EI to another should be a simple process, since the educational system should be interrelated and flexible enough to allow students horizontal mobility. However, children and youth with irregular status face difficulties to obtain certifications for superior courses in Colombia that would allow them to continue their studies in other EI, since in many cases these certificates are not issued if they do not have a valid ID in the country.

The last barrier to fulfilling the rights of young migrants to education are factors that affect their permanence in the Colombian educational system. The first is that they face challenges to learn and accept new pedagogical practices. The second challenge is social integration, since discrimination manifests itself in several ways. Lastly, there are also structural obstacles related to training and educating officials and educational personnel so they have better tools to meet the needs of young migrants, as well as the economic and infrastructure capacity.

### Alignment with the Global Compact on Migration

The educational policy of the Colombian government is aligned with the following objectives of the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration:

- **Objective 15.** Provide migrants with access to basic services
- **Objective 16.** Empower migrants and societies to achieve full inclusion and social cohesion

## Family welfare focused on migrant girls, boys and adolescents

In identifying the situation of the migrant population, the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare has encountered various challenges, among which stand out i) the process to progressively eliminate barriers for the care of migrant and refugee children and adolescents, mainly in services aimed at early childhood and protection; ii) the need for a Temporary Emergency Care Service for children on the border (Villa del Rosario and Cúcuta) and iii) technical assistance for administrative authorities on migrant protection.

To achieve this, technical support has been provided to the different agencies involved in order to establish services relating to the right to nationality and identity, the right to consular assistance by the Criminal Liability System for Adolescents (SRPA), the risk of statelessness and recognition of refugee status.

These activities have been prioritized in coordination with the Presidency, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Migración Colombia to establish immigration management committees, monitoring in the different Unified Command Centers and Immigration Roundtables in different Regions, and the presence of Special Migration Groups-Mobile Comprehensive Protection Teams (GEM-EMPI). All this served to initiate the exploration of reunification options for 16 of 41 unaccompanied and separated children with Administrative Procedures for the Restoration of Rights.

After identification was made in the field, the migrant childhood strategy was implemented with the aim of facilitating the transit of migrant children and their families from emergency care to inclusion in ICBF services at the central level and in 13 selected regions (in 25 municipalities where more than 50% of care for migrant children nationwide is given). This was done through: i) Identification and referral; ii) Integration of routes and services; iii) Territorial capacities and alliance management.

In 2019, the ICBF helped 103,000 children and adolescents in promotion and prevention programs



aimed at early childhood (91,000), childhood and adolescence (5,514), nutrition programs (5,091) and family unification (1,593). This meant a growth of 65% in relation to the 62,000 children and adolescents benefitted in 2018. Additionally, in 2019, 9,000 pregnant Venezuelan women benefited compared to 3,505 in 2018, an increase of 158%. Finally, in 2019, 2,225 migrant children and adolescents came under the protection of the ICBF due to some threat or violation of their rights for reasons such as sexual violence, child labor, sexual and commercial exploitation. As of June 30, 2020, the ICBF had assisted 291,570 children and adolescents. By June 2020 there were 1,003 active cases of girls, boys and adolescents under the Administrative Program for the Restoration of Rights.

### i) Identification and referencing

In retrospect, by the end of 2019, through efforts of the Mobile Comprehensive Protection Teams [EMPI], in an increase of 258% (5,005) compared to 2018 (1,400) in identification, reports of threats, family assistance and requests to restore the rights of migrant Venezuelan children and adolescents living on the street, high permanence on the street, or child beggars.

To counteract the previous figures, the Colombian Migration circular was updated and establishes the participation of ICBF teams in the GEM in accordance with the phases established in the comprehensive protection plan for the prevention of risk of children and adolescents living on the street. This was developed jointly with mission directorates and cooperation partners with contributions of 800 million COP (USD 0.2 million) (International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNICEF) for its first phase (Bogotá, Barranquilla, Cúcuta, Medellín, Arauca, Cartagena, Cali) to implement temporary services for

children/adolescents whose parents are migrants and nationals in a situation of high permanence on the street and begging.

On the other hand, a version of the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) application was executed in the first semester of 2020 for street situations in six municipalities (Bogotá, Soledad, Villa del Rosario, Valledupar, Puerto Carreño, Ipiales), which was jointly developed by the directorates of Early Childhood, National Planning, and Protection to Childhood and Adolescence.

To give attention to unaccompanied and separated children, in 2019, 245 Venezuelan migrant and refugee children and adolescents were identified and registered compared to 44 in 2018. To achieve this, the route of attention was communicated in 19 regional offices, 12 out of 13 prioritized ones, to 1,194 ICBF officials, local authorities, cooperation agencies and NGOs in joint technical assistance sessions with the Protection Directorate and GENIM, as well as 390 participating administrative authorities and their teams.

At the beginning of 2020 new search and care services for unaccompanied children and adolescents were implemented, using resources from cooperation partners with transitory modalities through care and shelter services, foster homes and search teams in Maicao, Ipiales, and Puerto Carreño with support from UNICEF, *Aldeas Infantiles* and the IOM, which have helped more than 100 children and adolescents. Support was also provided to re-establish contact, search and reunite families by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). An agreement with this entity helped support efforts to re-establish contact, searching and family reunification in Venezuela for 21 unaccompanied children and adolescents.





## ii) Integration of routes and services

Thus, the government, along with the permanent participation of the ICBF, defined the integration of routes and services, jointly formulating the route that integrates and simplifies services for migrant children and their families in 4 steps. These were socialized in twelve of the thirteen prioritized regions and disseminated through a Petitions, Complaints and Claims Manual (PQR Manual) with the Citizen Service Department.

Guidelines were established for emergency services aimed at caring for children and adolescents in the Maicao Integrated Assistance Center (CAI) in its third phase for 750 migrants, more than 50% of whom are children and adolescents, using a mobile identification unit. Using cooperative help, two spaces were set up for the Center's exit strategy in Maicao and Riohacha: a boarding school to protect victims of sexual violence in Riohacha, as well as a transitional space for unaccompanied children outside the Center in Maicao that includes an active search team.

Adjustments were also made in three of the five services for migrant children and adolescents and their families for non-discrimination. Identification requirements for early childhood were eliminated, they were registered in Childhood and Adolescence programs, and 1,650 places were created in the specific risk prevention strategy for migrants. For unaccompanied children and adolescents, access to prevention and protection services for migrant children and adolescents was expanded with a 69% variation in all services from 2018 (62,247) and 2019 (105,153). They continue to improve services through a proposal to adapt and pay for modalities, and a study to adapt the modalities of early childhood, childhood and adolescence protection (child development centers, generations with well-being, substitute homes and mobile integral protection teams) with support from UNICEF in three model cities (Cali, Riohacha and Arauca). This allows the ICBF to estimate the cost of these adaptations as they currently operate in relation to the needs of migrants and international standards. The pilot program with these adapted modalities will be carried out with resources from Canada for USD 1.5 million.

### iii) Territorial capacities and management of alliances

With the goal of creating alliances, migrants were connected and plans improved in prioritized regions. Thus, links in the thirteen prioritized regions were established, and response plans were formulated as part of the management agreements for regional directors (Bogotá, Atlántico, Norte de Santander, La Guajira, Arauca, Cesar, Antioquia, Valle, Santander, Bolívar, Magdalena, Risaralda and Nariño).

In addition, Migrant Childhood Working Groups have been established with increased presence at strategic, local and technical levels by means of the National System of Family Welfare (SNBF) and international cooperation actors. Resource and alliance management was implemented for COP 3.2 billion (USD 851,310) for technical advice, expansion and adaptation of spaces, and team improvement. In addition, agreements with IOM, ICRC, a work plan with UNICEF, GIZ agreements with Germany, the Czech Republic collaboration and a memorandum of understanding with UNHCR will be implemented.

### Challenges

Facing the challenges of migration from Venezuela, the ICBF has defined the continuity of services for 2020 and adapted them to international standards, including adapting prevention and protection services, and budgeting and adjusting 100% of the programs offered. We will have 13 prioritized regional directorates that will have improvement plans and committees on childhood with at least one alliance with the government, mayors and cooperation. On the other hand, five mission services are adapted and covered according to international implementation standards, and COP 6 billion (USD 1,596,207) in cooperation to establish adequate services.

Another challenge is the comprehensive protection of migrant children. A protocol has already been established with countries in the region to eliminate barriers that prevent children and adolescents from being with their family, regardless of their nationality or current immigration status. A proposal to legalize young migrants that are in the administrative process of reestablishing rights to identification is underway. Implementing the three phases of the action plan to prevent risk of NNA in street situations/begging (prevention and awareness, management of territorial offer-transitory spaces and regular offer and protection-restoration of rights) is carried out in eight prioritized municipalities based on the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) record-keeping and situational risk analysis. The plan will be carried out in coordination with municipal mayors, international cooperation and state entities such as the Children and Adolescent Police and Migración Colombia.

On the other hand, it is necessary to strengthen programs and care specifically for young people and adolescents that take into account their particular needs, including sexual education for sexual and reproductive health and to prevent adolescent pregnancy and school dropouts, promote and support finishing higher education, and prevent recruitment by criminal gangs.

### Alignment with the Global Compact on Migration

The Colombian government's family welfare policy is aligned with the following objectives of the Global Compact on the Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration:

- **Objective 15.** Provide migrants with access to basic services
- **Objective 16.** Empower migrants and societies to achieve full inclusion and social cohesion

## Habitability: access to housing and basic services

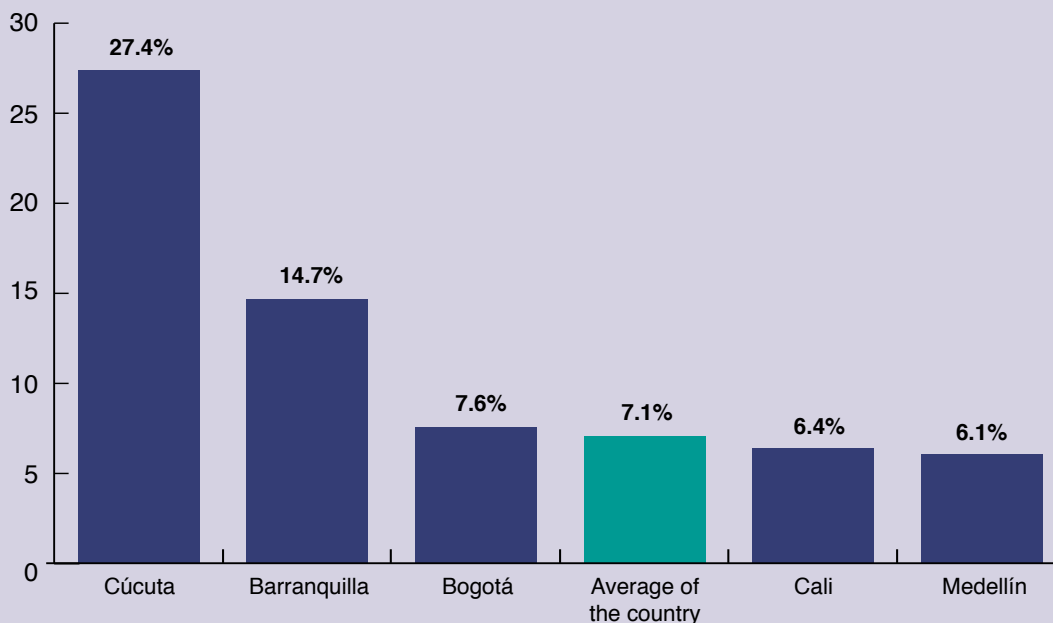
The increased Venezuelan immigrant population has generated an increase in the demand for housing, drinking water, and basic sanitation in territories of entry and in those where they settle.

A study carried out by the World Bank<sup>37</sup> found that 94% of the population is located in urban areas and 6% in rural areas. In total, approximately 80% of the Venezuelan migrant population rents housing, and the index is 90% in urban areas, representing 7.1%

of the total renter households in the country. 58% of urban tenant households are concentrated in five cities: Bogotá, Medellín, Cali, Cúcuta and Barranquilla, where they represent a significant percentage of the rental market, according to the graph below.

The study also reflects a high rate of overcrowding in Venezuelan households, with a national average of 14% of households living in one room, and higher indicators in some cities such as Maicao, with 33%,

**Graph 7. Number of Venezuelan households in the rental market in selected cities (2019)**



Source: Gran Encuesta Integrada de Hogares – (Great Integrated Household Survey) - GEIH, 2019. DANE.

<sup>37</sup> World Bank, Global Resilient Housing Program, support document for housing operation, 2020.

Riohacha, with 25%, and Bogotá with 19%. There are also gaps in access to drinking water: on average, 9% of migrant households do not have access to water, but the rates are much higher in La Guajira: 54% in Maicao and 24% in Riohacha. Also, 13% of migrant households do not have sewage, with worrying indicators in Tibú (65%), Maicao (50%) and Riohacha (40%).

In those departments with the greatest pressure from the migrant population – Arauca, La Guajira, Nariño, Norte de Santander and Putumayo – around 85 projects have been undertaken with an estimated investment of 800 billion COP (USD 212.8 million) to provide drinking water, sewage and wastewater management in high-impact facilities such as hospitals, health centers, schools, and underdeveloped living settlements.

In alliance with UN-Habitat, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Inclusive Cities, Communities of Solidarity Project is being developed. This project seeks to reduce vulnerability of Venezuelan migrants and refugees and address the impact on host communities to design stable and durable solutions with a medium and long-term perspective and a focus on development and urban planning.

However, policy options regarding housing for migrants raise the need to progressively integrate them into the institutional offer, first through rental subsidies due to the difficulty involved in permanent solutions or property subsidies.

Currently the World Bank is involved in a credit operation to finance a total of approximately USD 136.8 million, including advance co-financing of non-reimbursable resources from the GCF for USD 21.8 million, and USD 15 million from the GPG. Within the framework of this operation, alternatives are being evaluated to carry out pilots through a tiered scheme of short, medium and long-term care through the programs *Semillero de Propietarios*, *Mi Casa Ya* and *Casa Digna, Vida Digna*, to expand rent support for migrants, as well as support to develop decent housing in high-impact areas, and support to purchase new housing for migrants.



The population increase due to migration also generates an increase in the demand for drinking water and basic sanitation services that host communities cannot always satisfy, in some regions due to pre-existing deficits in these services. Additionally, populations established in irregular settlements face greater obstacles to access these services, which can also contaminate water sources due to poor waste management. A World Bank study estimates that interventions in the area of water and sanitation amounting to USD 13.5 million are needed to cover emergency needs in the short term, and interventions for USD 99.1 million in the medium term for basic technologies such as public water sources and septic tanks. In the long term, interventions for USD 145 million are needed for solutions that are more complex but more sustainable, such as household connections to aqueducts and sewage systems<sup>38</sup>.

The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) approved an operation for the socio-urban integration of migrants in Colombian cities to execute a grant from the Latin American Investment Facility (LAIF) from the European Union for USD 11 million and from the Knowledge Partnership Korea Fund for Technology and Innovation (KPK) for USD 4 million. One of the components of the operation is to facilitate access to rental housing. To this end, USD 3.8 million will be used to carry out a pilot with housing financing schemes through a Rental Guarantee Fund (FGA) to support migrants and low-income households to comply with guarantee requirements and incentivize homeowners to offer rental housing.

One of the areas most affected by historical deficits in water and sanitation and the additional pressure imposed by migration is the department of La Guajira. Consequently, an initiative with the IDB, *Guajira Azul*<sup>39</sup> was created to invest in water infrastructure in this department and improve coverage in rural areas and the continuity in urban areas. It will also increase the number of municipalities with access to water suitable for human consumption, as well as increase the proportion of population with access to wastewater treatment facilities. The strategy includes the following components: i) expansion and improvement of drinking water and urban sanitation systems; ii) expansion and improvement of rural drinking water and sanitation systems; and iii) improving local entities.

Cúcuta also has deficiencies in aqueduct reach and in providing drinking water for irregular settlement areas and waste collection, which results in contaminated water sources. The metropolitan area of Cúcuta, including Villa del Rosario, does not fully supply drinking water, aqueduct and wastewater treatment. That is why the *Bicentennial Water Pact for Norte de Santander* was officially launched in August 2019, which includes improvements on the Francisco de Paula Santander metropolitan aqueduct to guarantee drinking water for Cúcuta, Los Patios and Villa del Rosario. The construction of a new wastewater treatment plant for the Zulia river basin is also planned. The Norte de Santander Water Bicentennial Pact will cost nearly 900 billion COP (USD 239.4 million), it is expected to increase drinking water coverage in rural areas, guarantee 24-hour continuity of drinking water in urban areas, and increase wastewater treatment, all goals set for 2022.

<sup>38</sup> World Bank (November 2018). *Migration from Venezuela to Colombia: Short- and Medium-Term Impact and Response Strategy*.

<sup>39</sup> For more information see: <http://www.minvivienda.gov.co/guajiraazul>

## Maicao Comprehensive Care Center

The Maicao Integrated Assistance Center (CAI) began operating on March 8, 2019 at the request of the Colombian government and with the support of UNHCR and other GIFMM organizations.

The CAI provides temporary humanitarian assistance to refugees and migrants from Venezuela who are in highly vulnerable situations. Its services include lodging, water and sanitation, food, basic medical evaluation, psychosocial support and legal advice.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNGRD, UNHCR and the Mayor's Office of Maicao signed a letter of understanding on setting up and operating the Comprehensive Care Center (CAI).

At all stages of planning, both at the national and local levels, various stakeholders and the surrounding communities were consulted. Beyond the CAI, several host communities in Maicao are being supported.

The objectives of the Center are, on the one hand, to guarantee humanitarian assistance and protection under international standards to refugees, migrants, Colombian returnees and the Wayuu population from Venezuela. These are people with specific protection needs, people living on the street, and people in transit. On the other hand, there is the need to guarantee access to basic services, fundamental rights, and support the identification of durable solutions for people with specific protection needs.

As of June 2020, the Center has 110 Refugee Housing Units for 600 to 700 people. Depending on the needs and availability of financial resources, the participation of other humanitarian actors, the agencies of the United Nations System, and the administrative capacity of the Colombian government, it could be expanded to up to 1,200-1,400 people.

Since opening in March 2018, and until May 2020, 3,705 homeless people have received support for lodging, food, medical assessment and first aid, re-establishing of family contacts, psychosocial support, orientation and legal advice, and more. Similarly, the host community of Chichituy has received assistance and has benefited from receiving drinking water along with SENA coordination to train and certify skills.

During the CAI operation period until May 2020, 1,860 cases were given legal assistance and guidance, and 1,327 cases of psychosocial assistance were provided to people with specific protection needs. There have been 3,703 initial medical evaluations, 2,035 medical and nutritional reassessments, and 2,713 medications provided. A cash-for-work strategy has been implemented for 2,780 beneficiaries of the center and 3,358 basic items have been delivered, among which are kits with food, household cleaning and hygiene products, as well as kitchen items, which were delivered as part of the exit strategy.

To develop and implement the CAI, 4.7 million USD have been invested with financing from international cooperation agencies.

## Challenges

Despite the fact that initiatives are already being created to supply the demand for housing and basic services of migrants and refugees, in the short term the challenge remains to provide lodging and basic water and sanitation to migrants and refugees, especially the most vulnerable, including those on the street and in overcrowded conditions.

There are municipalities that lack adequate infrastructure for potable water and sewage and are dealing with additional pressure due to increased demand from migrants. Among them are the areas of Barranquilla, Soacha, Soledad, and Valledupar, among others (table 11), and they need investments in sewage, aqueduct and energy infrastructure that meet the needs of both Colombian communities and the migrants that settle in them.

**Table 11. Coverage of basic services in cities with high levels of immigration**

City	Sewerage Coverage	Aqueduct Coverage	Energy Coverage
Bogotá	100%	100%	100%
Cúcuta	12%	8%	3%
Barranquilla	6%	3%	1%
Medellín	100%	100%	100%
Cali	100%	100%	100%
Cartagena	20%	9%	2%
Riohacha	41%	24%	10%
Santa Marta	32%	34%	6%
Valledupar	10%	17%	2%
Villa del Rosario	6%	23%	2%
Soledad	18%	3%	2%
Soacha	7%	6%	1%
Maicao	50%	54%	17%

Source: World Bank Global Resilient Housing Program, support document for housing operation, 2020.



## Alignment with the Global Compact on Migration

The Colombian government's habitability policy is aligned with the following objectives of the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration:

- **Objective 15.** Provide migrants with access to basic services
- **Objective 16.** Empower migrants and societies to achieve full inclusion and social cohesion

## Differentiated care for vulnerable populations

### Indigenous migrant population

The information available on migrants from Venezuela who self-identify as indigenous is incomplete and scarce, and suggests that these people are in a greater degree of vulnerability than the general migrant population and the Colombian indigenous population in particular.

### Identification of preliminary needs

In order to improve the information available on this population group, the Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia sought support from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to do a preliminary categorization of migrants at the border between Colombia and Venezuela<sup>40</sup>.

The design of this study had the technical support of the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Planning Department, and involved face-to-face interviews with key local actors at critical points of migration of indigenous population between both countries: Riohacha, Maicao and

Uribia in the department of La Guajira; Valledupar and Becerril, in Cesar; Cúcuta, in Norte de Santander; Arauca, in Arauca; Puerto Carreño, in Vichada and Inírida, in Guainía.

The field work was done in August and September 2019 and consisted of semi-structured interviews with representatives of 43 government entities and 32 social organizations including indigenous authorities, church organizations, NGOs and international organizations in the 11 municipalities. They were asked about the estimated flow of indigenous migrants from Venezuela and their main needs according to categorization by participating entities (lodging, non-food items, food, transportation, information and guidance, health, education, and others).

The results of this study were used to create profiles relating to the needs of the migrant indigenous population by department, including specific recommendations in each case. It also made possible the first estimate of the order of magnitude of migrants who intended to stay, as reported by the sources consulted: La Guajira (1,255), Cesar (55), Norte de Santander (243), Arauca (100), Vichada (450) and Guainía (312), with an estimated total of 2,415 people. Although this estimate is preliminary and does not include circular immigration flows that cross the border between the two countries on a daily basis (whose size is assumed to be much higher), it is still the best available to date.

<sup>40</sup> International Organization for Migration (November of 2019). *Situation of indigenous communities in the border departments with Venezuela.*

The study does not specify the ethnic identity of the migrant indigenous population, although it suggests that there would presumably be migration from Venezuela from most of the 42 indigenous ethnic groups that settle in the studied departments. The Eñapa ethnic group in Arauca would be the only ethnic group migrating from Venezuela without any correlation in Colombia.

### Roadmap to address the particular needs of the migrant indigenous population

The results of this preliminary characterization demonstrated the need to implement differentiated responses by municipality and adjusted to the particularities of each migrant indigenous group, with the collaboration of central-level institutions, local authorities and indigenous authorities to identify them. Subsequent inter-institutional<sup>41</sup> analysis sessions facilitated by the Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia showed that the viability of these responses will largely be subject to filling public policy gaps on two critical issues:

- Specific regularization mechanisms for migrants from Venezuela who self-identify as indigenous, upon which accessing the entire public network for basic social services depends.
- Mechanisms so that Colombian authorities (national and local governments and indigenous authorities) recognize and/or verify the ethnic identity of migrants from Venezuela who self-identify as indigenous.

To resolve these gaps and implement responses to the specific needs of the indigenous migrant population from Venezuela, the team from the Directorate of Indigenous, Rom and Minorities Affairs of the Ministry of the Interior recommended launching two work fronts for inter-institutional coordination, which should work in parallel.

<sup>41</sup> With the participation of delegates from the Ministries of Health, Education, Interior and Foreign Affairs and of Migración Colombia and the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare [ICBF]

### Front 1: Coordination to define responses for the migrant indigenous population in circular dynamics

Considering that the majority of the migrant population from Venezuela who self-identify as indigenous follow circular migration patterns with Colombia, it will be necessary to install corridors equipped with facilities and personnel to provide basic social services especially adapted to the particular needs of these people at key points along the border. Given the historical persistence of circular migration of indigenous peoples on this border, it will also be necessary to explore options to facilitate a document similar to the current Border Mobility Card. This will serve as a basic identification document in Colombia and enables them full and free access to public education and health services. The necessary coordination to define and operate these corridors would take place at the municipal level with the participation of local authorities, key government agencies, and indigenous authorities through an existing mechanism (indigenous committee, migration committee, or others) or through the creation of an additional mechanism, if necessary.

### Front 2: Coordination to define responses for indigenous migrant population with the intention of permanence

In the case of the migrant population from Venezuela that self-identifies as indigenous and that has the intention to stay in Colombia, the actions to be followed would be defined within the framework of a national scenario as provided by Decree 1030 of 2014<sup>42</sup>, which regulates the Intersectorial Commission for Border Development and Integration and its regional chapters, agreed to in the La Delfina *minga* indigenous gathering in Buenaventura in March 2019. In this case, the follow-up actions should be arranged by the central-level entities that make up this Commission (Ministries of the Interior, Foreign Affairs, Finance and Public Credit, National Planning Department, Presidency of the Republic) and by

<sup>42</sup> Recuperado de: <https://www.funcionpublica.gov.co/eva/gestornormativo/norma.php?i=57461>

national indigenous authorities. The mechanism for this negotiation could be the aforementioned Commission or the relevant local migration committees.

## Challenges

During the first semester of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic and the declaration of an Economic, Social and Environmental emergency contingency tasks prevented progress in solving these public policy gaps and on the two work fronts for inter-institutional coordination recommended by the Ministry of the Interior. It is necessary that the Ministry of the Interior improves the capacity of the group to promote the rights of indigenous peoples and the Rom population since it is the leading government dependency on indigenous affairs, and therefore the central axis of the work fronts described above to ensure the effective design and implementation of response plans.

## Migrants who travel the country on foot - “walkers”

Within the Venezuelan migrant population there are people who move on foot through the country because they lack the resources to pay for conventional means of transport or they do not have documents to buy bus tickets. The nature of this migration can be transitory or permanent.

The phenomenon of migrants who move on foot, also known as “walkers,” has been increasing over the last few years. Most of these migrants are forced to undertake these trips from very deprived regions in Venezuela to cities in Colombia such as Bucaramanga, Bogotá or Cali, or pass through Colombia to reach Ecuador, Perú or Chile.

According to the report “Response to the Situation of Walkers” by GIFMM and requested by the national government based on monitoring studies carried out by IOM, PMA, (World Food Program) OCHA (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), the Red Cross and UNICEF, the reasons for the choice of destination is largely based on searching for employment, recommendations from relatives and acquaintances, or to reunite with part of their family.

The “walkers” take different routes in Colombia to reach their destination. One important route is between Cúcuta and Rumichaca on the Ecuadorian border, covering 1,430 kilometers with changing climatic and geographical conditions, such as through the Berlin Paramo, which involves climbing from 320 to 2,900 meters above sea level. Other routes go through Arauca, Casanare, Meta, and Cundinamarca.





Due to the pre-existing vulnerabilities of migrants before arriving in Colombia and the difficult travel conditions by foot in Colombia, “walkers” have heightened vulnerabilities and needs in diverse protection areas. Assessments of conditions and needs by different organizations between 2018 and 2019 concluded that, although flow varies according to the route and the month, the general trend is towards an increase in the number of migrants on foot. Additionally, the phenomenon has changed from being predominantly young men in search of economic opportunities to increasing numbers of women, families, pregnant and lactating women, children and older adults. This is due to the dynamics of family reunification and the increased precariousness in Venezuela, which forces the most vulnerable people to embark on the path to find better living conditions.

Monitoring “walkers” also shows that they are increasingly coming from Venezuelan cities further from the border, and that migrants have already made a significant internal displacement within Venezuela before arriving in Colombia.

While during 2017 and 2018 there was a significant flow of migrants crossing Colombia to reach other countries in the region, especially Ecuador, Peru and Chile, the imposition of visas by these countries has caused more migrants to decide to settle in Colombia, along with an agglomeration of people on the border with Ecuador.

The most urgent needs of “walkers” are related to subsistence, a safe place to sleep, transportation, food, water, health services and family reunification. There are also reports that a significant percentage of migrants are victims of crime, especially theft and scams, as well as threats and evictions from illegal armed groups, and of sexual violence and discrimination.

Given the complexity of the situation that “walkers” face during their long journeys, an active response that meets the most pressing needs is required.

Included in that response is the management of resources by international agencies and coordinating actions in the areas of health, food, hydration, accommodation and sanitation so that aid can be distributed in a coordinated manner on the most affected routes and sections. Similarly, it has been necessary to establish means of communication regarding the sections, agro-ecological conditions, rights and other data that facilitate transit.

To achieve this, a working group was established within the GIFMM (Interagency Group on Mixed Migration Flows) that specializes in this population. Various agencies of the United Nations System, NGOs, civil organizations and state entities participated, including the Presidency, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Migración Colombia, the National Police, The National Roads Institute (INVIAS), and others. The objective of the working group is to follow up and monitor the flow of walkers, establish protection strategies and articulate response actions, identify needs and coverage gaps, and improve communication and the social aid to migrants, among others.

Based on the coordinated work and under the leadership of the OIM, a tool was created to monitor flows and the supply of services that allows different organizations in the field to share information about their care and beneficiaries, to have more detailed and updated information on migrant movements, and to be able to respond more effectively to needs and situations that may arise.

## Challenges

Despite advances in understanding the dynamics and expansion of care for this population, there are still large gaps, especially with regard to temporary shelters, access to health care and to reliable and updated information. Likewise, it is necessary to improve analysis and response coordination to make them comparable and use analysis as an effective strategy.

## “Walkers” in the context of the pandemic

The arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic in Colombia forced the national government, regional and local authorities, and cooperation organizations to adjust their actions so they are in accord with the established guidelines to respond to the epidemiological risk and its social effects and the particularities of each region. Despite inclusion efforts, resources are insufficient to meet the needs of all migrants, so one of the government’s priorities has been to increase funding by international donors and cooperation agencies.

The government has prepared a six point plan to care for the migrant population during the COVID-19 pandemic, following the principles that the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) have worked on to guarantee the highest standards in response to this contingency. The responses to this emergency seek the well-being of all residents of Colombia, regardless of their nationality.

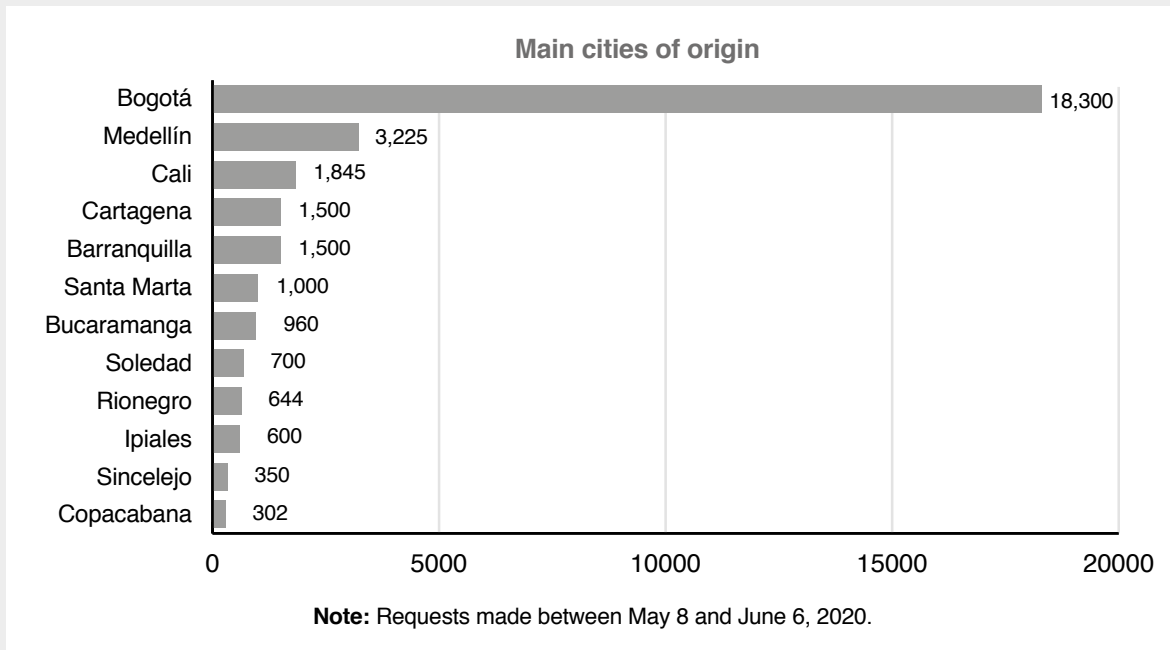
In the midst of this situation, the government has insisted that the migrant community stay in the country, keeping the required isolation protocols and mobility restrictions to safeguard their health and well-being and under no circumstances does it promote or encourage Venezuelans to return to their country, considering the risks of contagion on route and the precarious situation in Venezuela.

Despite this, some Venezuelans have decided to return to Venezuela. According to figures from Migración Colombia, as of June 2020, around 80,000 migrants had returned to Venezuela after the border was closed, 26,000 doing so in the first days for humanitarian reasons since they were in Colombia, given the flow that occurs daily in the area. Another 44,000 traveled by bus or by foot in the last weeks of May. This number represents around 4.2% of the total number of migrants who remain in Colombia. Most of these migrants have traveled by bus, but some have also been forced to return on foot.

Due to the return dynamics, a system of alerts for crowds of walkers was created with the support of the GIFMM to monitor contagion risks and provide timely support to migrants (Graph 9).

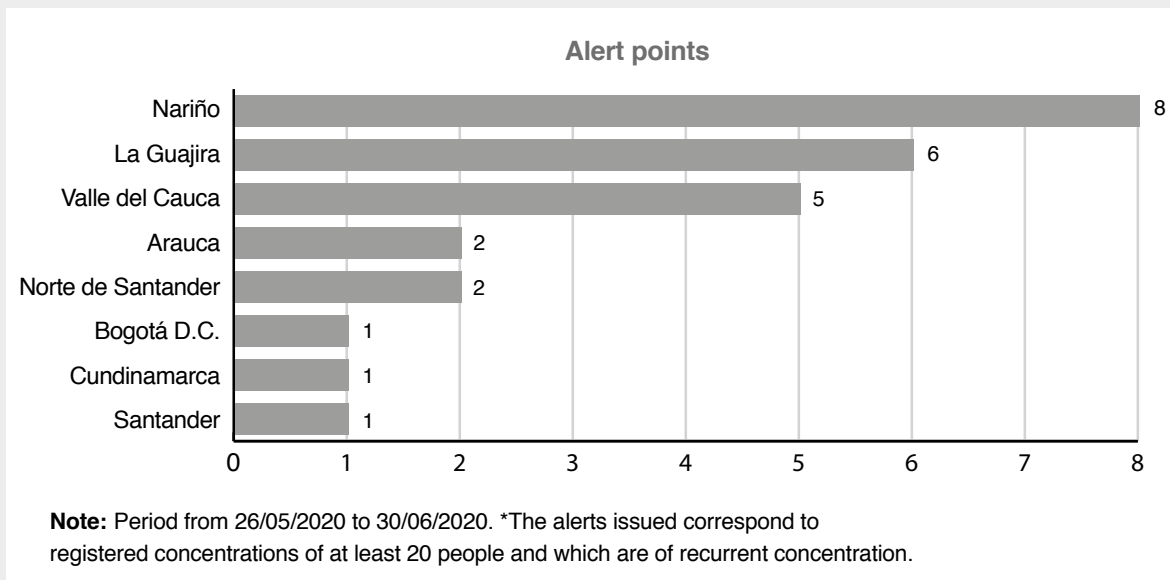


**Graph 8. Main cities of origin of migrants returning to Venezuela**



Source: Migración Colombia (as of June 30, 2020).

**Graph 9. Alert points by department (May-June 2020)**



Source: GIFMM - Alert System for Refugee and Migrant Concentration Points

Given the humanitarian risk that this situation presents, local authorities, control entities and human rights guarantors have decided to establish an extraordinary coordination procedure to guarantee that these returnees protect the human rights of migrants and health prevention for everyone.

It is worth noting that in the midst of the pandemic, the situation of walkers has presented a reverse transition, since people have embarked on a trip to their land of origin, Venezuela. The government provides the supportive response in Colombia if some decide to return, and will establish the necessary protection for their return.

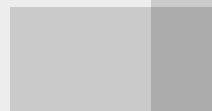
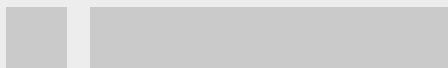
The return is conditioned by the limited number of persons the Venezuelan immigration authority (SAIME) accepts each day. For this reason, an orderly process must be established that does not generate massive flows on the border already under pressure from immigration.

In addition to this inter-institutional response and to help organize, manage and better distribute resources from diverse actors, the information management team has created a digital platform composed of three modules that creates a real-time list of services and humanitarian care on the different routes, a system of alerts on the points of concentration of people seeking to reach the border and their subsequent verification and attention, and finally a module that shows the number of people going on the different routes either by foot or on buses that leave from various cities. The system is fed by various sources, including members of the GIFMM and even those organizations that, although they do not have a presence in this interagency working group, provide services or offer humanitarian attention to the walkers, as well as the regional governments and mayor's offices that have access to relevant information. The tool enables

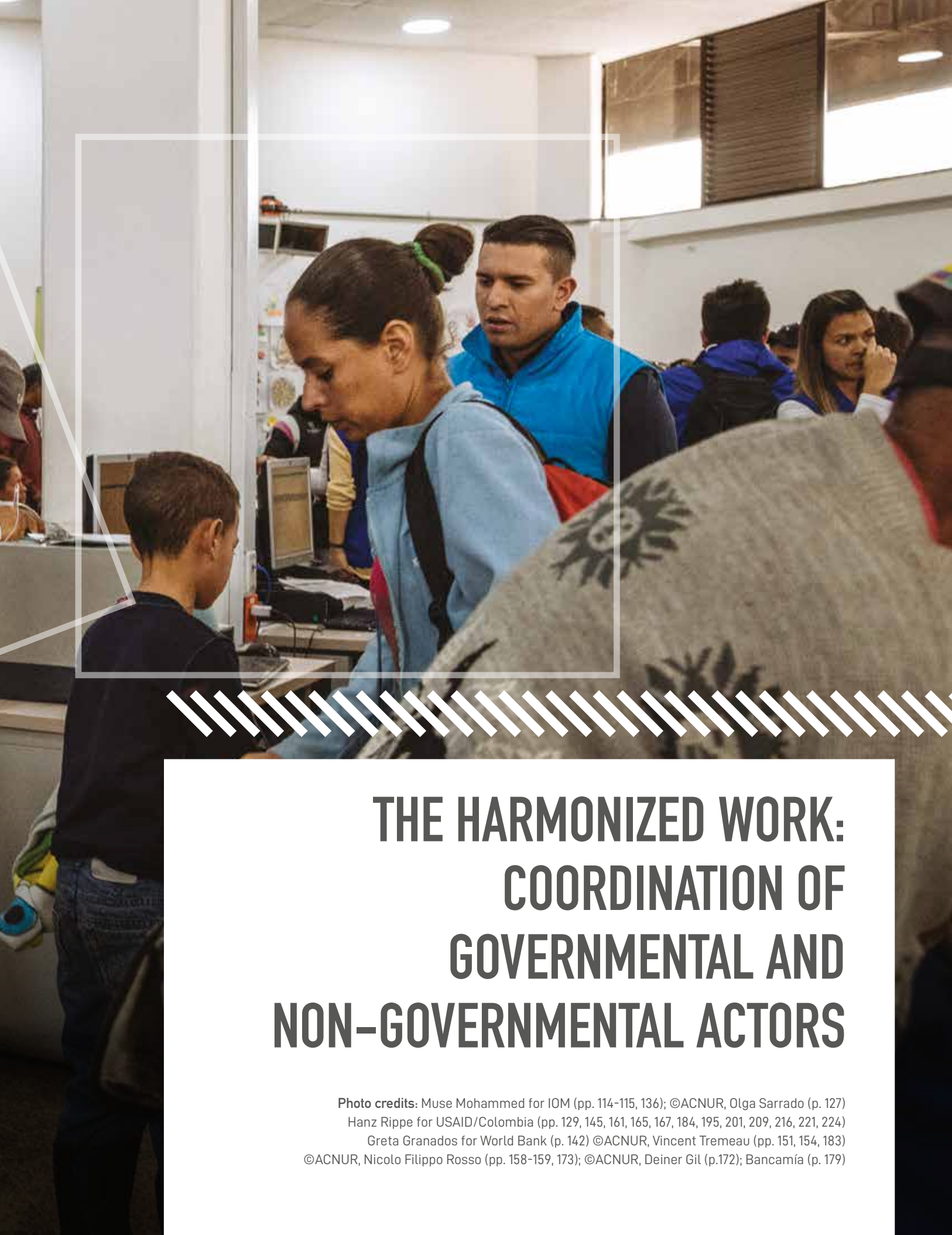


better targeting, management and distribution of resources based on a periodic follow-up report. This availability of detailed information is fundamental and supports the variety of actions that are programmed to give timely attention to migrants according to the needs that have been presented in this contingency.









# THE HARMONIZED WORK: COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ACTORS

**Photo credits:** Muse Mohammed for IOM (pp. 114-115, 136); ©ACNUR, Olga Sarrado (p. 127)  
Hanz Rippe for USAID/Colombia (pp. 129, 145, 161, 165, 167, 184, 195, 201, 209, 216, 221, 224)  
Greta Granados for World Bank (p. 142) ©ACNUR, Vincent Tremeau (pp. 151, 154, 183)  
©ACNUR, Nicolo Filippo Rosso (pp. 158-159, 173); ©ACNUR, Deiner Gil (p.172); Bancamía (p. 179)



## National initiative, local effort: regional coordination

### Immigration Roundtables

In 2018, when more than one million Venezuelan citizens had migrated to Colombia, the Immigration Roundtables were created so that the national government could coordinate with local authorities in departments where there was a major impact due to migration from Venezuela. These working groups were created under the leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Directorate for Development and Border Integration, the Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia and the National Unit for Disaster Risk Management.

The working groups emerged with the purpose of coordinating and synchronizing the response in the territory as well as evaluating strategies and measures to elaborate a strategy to care for this population. They took on special importance as they became the mechanism through which the three levels of government (national, departmental and municipal) meet to find solutions and generate actions to assist arrivals. In border departments, this organizing space is called the Unified Border Command Post (PMU) and due to its nature, the National Unit for Disaster Risk Management (UNGRD) is in charge.

Due to the high immigration flow into Colombia over the months, the national government undertook the task of addressing all the situations involved in this phenomenon. Thus, the roundtables became spaces for solutions to issues related to education, health, labor inclusion, protection of minors, adequate housing, drinking water, basic sanitation, security, and more.

To address migration from an inter-sectorial point of view required the participation of entities such as: Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Social Protection, National Police, Migration Colombia, Ministry of Labor, ICBE, Ombudsman's Office, Office of the Attorney General of the Nation, Prosecutor's Office, together with the Interagency Group of Mixed Immigration Flows (GIFMM) of the United Nations System in Colombia, among others. However, the governor, the mayor or the Departmental Director of Disaster Risk Management leads and coordinates the session; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia accompany this management and on occasions assume leadership.

Local governments interested in achieving coordinated and effective action in dealing with Venezuelan migrants have made progress formalizing this integration. It is worth highlighting, for example, that the Government of Nariño, through Decree 364 of 2018, created and regulated the departmental roundtable on migration. A similar situation occurred in Cali, Ipiales and Bucaramanga.

However, despite the fact that the roundtables have not been formalized in other territories, they are spaces for inter-institutional coordination and unification to monitor the Colombian government's response to the different effects of the immigration phenomenon. In summary, these roundtables identify problems due to immigration and define commitments to provide prompt and effective solutions; the humanitarian response is also reviewed and complementary actions are implemented to face the dynamics of this exodus.

For example, recognizing the immense flow of immigrants that cross the border in La Guajira, and

aware of the need to establish a border area with the presence of government entities related to immigration and commercial dynamics, the first roundtable of this year defined providing a National Border Assistance Center (CENAF) in Paraguachón a strategic project.

The purpose of this proposal and commitment is to organize border crossing and provide government and cooperation facilities for integrated control services related to the transport and transit of people, vehicles, and merchandise, and to provide humanitarian services to the migrant and returning Colombian population.

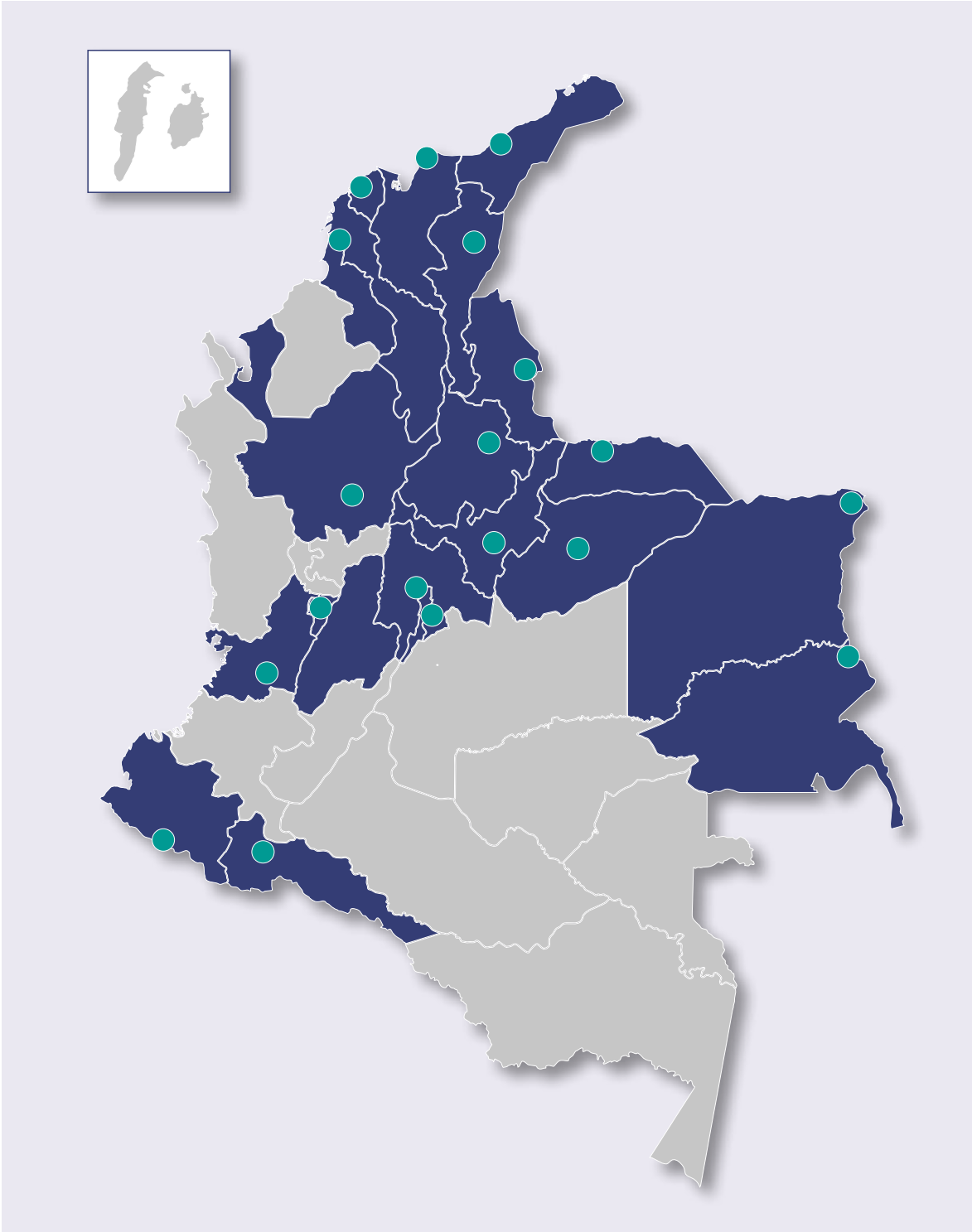
On the other hand, Norte de Santander, which is the gateway for the vast majority of the migrant population through municipalities such as Villa del Rosario, Cúcuta, Puerto Santander and Pamplona, took on a greater inter-institutional coordination challenge. This is how the weekly session of the Unified Command Post (PMU) in this department is a fundamental instance of monitoring, decision-making and evaluation of actions on the immigration situation.

The regional roundtables began in border departments such as Norte de Santander, Arauca and La Guajira<sup>43</sup>; but currently there are groups in these areas (map 4):

- i.** 19 departmental working groups: La Guajira, Norte de Santander, Arauca, Bolívar, Santander, Atlántico, Cundinamarca, Sucre, Guainía, Vichada, Cesar, Valle del Cauca, Nariño, Magdalena, Antioquia, Caldas, Quindío, Casanare and Risaralda.
- ii.** 4 sub-regional border groups: two in La Guajira and two in Norte de Santander.
- iii.** 5 border municipality groups: Riohacha, Uribia, Cúcuta, Pasto and Mocoa.

<sup>43</sup> In these departments, the roundtables are known as Unified Command Posts (PMU).

Map 4. Map of Migratory Working Groups



## Good practices of leadership actions and local coordination

### 1. Relocation plan for overcrowded migrant settlements, Villa del Rosario (Norte de Santander)

The government of Norte de Santander and the Mayor's Office of Villa del Rosario, with the coordination of GIFMM, especially the Monetary Transfer Group (GTM) and the World Food Program (WFO), have been evaluating the overcrowded conditions that arose in around 280 homes in the sector known as *La Parada*. The inter-institutional work aims to relocate around 3,000 migrants living in deplorable conditions.

- i) Attention and orientation center
- ii) Humanitarian transport and Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)
- iii) First aid and contact re-establishment
- iv) Attention to disabled people
- v) Nutritional assessment
- vi) Childhood protection space
- vii) Dining room
- viii) Sanitary facilities
- ix) Vaccination point
- x) Migración Colombia attention point

### 2. Rapid response to the need for accommodation after the pandemic, Ipiales (Nariño)

Due to the Migration Roundtable in Ipiales as well as local institutions and international organizations, three hotels serve as transitory sites where migrants are being temporarily housed in response to the quarantine caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

### 3. Support Space in Paraguachón, Maicao (La Guajira)

The Support Space in Paraguachón is in the planning and enlistment phase. This intervention will give protection and provide a physical space, access to updated information and a standardized package of services and assistance for refugees and migrants from Venezuela, host communities, returnees and people at risk of statelessness, among others.

Coordinating with local actors such as the Mayor's Office of Maicao and international cooperation organizations, the following services will be provided:

### 4. Local Integration Center for Migrants in Barranquilla

Located in the center of the city, the Integration Center is a space that aims to accompany and support Venezuelan migrants and refugees and returned Colombian to access the procedures and services they require to guarantee their rights.

It is a space for orientation and referencing promoted by the District Government Secretariat with the inter-related work of the different District Secretaries and other national entities.

To provide services, it operates in alliance with strategic international cooperation partners such as UNHCR and IOM.

Some of the services provided are: psychosocial support, legal advice, Unified Return Registration, health affiliation, maternal and neonatal control, refugee requests, protective space for children, identification and registration days, work and community activities, among others.

## Territorial planning

Caring for and integrating migrants from Venezuela has been especially challenging for border municipalities, which have received a large percentage of the population and do not have the institutional capacity to provide an adequate response to their needs. However, the phenomenon is no longer limited to the border and has affected numerous municipalities in the country that did not have the opportunity to prepare for what is becoming a challenge for the entire nation.

The phenomenon developed so quickly that 4 years ago, when territorial development plans were created (2015), it was not considered to be particularly relevant and strategies to manage it were not designed. Consequently, no resources were assigned for it within the budget plans, and the management has been disjointed and reactive rather than preventive and planned.

This is why the National Planning Department (DNP) and the Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia considered that when the new mayors and governors created the 2020 territorial development plans, it was highly relevant to include territorial response guidelines for the immigration phenomenon. Consequently, the DNP Territorial Planning Kit included a series of documents to provide guidance on the different strategies that municipalities could adopt.

The Territorial Planning Kit guides departmental and municipal governments in strategic enlistment, participatory construction, and processing with environmental and planning authorities in public corporations to support new leaders as they build their territorial development plans and thus meet the goals of their government programs<sup>44</sup>.

To manage migration, a guideline was created in three sections: i) Context; ii) Sectorial response to the phenomenon; and iii) Mechanisms of coordination. Additionally, ten sectorial infographics were included.

The documents were prepared with inputs from various sectors and some international cooperation entities and seek to guide the new mandates regarding:

- i.** How the immigration phenomenon has developed in Colombia;
- ii.** What are the general and sectorial regulations at the national level;
- iii.** What the role is of municipalities and departments at general and sectorial level in responding to the phenomenon;
- iv.** General and sectorial recommendations to respond to the phenomenon.

The tools of the Territorial Planning Kit are found online and were presented to the governors and mayors through workshops developed by ESAP and DNP. It is expected that the guidelines for the territorial management of the immigration phenomenon will lead to adequate and efficient strategies within municipal and departmental development plans..

## Integration of migration issues in territorial development plans

Following local elections held in October 2019, the new departmental and municipal administrations had the opportunity to integrate migration issues based on the experience of the previous two years into their development plans. Thus, the national government deployed a strategy of support and assistance for key Territorial Entities (EETT) made up of three components, which are summarized below.

<sup>44</sup> DNP (s.f.) *Territorial Planning Kit*. Available at: [Portalterritorial.dnp.gov.co](http://Portalterritorial.dnp.gov.co)



## 1. Orientation to new administrations in coordination with the National Planning Department

In order to accompany the formulation, execution, monitoring and evaluation of territorial development plans for the 2020-2023 period, the National Planning Department (DNP), through its Department of Decentralization and Regional Development, launched the *Gobierno al Plan* strategy<sup>45</sup>. The first phase consisted of holding 32 awareness-raising and on-site training sessions with teams from incoming mayors and governors during the months of January and February of 2020.

Experts from central-level entities attached to the key sectors of the government also participated in these sessions, under the coordination of the Council for the Regions of the Presidency of the Republic and with the National Federation of Departments, and were included in the categories of the Territorial Planning Kit<sup>46</sup>.

To achieve this, the Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia group included migration aspects within the DNP *Gobierno al Plan* strategy in two ways. On the one hand, in collaboration with the DNP's Justice and Security Directorate, it coordinated with government entities and international cooperation operators to prepare a migration reference document within the thematic guides of the *Territorial Planning Kit*, which included basic guidelines on the following topics: regularization, education, boys and girls, health, income generation, housing and basic sanitation, coexistence and security, returnee population, and coordination mechanisms with institutions and aid workers.

On the other hand, within the framework of the regional migration coordination working groups, the Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia group led complementary work sessions to those carried out by the DNP as part of its *Gobierno al Plan* strategy, emphasizing migration issues relevant to each location. These sessions were attended by representatives of the main entities at the central level.

## 2. Coordination with international cooperation operators

Since the end of 2019, the national government, through the Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia, has been coordinating with international cooperation operators the provision of support and specific assistance in situ on planning and migration issues for key mayors in border areas and/or with high concentrations of migrant population. Taking advantage of the particular emphasis and distinctive expertise of each operator, measures were taken to ensure that their respective programs covered as many critical municipalities as possible, that they complemented each other when their operations took place in the same municipalities, and that they adopted the categories and methodologies provided by DNP in its *Gobierno al Plan* strategy. Along these lines, operators also contributed to the reference document on migration in the Territorial Planning Kit referred to in the previous point. The following table shows the operators involved in this process and their respective geographic coverage.

<sup>45</sup> Territorial Portal of Colombia (s.f.) Gobierno Al Plan. Available at: <https://portalterritorial.dnp.gov.co/Adm-Foro/HojaRuta>

<sup>46</sup> Territorial Portal of Colombia (s.f.) Territorial Planning Kit Available at: <https://portalterritorial.dnp.gov.co/kpt/>

**Table 12. International cooperation operators with programs to support local migration planning in key municipalities**

		ACDI-VOCA	MSI	IOM	PNUD	World Bank
<b>Key municipalities on the border with Venezuela</b>						
Arauca	Araucuita	X	X			
	Arauca	X	X	X	X	X
La Guajira	Uribe	X	X			
	Riohacha	X	X	X	X	
	Maicao	X	X		X	X
Norte de Santander	Villa del rosario		X		X	X
	Tibú		X			
	Cúcuta	X	X	X	X	
	Puerto Santander		X			
	Los Patios		X			
<b>Key municipalities on the border with Ecuador</b>						
Nariño	Ipiales			X		

		ACDI-VOCA	MSI	IOM	PNUD	World Bank
<b>Key municipalities in the rest of the country</b>						
Bogotá D.C.	Bogotá D.C.			X		
Antioquia	Medellín	X		X	X	
Atlántico	Barranquilla			X		
Bolívar	Cartagena	X				
Magdalena	Santa Marta	X				
	Ciénaga	X				
Santander	Bucaramanga			X		
Valle	Cali	X		X		
<b>Key departmental administrations</b>						
Arauca		X				

### 3. Virtual training with key mayors and governors

In order to influence the integration of migration issues in territorial development plans and to provide mayors and governors with precise tools, the Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia coordinated with the DNP and the aforementioned cooperation operators to set up training cycles and practical advice with selected municipal administrations (Puerto Colombia, Soledad, Ciénaga, Fonseca, San Juan del Cesar, Fundación, Villa del Rosario, Tibu, Cécota, Chinacota, Puerto Santander, Los Patios, Arauca, Saravena, Puerto Inirida, Yopal, Puerto Carreño and Ipiales) and selected departments

(Cundinamarca, Boyacá, Casanare, Arauca, Vichada, Guainía, Norte de Santander, Santander, Guajira and Cesar) in the areas of health, education, security and citizen coexistence and protection, especially to vulnerable populations.

At the time this publication was finalized, not all of the territorial development plans had been approved. The following table presents a general synthesis by territorial entities prioritized by the Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia in which this information was available as of July 2020.

**Table 13. Integration of migration issues  
in development plans in prioritized territorial entities**

Key Municipalities	
<b>On the border with Venezuela</b>	
Arauca	Arauquita
	Saravena
	Arauca
Cesar	Valledupar
Guainía	Inírida
La Guajira	Uribia
	Ríohacha
	Barrancas
	Fonseca
	San Juan del Cesar
	Distracción
	Maicao
Norte de Santander	Villa del rosario
	Tibú
	Cacota
	Cúcuta
	Pamplona
	Chinacota
	Puerto Santander
	Los Patios

Key Municipalities	
Vichada	Puerto Carreño
<b>On the border with Ecuador</b>	
Nariño	Ipiales
<b>Rest of the country</b>	
Capital District	Bogotá D.C.
Antioquia	Medellín
Atlántico	Soledad
	Puerto Colombia
	Barranquilla
Bolívar	Cartagena
	Arroyohondo
Casanare	Yopal
Cundinamarca	Soacha
Magdalena	Santa Marta
	Fundación
	Ciénaga
Risaralda	Pereira
Santander	Bucaramanga
	Floridablanca
Valle	Cali



Key Departmental Administrations
Guajira
Cesar
Norte de Santander
Arauca
Vichada
Guanía
Atlántico
Nariño
Cundinamarca
Boyacá
Casanare
Santander

## Challenges

The coordination with local governments -and the work carried out by them- has been definitive in the reception and acceptance of the migrant population. Sustained coordination spaces, such as the Migration Working Groups and PMUs, have made it possible to identify and solve migration problems in the territories, and at the same time have tried to strengthen the administrations' efforts through the programs and projects that the national government has promoted in the hands of international cooperation agencies and humanitarian organizations; however, there are many challenges and tests to overcome and face.

Regarding this synchronization and coordination exercise, and facing the new Territorial Development Plans (PDT), as well as the new dynamics of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is necessary to identify some of these challenges and raise reflections:

- i.** The formalization of the Immigration Working Groups is necessary. With this, a regulatory and/or administrative framework is generated that defines its object, scope and compliance with the commitments; at the same time it positions the instance as a formal institutional space.
- ii.** Compliance with the actions and/or programs defined in the PDTs can transform migration into a safe and organized flow and at the same time turn it into an opportunity for municipalities and departments, and it is imperative to address Venezuelan citizens in a comprehensive manner and not put the political stability of territories at risk.
- iii.** Administrations must address the migration phenomenon from a permanent and not an emergency scenario and thus improve the host governance approach.
- iv.** Despite current efforts, there is a need to continue characterizing migrants to achieve a higher level of coordination between the national and local government that not only responds to the current health crisis, but also translates into clear and effective long-term actions.
- v.** It is necessary to improve communication channels between international cooperation and local authorities so that programs and projects are implemented in a coordinated manner and the intervention decisions are taken jointly.
- vi.** It is necessary to improve the technical capacity and soft skills of officials and authorities at the local level to welcome this population.





### Alignment with the Global Compact on Migration

The work policy coordinated between the national and local areas of the Colombian Government is aligned with the following objectives of the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration:

- **Objective 11.** Manage borders in an integrated, secure and coordinated manner
- **Objective 15.** Provide migrants with access to basic services
- **Objective 16.** Empower migrants and societies to achieve full inclusion and social cohesion
- **Objective 17.** Eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote an evidence-based public discourse to change perceptions of migration
- **Objective 19.** Create the necessary conditions so that migrants and diasporas can fully contribute to sustainable development in all countries

## Barranquilla responds to the immigration challenge from Venezuela

### Clemente Fajardo Chams

Secretary of Government  
Barranquilla Mayor's Office

Barranquilla is one of the main destinations chosen by the migrants who arrive in Colombia. After Bogotá, the capital of the department of Atlántico is the non-border city that has received the most Venezuelan migrants. Today there are about 100,000 Venezuelan citizens (a figure that corresponds to a little more than 8% of our population according to the 2018 Census) who live in our territory with an intention to stay. The population is large and diverse, and therefore our attention and response to guarantee access to rights has also been so.

The administration has worked and will continue to work to offer solidarity and be receptive to this group of vulnerable people, focused on the rights and differential approach that this population deserves. Since 2017 we have made enormous efforts to welcome immigrants and create conditions of well-being and inclusion. The institutional response has been broad and covers sectors such as health, education, childhood, human rights and more. This is how a coordinated and joint effort has been developed administratively from the Mayor's Office, with the leadership of the Secretary of Government, and with other agencies that offer specific services to this population such as education, health, culture, women's office and social management in such a way that the political and institutional apparatus was activated to define strategies, measures, care and services to Venezuelan citizens, which can contribute to building durable solutions.

To highlight a few:

- From March 2017 to May 2020 more than 288,370 services were carried out and 41,000

doses of vaccination applied to migrants, demonstrating the activity of the health sector in Barranquilla.

- In education, as of May 2020 more than 14,000 children are enrolled in the city's schools.
- During the first semester 10,643 girls, boys and adolescents have been cared for in Atlántico and 6,755 in ICBF prevention programs. Also, 255 pregnant women have received care in the best conditions in the city.

The Human Mobility Monitoring Matrix (DTM) with the IOM will soon be applied for children and adolescents on the street. With this application we will have key information and generate policy recommendations that will allow us to provide appropriate care and prevent risks for children and adolescents in the aforementioned conditions. Likewise, the results of the DTM by the IOM in the District of Barranquilla will soon be delivered to the territorial entity.

The Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia has provided fundamental support. Thanks to the development of Immigration Roundtables, which has advanced leadership, we can say that the actions in the District of Barranquilla are carried out in a coordinated and effective manner at all levels of government and in conjunction with other sectors of society such as international agencies and civil society. Inter-institutional coordination has been fundamental to identify and resolve problems from the arrival of Venezuelan migrants and Colombian returnees to the city. In Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia we have an essential and effective ally and support to respond to this challenge.



The support of international cooperation has been key and fundamental; they are our great allies for many actions and projects. We highlight projects such as:

- “Inclusive Cities, Solidary Communities”: UNHCR, IOM and UN Habitat, support the District to reduce the vulnerabilities of Venezuelan refugees and migrants, as well as address the impact on host communities in order to design stable and lasting solutions. In Barranquilla, the project is implemented in La Playa, Las Flores and Siape neighborhoods. Between July and October 2020, an emergency cash component will be implemented, which is expected to benefit around 913 families.
- Multipurpose money transfer programs with IOM, *Action Against Hunger, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC)*, *Mercy Corps* with *World Vision* and UNHCR, which has reached more than 6,000 beneficiaries between January and June 2020.
- In protection and guidance, the cooperation reinforces the work on this issue vis-a-vis
  - the increase in Gender-Based Violence, developing for example, *Valientes de Somos Panas* (Brave ones-We are friends) for a Colombian campaign through an alliance of UNHCR and UN Women with the Women’s Office of Barranquilla.
  - In this sense, the strategy “My House, my Home” was also developed, directed at girls, boys and adolescents, led by the Secretary of Social Management of the Barranquilla district, the Atlantic regional ICBF and the Office of the First Lady of Barranquilla, with the support of some others: World Vision, IsraAID, the Red Cross, HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) and UNICEF.
  - HIAS lodging program through Airbnb and another by IOM and UNHCR.
  - Attention to the migrant public is maintained, due to COVID, by telephone from the Local Integration Center for Migrants in coordination with the IOM, Point of Reference and Orientation (PRO).



- IOM delivered hygiene, sleeping, energy and biosafety kits since the beginning of the pandemic.
- UNICEF delivered Wash Kits aimed at children and adolescents.

We highlight our coordination with civil society organizations such as: *De Pana Que Sí, Venezolanos Unidos en Barranquilla* (Venezuelans United in Barraquilla), y *Mujeres sin Fronteras*, (Women without Borders) and FUVADIS, with whom we have carried out conferences and activities on citizen culture, health, recreation and others.

The Local Integration Center for Migrants, inaugurated last year, is one of our star projects. This is a space for orientation and reference for migrants, refugees and Colombian returnees. The purpose is to accompany and support this population to access the procedures and services they require to guarantee their rights.

Some of the services offered and activities carried out are:

- i. Affiliation through a census list with the Ministry of Health for migrant population with PEP and returnees.
- ii. Protective space for boys and girls operated by Fundación Plan.
- iii. Presence of liaison of the coverage area of the Ministry of Education for school quotas.
- iv. Orientation for care and access to health services such as referral of patients living with HIV to the Ministry of Health, the Red Cross and other entities that handle anti-retroviral drugs.

- vi. Civil registration for Venezuelan children of Colombians born in Venezuela (UDAPV).

- vi. Throughout the year we have assisted 3,000 families in the Integration Center.

Aware of the need to establish structural measures and public policies for this population, our Development Plan 2020 - 2023 "*I am Barranquilla*," in line with the "*Policy of promotion of social inclusion*", we established the "Program of Attention to Migrants," with the following projects:

- i. Care Center for migrants.
- ii. Comprehensive care for migrants.
- iii. Training spaces for migrants.
- iv. Institutional training sessions for the care of the migrant population.
- v. Increase health affiliation for migrant population.
- vi. Early childhood programs.

Our objective is to guarantee access to the District's services and other complementary services that can be coordinated with national entities such as SENA, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Labor and GIFMM international aid workers.

Our commitment to this population is still under construction and we will improve our action plans; we are working and will continue to do so. We will continue the task of reducing the gap and facing the challenges of economic inclusion, habitability and citizen security for the population that wants to stay.

## Economic inclusion and income generation for the migrant population

### Income Generation Strategy for the migrant population from Venezuela and the host population

Based on previous experience of the Government's attention to vulnerable population, as well as on international experiences and existing academic papers on this issue, the national government and international cooperation and humanitarian organizations reacted immediately (and continuously) to assist the immigrants coming from Venezuela by implementing humanitarian actions that guarantee the basic needs of migrants from Venezuela in sensitive aspects such as health, education, and special care for early childhood.

Taking into account this growing population's intention to stay in Colombia, care for migrants must go beyond meeting basic needs and must integrate migrants socially and economically and ensure that they become a positive factor for developing their families, their communities and the country. A study by the CGD-RI Refugee Labor Market Access indicates that greater economic inclusion of Venezuelans and host communities could mean higher income and an increased GDP: for every dollar transferred to migrants, the economy grows by USD 2.60. If the barriers to economic inclusion of Venezuelans are lowered, their average monthly income would increase from USD 131 to USD 186. This would imply an increase in GDP of about 0.3%, USD 996 million, (calculated in 2018)<sup>47</sup>.

Consequently, in November of 2018 the government, through the Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia, called on the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) for its support in the construction

of an "Income Generation Strategy for the migrant population from Venezuela and the host population"<sup>48</sup>. This Strategy, which was built hand in hand with public and private institutions, initially sought to identify the obstacles that hinder the process of socioeconomic integration of the migrants from Venezuela and to establish routes for its mitigation. Initially, the process sought to prioritize three processes:

- i) An *employability route* to promote the formalization of work by making the regularization schemes more flexible, as well as the mechanisms for validating qualifications and certifying competences, an increased training offer, an improvement of the labor intermediation system and a more acute fight against forced labor.
- ii. An *entrepreneurship route* to include the simplification of the procedures necessary for the creation of businesses, an improved training and support for entrepreneurs, an increase in funding for business projects, and a strengthening of already consolidated companies.
- iii. A *path to financial inclusion* that simplifies the processes of opening bank accounts and offers financial education to those needing it.

This exercise culminated in identifying 45 obstacles and 82 mitigation actions that are included in this document.

The next phase in implementing this Strategy was the *Creation of an inter-institutional working group for income generation for the migrant population from Venezuela and the host communities*. The main objective of this roundtable was to achieve better inter-institutional coordination and overcome administrative, legal or

<sup>47</sup> From Displacement to Development: How Colombia can transform Venezuelan displacement into shared growth. CGD-RI Refugee Labor Market Access. April 2020.

<sup>48</sup> Income generation strategy for the migrant population from Venezuela and the host communities. Government of Colombia and UNDP. November 2019.

technical obstacles which may hinder the access the migrant population has to formal employment and entrepreneurship. The interesting thing about this space is that not only national government entities form part of this roundtable, but private entities and international cooperation organizations are also included.

Within the framework of this general roundtable, four committees were created to focus on the following topics, led by the leading entities of such processes. In 2019 these roundtables achieved much, as is outlined in the Table that follows:

**Table 14. Roundtables to create income generating strategies**

Working group	Leading Entity	Main Achievements
Documentation, registration and characterization	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measure to grant Colombian nationality to children of Venezuelan parents born in Colombia.</li> <li>• Characterization survey of Venezuelans who renew their Special Permit of Permanence [PEP].</li> </ul>
Training and educational processes	Ministry of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scheme for the optimization of the process of validation of professional titles of Venezuelan nationals.</li> <li>• Operational scheme for the Special Permit of Permanence of Training and Recognition of Previous Learning [PEPFR].</li> </ul>
Employability	Ministry of Labor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation and implementation of the Special Permit of Permanence for Fostering of Formalization [PEP-FF].</li> <li>• Implementation of the Comprehensive Actions Strategy.</li> </ul>
Entrepreneurship	Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drafting of the support offer for entrepreneurship to which Venezuelan migrants can access.</li> </ul>

The next stage of the income generation strategy is the design and start-up of pilot projects, particularly in areas with the highest concentration of migrant population. To achieve this, in the second half of

2019 the Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia and international cooperation agencies have defined 10 lines of employment to create income:

**Table 15. Income generation strategy**

Income Generation - Lines of Work
1. Enable mechanisms to continue regulating
2. Continue characterizing the socioeconomic profile
3. Minimize times, requirements, and validation costs
4. Increase access to skill certification and training programs
5. Implement the Public System of Employment (SPE) specialized route, intermediation systems, labor mobility
6. Build routes to combat forced labor, discrimination, and to improve inspection capacity
7. Facilitate access to entrepreneurship support
8. Equitable access to socioeconomic programs for women
9. Access to financial products and services and financial education
10. Resources to promote local economic development in impacted areas

From this division of labor, actions aimed at mitigating the identified barriers and guaranteeing that, through specific exercises and policy lines, the socio-economic integration of migrants in the country is being articulated with the different entities.

## Challenges

Looking ahead, these goals have the following challenges, some of which as of the date this report was written had already been addressed:

- **Work locally** to support the economic fabric of border departments. This must be a collaborative effort between central and local entities, including all business and civil society actors. This is how

migration can become a real opportunity for the Colombian economy and society.

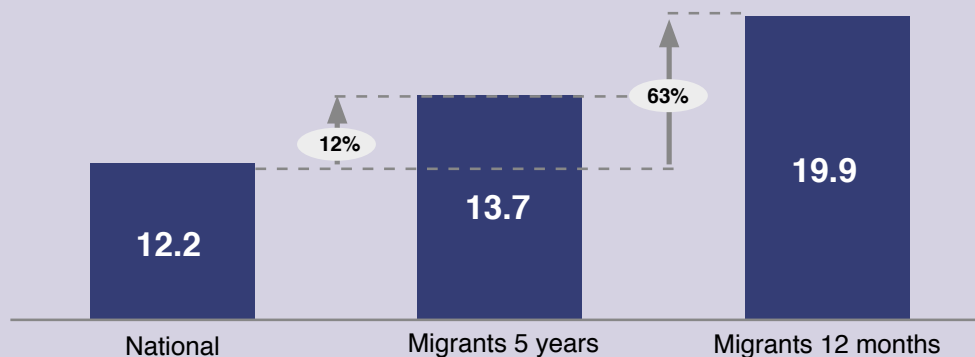
- **Mobilize financial resources** to promote local economic development through an ambitious program of investment in public works, the creation of special economic zones along the Colombian- Venezuelan border, stimulation of tourism and improve the local creative economy.
- **Work hand in hand with the private sector** to improve labor insertion for the migrant population. In particular, Colombian businessmen need to better understand the rules regarding employment of foreigners and change their perception regarding employing Venezuelans. It is also important to invest in training public officials, both at central and local levels, so they have a sound knowledge of the regulations regarding the foreign population in general and Venezuelans in particular. To achieve this, training labor inspectors should be a priority.
- **Ensure support from international cooperation** to finance the most expensive initiatives

and implement socio-economic integration projects aligned with the priorities of the Colombian government. This collaboration between national and local public authorities, on the one hand, and the international cooperation, on the other, is a precondition for this strategy to be successful. Cost analysis estimates that an effective implementation of this strategy would cost approximately USD 364 million.

## Work and employability

The labor market in Colombia for February of 2020 presented a more complex outlook than 2019. According to the DANE, the national unemployment rate stood at 12.2%, 0.4 percentage points above the figure in February 2019, which represented a decrease of 65,000 persons employed (Graph 10). The scenario for the unemployment rate of the Venezuelan migrant population involves two cases: i) Migrants who lived in Venezuela 12 months ago, who faced an unemployment rate of 19.9%. ii) Migrants who lived in Venezuela five years ago, who faced an unemployment rate of 13.7%. These indicators show that

Graph 10. Migrants Unemployment Rate



Source: DANE [National Administrative Department of Statistics], GEIH [Great Integrated Household Survey] (February 2020).

newly arrived migrants face greater obstacles to access the Colombian labor market<sup>49</sup>.

According to a study by the Universidad Externado de Colombia entitled “Employment Scenario of Venezuelan Migrants in Colombia,” in 2018-2019 the likelihood of a Venezuelan immigrant finding a job remained stable in comparison with the 2014-2015 period, despite the increased number of workers. However, all informality indicators recorded consistent increases, and the average number of working hours rose above the legal weekly schedule. According to that same study, Venezuelan immigrants partly created their own job opportunities within the informal market by offering basic personal services and developing small productive activities, and partly replaced Colombians in the lowered-paid tier of the occupational scale, especially in retail, restaurant, hotel, construction and personal service sectors<sup>50</sup>.

By 2018, the Ministry of Labor, working with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Special Administrative Unit Migración Colombia, was the only entity of the national Government that had a unit in its organizational structure in charge of migration issues - the Labor Migration Policy Steering Group. Even though it was created more for the needs of Colombian workers abroad, the growing immigration of displaced Venezuelans seeking to enter the Colombian labor market shifted their priorities and modified their public policy decisions so they could be decisive in the goal of creating economic inclusion and income generation for the migrant population.

In Colombia, the Ministry of Labor has the responsibility of formulating labor migration policies and, additionally, is also the leading entity of the Labor Sector that coordinates seven entities, among which is the Public Employment Service Unit (SPE), the institution in charge of employment mediation in the country, that manages the migrant population,

as well as the National Training Service (SENA), the entity that provides employment training and skills certification processes.

When migration from Venezuela began to grow significantly and the intention of this population to remain in our country for a long period of time became increasingly evident, the need to aid them to enter the Colombian labor market and provide strategies that promote and improve their employability became a priority and a clear intention of public policy. However, when attempting to initiate these tasks, the Ministry and its attached agencies encountered a number of regulatory, technological, organizational and information barriers, among others.

Therefore, the first actions were focused on mitigating access barriers to existing strategies and policies that are less time consuming to solve and on identifying the sector’s roadmap to address this situation. Worthy of mention here is opening of the Public Employment Service and its Network of Providers to the registration of Venezuelan migrants with just their Venezuelan Identity Card, which allowed them to seek work even in a situation of immigration irregularity and to receive occupational guidance and training in soft skills, as well as the design of specialized labor intermediation routes for Colombian returnees and care and service fairs for Colombian returnees and Venezuelan migrants in Cúcuta and Bogotá, where the needs of 1,509 people were addressed.

In coordination with the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, the Special Permit of Permanence (PEP) was included as a valid document of affiliation and contribution to the Social Security System and the systems and related regulations were adjusted. In addition, extensive training sessions were held for labor sector staff to publicize advances in the sector, both in caring for and orienting Venezuelan nationals.

On the other hand, with the conviction of the fundamental role that occupational training plays in the employability of migrants and without losing sight of their needs, the proceedings for the certification of the skills taught by SENA were adjusted and relaxed in terms of requirements and invested time.

<sup>49</sup> DDANE, Great Integrated Household Survey (GEIH): Labor Market, February 2020.

<sup>50</sup> Universidad Externado de Colombia (February, 2020), Employment landscape of Venezuelan migrants in Colombia.

Finally, one of the first actions were awareness-raising and training sessions for the business sector related recruitment processes for immigrants from Venezuela and the guarantees in national legislation.

Under precise instruction to facilitate labor market integration of Venezuelans in Colombia, in 2019 the Labor Migration Policy Steering Group of the Ministry of Labor created and led a clear and solid strategy, which included the following actions:

**i) Implementation of Comprehensive Actions.** Within the framework of the agreement with the International Organization for Migration, the Comprehensive Actions strategy was developed at a national level and aimed to establish dialogue with all the actors involved in the job placement for immigrants. Within this framework, workshops were held with: i) Officials of different sectors and territorial agencies in the region; ii) Host population; iii) Regional entrepreneurs ; and, iv) Migrant population (returned Colombians and Venezuelans). After these four meetings, care and service fairs for returnee Colombians and Venezuelan immigrants were held, and different entities made their services available to this population. Comprehensive actions were implemented in seven cities:

Barranquilla, Valledupar, Bucaramanga, Cali, Cúcuta, Santa Marta and Medellín, and reached a total of 8,316 participants.

**ii) Special Permit of Permanence for Fostering of Formalization [PEP-FF].** In an effort to reduce labor informality and allow Venezuelans in an irregular immigration situation gain access to employment, the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued Decree 117 of 2020 to create the *Special Permit of Permanence for Fostering of Formalization (PEP-FF)*, so that the Venezuelan population in a state of immigration irregularity could regulate their situation through formal employment.

The PEP-FF is an identification document that allows the migrant worker to register with the Social Security System and open bank accounts. As of June 2020 1,124 PEP-FF has been issued, of which 376 are provisional.

**iii) Hard-to-fill vacancies.** The Ministry of Labor, in coordination with the IOM and the consulting firm UrbanPro, created a hard-to-fill, high-turnover and neutral vacancies methodology to identify needs in the Colombian labor market which can be filled by immigrant workers from Venezuela.





- iv) Identification of gaps for the job placement of the migrant population.** The Public Employment Service, in association with various international cooperation agencies, implemented a pilot to identify and mitigate labor inclusion barriers for the migrant population from Venezuela in ten cities: Cúcuta, Medellín, Santa Marta, Pasto, Arauca, Barranquilla, Bogotá, Cali, Cartagena and Riohacha. This exercise identified 180 access barriers as well as actions to mitigate them that involved different actors of the employability ecosystem.
- v) Coordination to issue the Special Permit of Permanence for Training and Recognition of Prior Learning Experiences (PEP-FR).** The PEP-FR is an exceptional and transitory instrument for immigration regularization aimed at Venezuelan nationals who are registered with the Public Employment Agency of the National Training Service (SENA) and wish to have access to work training or recognition of previous apprenticeships through an evaluation and certification of skills and have no valid identification document in the national territory. Its objective is to help Venezuelan nationals stay with a regular migration status so they can have access to and promotion in these types of training. This Permit, as of June 2020, is still in the legal validation phase by the entities involved.
- i) Strengthen the actions against subcontracting and labor exploitation** and identifying vacancies and mitigation of barriers to job placement.
- ii) Expand the institutional capacity of the inspection, surveillance and control mechanisms** exercised by the Ministry of Labor to monitor compliance with the labor rights of migrant workers in the country, as these are not at the level required in terms of the number of inspectors and expertise of said inspectors in matters of migration and territorial presence.
- iii) Apply the methodology for the identification of hard-to place vacancies** and creating a list of critical occupations in order to place migrants and avoid the displacement of the local workforce.
- iv) Continue with the inter-institutional and territorial coordination** to mitigate the identified barriers to job placement.

### The role of public-private sectors alliances in the migratory schedule

The immigration phenomenon has impacted the Colombian economy due to the increase in public spending for migrants, where health care and education predominate. However, it is predicted that achieving a real inclusion of migrants in the economy will create significant economic growth in Colombia. It is not yet possible to quantify the impact of Venezuelan migration in the country, but the projected economic scenarios (before the pandemic) are encouraging.

## Challenges

Among the challenges both the Ministry of Labor and the Labor Sector must assume in order to consolidate the line of Employability and Training for Work within the framework of the Generation Strategy for migrant population from Venezuela, are, among others:



The IMF states that: “In the medium term, Venezuelan migration could contribute 0.1% growth to Colombia’s GDP per year, thanks to the increase in the labor supply and as the costs of migration adjustments are implemented”<sup>51</sup>. However, the calculations of the National Planning Department (DNP) and Fedesarrollo are more optimistic as they see said growth increasing between 0.5% and 0.9% by 2021.

Broadly speaking, we would expect to see changes in the main macroeconomic and labor aggregates as follows:

**Table 16. Changes in macroeconomic aggregates: projection to 2021**

	Without Migration	1 million additional migrants	2 million additional migrants
Growth in Consumption	2.2%	2.8%	3.3%
Growth in Investment	2.9%	3.3%	3.5%
Growth in Exports	3.3%	3.9%	4.4%
Growth in Imports	2.3%	2.6%	3.0%
Unemployment rate	9.4%	9.2%	8.9%

Source: Migration Venezuela Project, data provided by the NDP and Fedesarrollo.

<sup>51</sup> Valora Analitik (August 3, 2019), “FMI: Venezuelan migration could boost Colombian PBI 0.1% per year from 2024”, *Valora Analitik*. Available at: <https://www.valoraanalitik.com/2019/03/08/fmi-migracion-venezolana-impulsaria-pib-de-colombia-en-0-1-al-ano-a-partir-de-2024/>

This scenario of positive impacts on the economy must be complemented by the pressure the wave of migration puts on tax collection and public spending. On the one hand, there is a negative impact on tax collection, mainly explained by the informality of migrants' jobs. On the other hand, public expenditure increases to provide services to this population.

The inclusion of a young, moderately educated productive cohort ready to enter the workforce could contribute to economic growth and an increased productivity in host communities provided that the public, private, and social sectors understand how to catalyze opportunities in sustainable and inclusive long-term commitments.

Therefore, migration and the inclusion of vulnerable communities can have a positive economic impact and can leverage sustainable development and equity processes for Colombia. The consolidation of impact investment mechanisms, results-based financing and information systems for vulnerable populations should enhance the orientation and alignment of multi-sector efforts.

Taking the role of public-private partnerships as a starting point can affect development models for host communities and their migrants, and the following is especially noteworthy:

- **Mobilization of actors to transcend the humanitarian care for a development approach:** efforts to channel resources towards models should have long term priorities and stabilize immigrants in host communities.
- **Generation of local capacities in the territories:** the social and productive inclusion of migrants must be appropriated without generating a preferential treatment, that is, the implemented models must catalyze opportunities for the entire community.
- **The philanthropic sector as an ally for pilots:** social sector initiatives can be used to identify replicable and scalable success stories.

The coordinated work with key players has included: mobilizing the entrepreneurial and philanthropic sector, catalyzing multi-sector coordination, and enhancing the impact of social and economic inclusion strategies for vulnerable communities. In that order of ideas, an attempt is being made to promote agendas of inclusive growth and competitiveness, and social and economic development with a territorial approach in vulnerable communities through different priorities to drive the immigration appropriation approach.

The first one seeks the involvement of the business sector to promote inclusive employment, impact investing and sector agendas. Inclusive employment addresses job placement based on the interrelation between the different moments that people and companies go through to achieve a successful connection between labor supply and demand, and includes methodologies, strategies and actors that are involved in labor inclusion. Impact investment, for its part, addresses an emerging vulnerability category, since it launches innovative triple-impact projects (Social Impact Bonds, Real Estate Funds, results-based financing mechanisms) through innovation and aligning interests in different sectors. Finally, sectorial agendas ensure that the actions carried out have a medium and long-term scope.

The second one examines the possibility of articulating common agendas between the State, businesses, and civil society to achieve awareness and mobilize the efforts. This creates a broader scope and boosts new alliances and strategies to address existing barriers.

These agendas are deployed at an international level in order to position the country in relevant processes and demonstrate the leadership that has been shown in integrating migrants. At a national level, agreements have been consolidated between key players in different sectors and are aimed at strengthening the institutional capacities of the State. At the local level work is being carried out to coordinate the business sector on multi-sectoral agendas. This consolidates itself by creating a platform to involve the business sector: migration in Colombia, strategy and business

opportunities. At first, it will require the establishment of an advisory council, made up of business leaders, to support and guide the creation of business opportunities and economic growth derived from the

Venezuelan migration and thus achieve an effective one. It also deploys a multi-sectoral coordination strategy in different axes: inclusive employment, impact investment and sectorial agendas.

## Tax incentives for private investment at the borders: Special Economic and Social Zones –ZESE–

### Case History

Based on Law 1955 of 2019, or the National Development Plan Act, Regulatory Decree 2112 of 2019 and Law 2010 of 2019, also called the Economic Growth Law, the national government, headed by the President of the Republic, guaranteed three departments (La Guajira, Norte de Santander, Arauca) and two capital cities (Armenia and Quibdó) a special tax regime called ZESE (Special Economic and Social Zones), to attract national and foreign investment and thus contribute to improving living conditions for the population and generate jobs in those territories.

Although the special regime was conceived and designed for border territories, given the difficult economic situation in Venezuela and what this entails to border economies, the regime was extended to two capital cities that had unemployment levels higher than 14 % during the 5 years prior to the issuance of Law 1955 that created the special regime.

Evidence indicates that tax incentives are positive factors to attract investment from companies that consider the size of the market and labor

force and review installation costs<sup>52</sup>. Likewise, it has been shown that tax incentives such as the special regime, also called “Tax Holidays” tend to stimulate investment<sup>53</sup>

The objective of the Economic, Social and Special Zones (ZESE) is to attract national and foreign investments, granting tax incentives when employment is generated by the companies registered to benefit from the special tax regime.

Business enterprises or commercial companies incorporated in the ZESE, in the years following May 25, 2019, date that the National Development Plan Act was issued, can benefit.

The following benefits can be obtained by those who register and meet the requirements:

<sup>52</sup> The World Bank Group (2003), “Tax Incentives”, *Public Policy for the Private Sector*, 25521. Available at: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/412911468148792444/pdf/255210NEWSOREP10Box345634B01PUBLIC1.pdf>

<sup>53</sup> United Nations (2000), “Tax Incentives and Foreign Direct Investment: A Global Survey”, ASIT Advisory Studies, 16. Available at: [https://unctad.org/en/Docs/iteipcmisc3\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/en/Docs/iteipcmisc3_en.pdf).

- Zero percent income tax for five years from 2020 on, and fifty percent of the rate for the next five years after.
- When payments or credits are made to an account held by a beneficiary of the ZESE, the withholding tax rate will be calculated in proportion to the percentage of the beneficiary's income tax rate. That is, zero percent for five years from 2020 on, and fifty percent for the next five years after.

The primary enabler or requirement to access this regime is to demonstrate a 15% increase in direct jobs based on the average number of workers during the last two years. This number of jobs may not be less than two jobs.

Company marketing, for industrial or agricultural companies may be performed outside the ZESE. The products they develop or provide must be sold or dispatched within the same special zone, or a national or international destination. The economic activities covered by the regime will be industrial, commercial, agricultural, health and tourism. Companies dedicated to port activities or to the exploration and exploitation of minerals and hydrocarbons cannot be covered by the regime. No existing commercial companies that transfer their tax domicile to any of the municipalities belonging to the departments or cities of the ZESE jurisdiction can apply.

For those incorporated in 2020 and until May 24 of 2022, the 10 years covered by the regime will begin to be counted from the year of incorporation.

### Direct jobs increase requirement

Direct employment is the direct and full-time relationship through employment contracts according to current regulations. This must be related to the main economic activity of the beneficiary company.

The 15% increase in direct employment is calculated on the basis of the average number of workers hired during the last two taxable years prior to the fiscal year in which the application of the differential rate of income tax in the ZESE regime begins, and not may be less than 2 direct jobs.

Companies which have been incorporated less than two years before the date of application of the special ZESE regime will calculate the 15% increase based on the average number of workers employed since their incorporation.

This regime establishes that the increase in jobs must be the average for the year, that is, it is recognized that the economic and business activity of the sectors covered may change during said year. That is to say, there may be a time of year when more or less jobs are required due to the seasons, and this will not affect the use of the regime, because the year's average would be taken into account to identify the (15%) fifteen percent growth in employment.

## Results

According to the latest report of June 2020, there are significant results to share:

- i) The total number of companies registered in Norte de Santander was 727 business enterprises or companies registered under the ZESE regime.
- ii) The number registered in Norte de Santander is quite encouraging because local employment could, if additional jobs generated were a minimum of two jobs as established by the regulations, lead to 1,454 new jobs.
- iii) The number registered in Norte de Santander represents 84% of the total registered companies which, to date, want to take advantage of the regime and will create new jobs for the region.

Table 17. Number of businesses registered by city

Area	Quantity
Sectional Tax Department of Cúcuta	727
Sectional Tax and Customs Department of Arauca	71
Sectional Tax and Customs Department of Armenia	35
Sectional Tax and Customs Department of Quibdó	18
Sectional Tax and Customs Department of Riohacha	9
Total	860



## Association challenges with the private sector

Raising awareness and mobilizing the private sector is a priority so we can demonstrate that the social and economic inclusion of migrants translates into economic benefits and development. However, for this to materialize, we need to deepen the relationship

mechanisms with business and philanthropic endeavors to help them understand that migrants can be potential economic agents. We are facing a change in the narrative that no longer considers migrants to be just another category in philanthropic projects under the logic of corporate social responsibility or the social vocation of companies. Migration represents an opportunity for business models. Migrants are consumers, employees, and suppliers, which may positively permeate value chains. An example of that is the work done by Bancamía through the Empropaz Plan, which has found that the migrant population is an interesting segment for financial inclusion as an essential step towards integration.

By way of example, challenges in three types of agendas are highlighted.

First, in inclusive employment, knowledge about practical issues of hiring foreigners must be deepened. Although we have gained a lot of ground, many companies remain ignorant about recruitment and this limitation must be overcome. Second, the incentives for border areas and high concentrations of vulnerable communities, including migrants, are the way to local economic development. Mechanisms like the ZESE, multi-sector alliances and strengthening entrepreneurial ecosystems should be adapted on a larger scale, and, therefore, the understanding of financial innovation strategies and impact investment are essential. Finally, understanding the consumption trends of migrants is essential. Information is available on the increase in consumption of some products in the minimum basket, but it is clear that we are facing a still unknown segment of consumers where we need to build customer loyalty.

### COVID-19 challenges

COVID-19 has put unprecedented pressure on the economy and the inclusion of vulnerable communities. The forecasts are far from encouraging, as the decline in equity, the fulfillment of Sustainable Development Goals, and economic growth at global level are evident. Given this perspective, the role of the private

### Alignment with the Global Compact for Migration

The economic integration and income generation policy of the Colombian Government is aligned with the following objectives of the Global Compact for a Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration:

- **Objective 6.** Facilitate a fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard the conditions that guarantee decent work.
- **Objective 16.** Empower migrants and societies to the purpose of achieving a full inclusion and social cohesion.
- **Objective 19.** Create the necessary conditions so that migrants and diasporas can fully contribute to a sustainable development in all countries.
- **Objective 18.** Invest in skills development and facilitate mutual recognition of skills, qualifications and competencies.
- **Objective 20.** Promote faster, safer and cheaper remittance transfers and encourage the financial inclusion of migrants.

sector in the migration agenda must be adapted to a context of economic reactivation and social tension where different vulnerable communities will require the attention of the State.

The strategy of engagement with the private sector starts with understanding of specific needs, and the

main challenge lies in raising awareness and mobilizing the business community. Currently, identified agendas of inclusive employment and local and sectoral economic development remain in force; however, we must deepen our understanding of the opportunities to integrate migrants in value chains and mechanisms that can enhance their integration.

## Alliance for Migrations

### **José Francisco Aguirre Borda**

Executive Director

Santo Domingo Foundation

With more than five million people leaving their country, the Venezuelan exodus is unprecedented on a global scale. As of June 2020, Colombia is the first destination, with more than 1,7 million Venezuelans, according to the figures from Migración Colombia. The country is facing the economic and social consequences of this immigration flow and has approached it through strong government interventions and a human-centered approach. In addition, migration is a real opportunity for growth and social development.

However, an adequate response requires cross-sector strategies to address the enormous pressures regarding access to basic social services and identifying long-term strategies to promote integration. This is why, in 2019, the Santo Domingo Foundation, Open Society Foundations, and Felipe Muñoz, the Presidential Advisor for Venezuelan Migration, mediated a public-private effort to promote the socioeconomic inclusion of all vulnerable populations, including the migrant population. We

formed the Alliance for Migration with ten other partners to identify opportunities to capitalize on the impact of migration through competitiveness and inclusive growth agendas.

Three specific objectives were identified: mobilize the country's business and philanthropic sector, catalyze the multisectoral agreement, and increase the impact of social and economic inclusion strategies in vulnerable communities. The State, private sector, and civil society should align themselves with long-term strategies to transform migration into an opportunity. First, the government's response must overcome structural barriers and accelerate integration. In turn, the private sector must participate by promoting and incorporating migrants into value chains, and increase private social investment. Finally, civil society leadership is needed to coordinate actions and strengthen public policy on migration at the national and local levels.

In addition to seeing migration as an opportunity, and not just as a crisis, another basic premise of the Alliance for Migration is that no vulnerable group should receive preferential treatment. All work must ensure that vulnerable migrants, especially undocumented migrants, can access





the services and programming that result from the Alliance. In the context of COVID-19, it is necessary to guarantee the protection and health of all vulnerable populations, including migrants in irregular situation, to safeguard the health of everyone in Colombian society.

With respect to this last point, since May 2020 the Alliance has supported the Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia to lead a dialogue with different civil society organizations. The objective is to open new communication channels that promote joint work between these bodies and institutions that deal with migration issues

within the country. In order to guide and promote the consolidation of multi-sector alliances, issues related to the challenges and opportunities of including the migrant population in Colombian society have been addressed.

The Santo Domingo Foundation, Open Society Foundations and our partners are ready and committed to continue finding opportunities for social integration between host communities and the migrant population. We know that implementing new ideas and solutions takes time and implies taking risks to test innovative solutions, as well as decisive and immediate action. You can count on us as partners in this cause.

## Civil society takes up the challenge

### Civil Society

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have extensive experience in relations with the Colombian State at both national and local levels. Thanks to their participation in formal and informal consultation bodies, the execution of social projects and advocacy in public policy, civil society has contributed to the visibility of often vulnerable groups and the consolidation of common agendas in favor of inclusion and progress in the country. That is why their involvement and contributions in the

migration agenda are essential for intersectoral collaboration and to improve the public policy in the medium and long term.

However, dialogue with civil society is challenging due to the heterogeneity of the organizations and their relationship with the public. In the first place, we identified the opportunity to strengthen three types of actions: i) formal spaces for dialogue supported by intergovernmental coordination working groups oriented towards inclusion of migrants in local development plans, ii) coordination

### Illustration 2. Analysis by type of organization

	Implementers		Mobilizers		
	Provision of services	Implementation and monitoring	Advocacy	Formulation of public policies	Platforms
Key aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Field contact: sources of information on specific needs</li> <li>Tendency towards relationships with local entities</li> <li>Diversity in organizational maturity - "professionalization"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact in the field</li> <li>Access to funding sources</li> <li>Approach under the mandate of cooperation agendas</li> <li>Analysis and systematization of interventions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comprehensive policy analysis</li> <li>Media positioning and opinion leaders</li> <li>Independence safeguarded before the Government (main asset)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analysis from a logic of the public policy cycle</li> <li>Dialogue with the Public Administration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Centralized discussions</li> <li>Awareness about the importance of common agendas</li> </ul>
Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capacity for dialogue on key public policy agendas</li> <li>Ability to highlight specific problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ability to guide agendas at the country level and identify good practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ability to influence structural changes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ability to promote a specific agenda and to convene a diversity of actors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ability to disseminate information</li> <li>Ability to materialize common agendas</li> </ul>

and alignment of CSOs based on identifying common agendas and efficient use of resources, and iii) the execution of individual and collective strategic initiatives with an approach to migration. Secondly, the types of organizations with which the civil society interacts are analyzed to establish groups and define objectives for the agenda and the structure of the relationship. This segmentation provides starting points to design relationship strategies within society.

To have clarity on the type of organizations that can be approached and establish shared agendas for social and economic development with a territorial approach regarding vulnerable communities receiving migrants, three objectives are prioritized: i) contribute to a shared vision on the integration in Colombia, ii) promote common agendas on specific issues, and iii) maintain communication with the organizations identified under the principle of reciprocity of dialogue.

Implementing this agenda for dialogue with civil society begins with platforms from Venezuelan organizations, since these platforms allow us to identify specific challenges the migrant population has in a centralized manner, and leaders that work for socioeconomic inclusion throughout the country are recognized. This way, the agenda is structured using exploratory meetings to align expectations, define issues that should be addressed and their corresponding spokespersons, and jointly identify the objectives to be addressed.

Thanks to this dialogue, ties can be strengthened with leading organizations that care for the Venezuelan population, and an assessment is made at both thematic (education, health, protection and ethnic groups, housing, security and income generation) and regional levels (Caribbean and insular, Amazon, Pacific, Orinoquia and Andean). Moreover,

mapping critical issues makes it possible to specify action plans and adopt an approach aimed at building trust and achieving common objectives. Subsequently, other regional working groups are established to delve into issues specific to each territory. In addition, there are communication channels with other organizations and key groups in the immigration agenda in order to continue deployment of this dialogue agenda. In the medium term, working groups will be organized with implementing organizations and organizations specialized in formulating public policies.

## Challenges

This first exercise is born from the recognition and appreciation of the hard work implemented by civil society organizations. However, there is still a long way to go. The current immigration situation presents an important challenge in Colombia, and dialogue with these types of organizations requires that individualism be transcended and a proactive attitude be maintained in pursuit of common goals. The main challenges identified so far lie in the construction of common agendas with such a heterogeneous group. Often times, the expectations regarding progress on critical issues of the CSOs migration agenda are difficult to meet and the achievements and strength of the State's response to date are not sized. Thus, building trust and identifying strategic and non-specific issues for any group is a job that requires time, so it is expected to continue with the development of this agenda by convening a greater diversity of organizations.

Finally, understanding that coordination between the national and local government should be further improved, this dialogue must bring local administrations closer to the agenda, since it is one of the key players to enhance public policy.



## The role of organized civil society

### Juan Carlos Viloria Doria

Vice President of Venezuelans in Barranquilla and General Coordinator of the Coalition for Venezuela

In this era of globalization, civil society has taken a leading and internationally recognized role as an actor in development processes, and therefore in the design, planning and implementation of public policies focused on social cohesion. The limitations of the most vulnerable sectors in accessing their rights have led to the creation of community deliberation spaces that demand the organization of the civil society where citizens, institutions, governments and other sectors, through dialogue, achieve coordination for the achievement of common objectives.

Every day it is evident how the gaps that separate us grow incessantly, which is characteristic of inequality and inequity of opportunities, preventing social justice, worthy of any human being. Therefore, talking about climate change, wars, pandemics, sexual diversity, should not shock us or seem alien to us; on the contrary, it is a call to action which, as a society, the planet and the circumstances require us to empathically take care of in unison. And this is also the case with migrants and refugees. With more than 272 million migrants in the world today<sup>54</sup> and over 70 million refugees<sup>55</sup>, we need to concentrate great efforts on the care and integration of these populations.

<sup>54</sup> UN (September 17, 2019), “The number of international migrants is growing faster than world population”, UN News. Available at: <https://news.un.org/es/story/2019/09/1462242>

<sup>55</sup> ACNUR (June 18, 2019), Global Trends Forced Displacement in 2019. Available at: [https://www.acnur.org/5eeaf5664#\\_ga=2.141884018.113451116.1595715389-317069877.1595715389](https://www.acnur.org/5eeaf5664#_ga=2.141884018.113451116.1595715389-317069877.1595715389)

In this sense, Colombia plays an important role in the face of the complex humanitarian emergency that Venezuela is going through<sup>56</sup>. The care and integration of the migrant and refugee population from Venezuela has implied great challenges and opportunities which, as a civil society, we have been able to witness and feel on a daily basis in our communities, and which, from the beginning, leads to the mobilization of actions in the face of recognizing our moral and civic co-responsibility to assist. Hence our incessant effort to participate in workshops with different sectors of the society.

Currently, Colombia is home to a large number of civil society organizations that support the Venezuelan migrant and refugee population, Colombian returnees, and the host population. Among them, it is important to highlight the initiative called Coalition for Venezuela, which brings together 23 organizations with a presence in 25 departments and which also extends to the entire American continent, as well as 40 other reference organizations that operate in 22 countries in the Americas<sup>57</sup>.

This is how the Coalition for Venezuela presents itself today: as one of the greatest organizations for civil society, demonstrating its power of advocacy in different instances of local, regional, national governments and multilateral organizations. Their experience has highlighted the receptivity of instances for dialogue and the fact

<sup>56</sup> HRW (April 4, 2019). Venezuela: The UN should lead a large-scale response to the humanitarian emergency. 2019. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/es/news/2019/04/04/venezuela-la-onu-deberia-liderar-una-respuesta-gran-escala-la-emergencia>

<sup>57</sup> Coalition for Venezuela. Available at: <http://coalicionporvenezuela.org/>

they have a government request to effectively coordinate and articulate actions. This has been demonstrated by the determination and leadership of the Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia, which has carried out necessary measures to respond to the immigration flow from Venezuela. There are also limitations to access information and sufficient resources to quickly respond to identified needs.

This leads us to highlight and acknowledge the actions of the Colombian government such as immigration regularization, enrollment of girls, boys and adolescents (NNA) in the education system as well as in the School Food Program (PAE), the Identification and Classification System of Potential Beneficiaries for Social Programs (SISBEN), registration and expansion of the quota system for care through the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare (ICBF), coordination with regional and local entities through Immigration Panels<sup>58</sup>; articulating and coordinating actions with international agencies and organizations that today are part of the Coordination Platform for Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants (R4V), as well as with institutions of higher education, representatives and unions of the private sector and inter-religious sector.

Regarding coordination with civil society, citizen participation has gained great relevance in spaces such as the 19 Immigration Panels, one meeting with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, IOM and UNHCR, meetings with the agencies and NGOs that belong to the GIFMM, promotion of 6 spaces of citizen participation and bilateral dialogue between Advisory Office

for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia, Migration from Venezuela and civil society organization<sup>59</sup>.

Having said the above, we can affirm there have been important advances in the care and integration of the migrant, refugee and returnee population from Venezuela; however, we cannot ignore the still existing challenges, such as:

- i) The need to advance in regularizing immigration status and recognizing the current international protection crisis, within the framework of the Cartagena Declaration of 1984, which guarantees migrants, refugees and returnees access to all their rights.
- ii) Strengthen the cooperation and presen-

<sup>58</sup> National Chancellor's Office (December 10, 2018). Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia, and Migración Colombia strengthen the migration coordination working group in Cartagena. 2018. Available at: <https://www.cancilleria.gov.co/en/newsroom/news/cancilleria-gerencia-frontera-presidencia-migracion-colombia-fortalecen-mesa>

<sup>59</sup> UNDP (July 4-5, 2018). International experts, academics and the National Government debate on the formulation of a public migration policy in Colombia. 2018. Available at: <https://www.co.undp.org/content/colombia/es/home/presscenter/articles/2018/07/04/expertos-internacionales--academicos-y-gobierno-nacional-debaten.html>; Coalition for Venezuela. Coalition for Venezuela in Colombia thanks the Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia, and allied entities for supporting this space. Citizen Participation is a fundamental tool in the coordination and articulation for an effective humanitarian response #R4V. 2020. Available at: <https://twitter.com/coalicionve/status/1263640319847018496>; Foreign Ministry of Colombia. #AHORA | Cancillería, @OIMColombia and @ACNURamericas hold the national workshop of technical working groups with Venezuelan associations in Colombia. 2018. Available at: <https://twitter.com/CancilleriaCol/status/1070720703694024705>; Workshop of technical working groups with Venezuelan associations in Colombia, organized by the Foreign Ministry, @OIMColombia and @ACNURamericas carried out in follow-up to the 5 technical working groups held in Bogotá, Cúcuta, Medellín, Barranquilla and Pasto. 2018. Available at: <https://twitter.com/CancilleriaCol/status/107072077850783334425>. National Chancellor's Office. Foreign Ministry, @minsaludcol, @mineducacion, @migracioncol, @mintrabajocol, @ICBF, @OIMColombia and @ACNURamericas and Venezuelan organizations participate in the national workshop of technical working groups with Venezuelan associations in Colombia. 2018. Available at: <https://twitter.com/CancilleriaCol/status/1070720840600379393>

ce of the Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia to improve coordination and articulation with territorial entities, international agencies and civil society to provide a better response to the population.

- iii) Count on a roadmap for national care and standardize protocols for collection, use and management of information that provides a better understanding and communication with all sectors of society of the actions the government takes in behalf of the population coming from Venezuela to access their rights.
- iv) Improve coordination with regional and local territorial entities, replicating the model of the Immigration Committees, with the support of the GIFMM, academic society, interreligious and business sectors, and civil society.
- v) Greater participation and strengthening of civil society organizations made up of migrants, refugees and returnees from Venezuela in the national, regional and local roundtables based on their experience, trajectory and status/condition in addition to the capacity demonstrated in caring for their co-nationals.
- vi) Recognize the skills of civil society organizations in responding to issues of refugees and returnee populations to which they belong, and let these organizations be in charge of the field work that was entrusted to consultants who have no relevant experience.

Venezuelan civil society is a fundamental part of the response to the migration crisis and refugees coming from Venezuela. It should be organized and remain engaged through different structures at all levels of public advocacy<sup>60</sup>, integrating the host community so that any act of discrimination, intolerance or xenophobia is transformed into positive actions, and the necessary strategies are created and implemented to lead to sustainable and viable benefits. Only in this way will we obtain more inclusive, resilient, democratic and just societies.

In conclusion, given the uncertain panorama implied by the serious political, economic and social crisis that Venezuela is going through, we are faced with a scenario of opportunities that require action from all sectors of society, especially in Colombia. The condition of vulnerability of the Venezuelan migrant and refugee should not be a limitation, but rather an ideal situation for the State to adopt the necessary measures to effectively integrate immigration flow, as announced by the Coalition for Venezuela in its latest report of recommendations prepared with the OAS Working Group for the Venezuelan Migrants and Refugees Crisis<sup>61</sup>.

<sup>60</sup> Relief. International Conference of Donors in solidarity with Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Latin American and Caribbean countries. 2020. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Posicionamiento%20-%20Pledge%20Conference%20-%20final%20espan%CC%83ol%204.pdf>

<sup>61</sup> OAS - Coalition for Venezuela. Proposals to Improve the Situation of Venezuelan Migrants and Refugees in the Framework of COVID-19. 2020. Available at: [http://www.oas.org/documents/spa/press/Propuestas-OEA-y-Coalicion-por-Venezuela\\_csp.pdf](http://www.oas.org/documents/spa/press/Propuestas-OEA-y-Coalicion-por-Venezuela_csp.pdf)

## Migration Research: Knowledge for Decision Making

The magnitude and accelerated growth of migration from Venezuela have represented unprecedented public policy challenges. To respond, it has been necessary to adapt institutional frameworks, adjust administrative and legal frameworks, and implement short and long-term responses. Mindful of the necessity to base these public policy-making processes on a solid knowledge foundation, key government actors have undertaken initiatives to approach the academic community and knowledge-generating actors in general (e.g. think tanks and international organizations).

On July 4 and 5, 2018, the Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia coordinated, with the support of USAID, the International Organization for Migration and the United Nations Development Program the forum *‘Challenges for the Public Migration Policy in Colombia: A Perspective on Knowledge Management’*, in Bogotá. In that forum, 71 experts on various subjects from 19 national universities, representatives of Government entities and international experts participated. The forum consisted of discussions aimed at identifying problems and formulating recommendations to address the response to migration from Venezuela, organized in eight thematic panels: health, education, income generation, humanitarian aid and border management, security and coexistence, protection and gender, ethnic groups, as well as girls, boys and adolescents.

Based on the reflections derived from this exercise and on additional analysis, the Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia, during the third semester of 2018 and the first of 2019, formulated the Strategy for the generation of income of the migrant population and of host communities, which constitutes the Government’s roadmap to facilitate access to the labor market and entrepreneurial opportunities for the migrant population. In order to coordinate relevant academic experts to implement this strategy, on September 2, 2019, they hosted a debate panel in Bogotá with 32 participants from 10 universities, think tanks and multilateral banking.

At the same time, Migración Colombia organized the International Migration Week from September 2 to 14, 2019, in which representatives in national and local levels of government, academic society, United Nations agencies, national and international organizations, and the private sector discussed current studies and significant public policy challenges regarding migration in general and the response to the migration from Venezuela in particular.



State sectors have also taken measures to improve their understanding of current immigration and its effects on different areas. The Investigations Unit of the Banco de la República has, since the end of 2019, been working on an analysis of the economic impacts of migration, the final text of which was not yet available at the time this book went to print. Future efforts of the Banco de la República will include analysis on the dynamics of remittances.

Control agencies have also undertaken work to contribute to a better understanding of the institutional response to this situation. During the second semester of 2019, the General Comptroller's Office carried out a participatory evaluation of the impact migration has had according to the perception of government authorities, international organizations and civil society in key border municipalities. This study of perceptions will be complemented by a fiscal impact analysis, which is still being prepared. During the second semester of 2019 the General Procuracy through the Institute of Public Ministry Studies carried out an analysis of the response to migration in six municipalities of category 5 and 6<sup>62</sup> (four in the border area, two in receiving municipalities), from which precise recommendations emanate to manage migration in these contexts. The final document of this analysis was not yet available at the time this book was printed.

In the academic world, it has been noteworthy how several of Colombia's main universities have integrated migration issues into their research agenda. Over the last two years research groups on pre-existing Venezuelan and migration issues have received support and several others have been created in academic centers in Bogotá, border areas, and cities with high concentrations of migrant populations. The following list, by no means exhaustive, reflects the dynamism of this research niche.

- i)** Research Network on Border Affairs [RIAF] - Regional initiative resulting from an alliance between authorities of the Department of Norte de Santander and local researchers
- ii)** Colombo-Venezuelan Human Mobility Network [RedColVen] - Various universities
- iii)** Migration and Health Network - Universidad del Norte
- iv)** Network of legal and socio-legal research groups and centers - Various universities
- v)** Network in motion - Universidad Nacional
- vi)** Venezuelan Observatory - Universidad del Rosario
- vii)** Border Observatory - Various universities
- viii)** Observatory of International Migration - Universidad Externado
- ix)** Center for Migration Studies - Universidad de los Andes
- x)** Institute of Political Studies - Universidad Autónoma de Bucaramanga
- xi)** 'Pensar' Institute - Universidad Javeriana
- xii)** Research Group - CIEMPIÉS
- xiii)** Incubator of Migration and Borders - Universidad del Rosario
- xiv)** Incubator Law and Migration in Colombia - Universidad de los Andes

On the international stage, the Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia has initiated contacts with platforms to share knowledge on migration. In 2018, this department got in touch with the Refugee Studies Centre<sup>63</sup>

<sup>62</sup> The National Planning Department classifies the municipalities of Colombia in 6 categories according to their budgetary and administrative capacity, where the comparatively stronger administrations are classified in category 1 and the comparatively weakest in category 6.

<sup>63</sup> For more information, visit: <https://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/>



of the Oxford University in the United Kingdom to analyze the context of massive immigration Colombia in the light of other comparable experiences. As a result of this effort, researcher Alexander Betts<sup>64</sup> visited Colombia in 2019 and produced a policy document<sup>65</sup> with recommendations to turn migration from Venezuela into a development opportunity.

This entity has also actively participated in international forums for the exchange of experiences in response to migration:

- a) **Colombia's response to migration flows from Venezuela: How Latin America Is Responding to the Venezuelan Exodus** (December 5, 2018): Virtual meeting organized by the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), based in the United States, with immigration authorities from Ecuador, Peru and Colombia.
- b) **Migration and Cities: The Path to Inclusive Integration** (Madrid, Spain - March 20, 2019): Event organized by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), within the framework of the Platform on Migration and Forced Displacement coordinated by the Multilateral Development Banks. The Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia participated as a panelist in the discussion entitled "A Latin American look at Migration: Mexico and Colombia".
- c) **Innovation in migration policies: a private high-level meeting** (Mexico City, Mexico - May 20 and 21, 2019): Event organized by the MPI with the participation of immigration authorities from Peru, Costa Rica, Mexico and Colombia.
- d) **Facilitate the social and economic inclusion** (San José, Costa Rica - July 24 and 25, 2019):

regional workshop to exchange experiences organized by the Global Forum on Migration and Development (FGMD). Participation as a panelist in the discussion *Inclusion in the current migration context in Latin America*, together with authorities from El Salvador, Brazil and Costa Rica.

- e) **South America's humanitarian crisis: Colombia's response to the mass exodus from Venezuela** (London, UK - December 16, 2019): Event organized by the Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) to learn about the Colombian government's response to migration from Venezuela.
- f) **The Colombian Response to the Venezuelan Migration Crisis: A Dialogue with Colombia's Migration Czar** (Washington D.C., USA - September 27, 2019): Event co-organized by the MPI and the Interamerican Dialogue to hear about the Colombian Government's response strategy to migration from Venezuela.
- g) **How host countries are dealing with migration in times of COVID-19 in Latin America** (April 21, 2020): Virtual meeting organized by the Migration Unit of the IDB as part of its Regional Policy Dialogue series. The Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia participated as a panelist with authorities from Chile and Peru.
- h) **Responses of governments in Latin America to the COVID-19 pandemic: challenges and opportunities in migration management** (May 20, 2020): Virtual meeting not open to the public, organized by the MPI to compare experiences. Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia participated as a panelist together with authorities from Costa Rica, Mexico, Argentina, Peru and Ecuador.

At the end of 2019, this Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia was linked to the *Labor Market Access for*

<sup>64</sup> For more information, visit: <https://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/people/alexander-betts>

<sup>65</sup> Betts, A. (2019) *Research in Brief: Venezuelan Survival Migration as a Development Opportunity*. Refugee Studies Centre at Oxford University. Available at: <https://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/publications/research-in-brief-venezuelan-survival-migration-as-a-development-opportunity/@@download/file>



*Refugees*<sup>66</sup>, initiative, promoted by the Center for Global Development and Refugees International, which has been carrying out comparative studies on the access of the migrant population to labor markets in different parts of the world. The initiative will initially focus on analyzing the cases of Colombia, Peru, Kenya and Ethiopia. The findings of the first studies, on Colombia and Peru, are scheduled for the second half of 2020.

At the time of this publication, the Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia is finalizing the design of a strategy aimed at generating applied knowledge base that informs public policy formulation on priority issues relating to the response to migration from Venezuela at national and local levels, which consists of three components:

- i)** Identifying and/or designing platforms for interaction and coordination between the Government and knowledge-generating entities (e.g. academic communities, think tanks, international organizations) which allow the former to be aware of developments and ideas in priority areas of public policy, and facilitate the exchange of knowledge on relevant practices at national and international levels.
- ii)** Identifying specific public policy areas for which academic research and applied policy research are especially relevant.
- iii)** Generation of and/or integration to incentive programs to promote research in the policy areas identified above.

The implementation of this strategy in the second half of 2020, will allow the Government to take advantage of the production of networks and entities referred to in this section, and create access to additional ones.

<sup>66</sup> For more information, visit: <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/cgd-and-ri-launch-new-initiative-expand-formal-labor-market-access-refugees>

## Important Advances and Pending Challenges of the “Colombian Model”

**Andrew Selee y Diego Chaves**  
Migration Policy Institute [MPI]

The response of the Colombian government to the crisis of millions of displaced Venezuelans has been recognized in the international community for its consistency, efficiency, and above all, its creativity.

Historically, Venezuela was a destination for many Colombian migrants. Since the remote times of the Conquest, but with a remarkable boom between the 1950s and 1980s, the growth of the Venezuelan economy and its migration policies attracted millions of foreigners, including many Colombians. Indeed, in the great immigration waves of Colombians moving abroad, Venezuela has always been one of the favorite destinations. The Venezuelan oil bonanza in the 1980s, which coincided with an upsurge in violence in Colombia, led thousands of Colombians to cross the border and settle on the other side.

Recently, Colombian-Venezuelan immigration movements began to reverse, and this happened progressively. The departure of Venezuelans has been increasing these past five years, whereas the number of migrants wanting to stay permanently increased from less than 39,000 at the end of 2015 to 1.8 million at the end of June 2020, without counting the almost half a million Colombians who returned. Colombia also plays different roles than that of a final destination. Close to two million migrants have entered the country in transit between Venezuela and an alternative destination country such as Ecuador or Peru, and even for other migrants, the flow is circular because they reside in Venezuela and regularly travel between the two Countries for employment, health or educational reasons. In total, the Venezuelan migration crisis in Colombia has, in numerical terms, been at a pressure

index estimated at eight million individuals – the size of Bogotá – and that demands services from the Colombian State.

At the same time, it should not be forgotten that, as Venezuelan migration grew, Colombia began to implement the agreements signed between the government and the illegal armed group of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). This meant one more responsibility for the Colombian State, in the sense that the end of the conflict with the FARC represented a significant political, legal and economic effort.

The interesting thing is that the Colombian State has managed, despite multiple difficulties, to bring about a shift to welcome what today represents the second highest migration flow in the world, only after Syria, and found ingenious ways to provide response and care for the migrant population and host communities. Colombia can be described as an example on the global stage, where, for several international experts, the term “Colombian model” has already been coined to refer to how people in situations of human mobility worldwide should be cared for.

In particular, five elements of the Colombian response can be highlighted and deserve recognition for their pragmatism and effectiveness:

- i) **The consistency** that different levels of government and other State institutions have had in responding to this crisis. From the Presidency of the Republic and its Ministers, leadership of all political parties in the government and the opposition as well as other entities such as the General Procuracy, have made these efforts a collective exercise to welcome and integrate Venezuelan migrants. Few times in history has this level of consistency, commitment and messages been seen

by the government and other political actors, which has maintained a national commitment to the response.

- ii) **The coordination** of these efforts from the Presidency of the Republic, under the creation of a central coordination office with the capacity to integrate the various efforts of the ministries and government agencies. Receiving a volume of migrants in such a short time requires an integrated response from the government that ranges from the Colombian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Migration to the Ministries of Education, Health, Labor, Housing and Environment, among others. Similarly, said office has managed to link up to departmental and municipal governments, non-governmental actors and international organizations in order to provide a coordinated and timely response to the population. In this sense, having a focal point of coordination at the Presidency has been a fundamental axis for the Colombian response, which, in turn, can be distinguished from the responses that have been seen in other latitudes, where an agency or ministry is often designated, thus giving up the capacity to coordinate the entire institutional apparatus, or, what is worse, countries that do not designate a responsible agency and therefore present a disjointed and less efficient response.
- iii) The decision of granting several rounds to **regularize the migratory situation** through the Special Permit of Permanence (PEP) to Venezuelans. Most of its rounds have been focused on regularizing the situation of the migrants that arrived through regular channels regularly arriving in the country but have also focused on enabling rounds to benefit a quarter of a million migrants in an irregular situation registered in the Administrative Register of Venezuelan Migrants (RAMV), and a similar figure such as asylum seekers who were denied their refugee status, and military deserters from Venezuela. This was a practical measure that allowed Venezue-

lan migrants and refugees to have an expedited process of integration into the national life, especially the labor market, health and education.

- iv) In like manner, Colombia guarantees to a great extent the **free and universal access to basic education** for all girls and boys, regardless of their immigration status, and **fairly broad access to basic health services**. In addition, those Venezuelan migrants who meet the requirements to join the contributory or subsidized health regime (usually those with a PEP), can have access to those services through insurance. Both axes have been fundamental to promote the integration in terms of equality of the migrants and refugees with the rest of Colombian society.
- v) Finally, Colombia, adhering to the international framework and having joined the Convention to Reduce Cases of Statelessness (1961), resolved to grant **nationality to those born to Venezuelan parents** in Colombian territory from August 19, 2015 on.

The above shows that the Colombian response has two fundamental objectives: first, **a State commitment to receiving Venezuelan migrants and refugees**, providing aid and humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable. Second, a commitment by the Colombian government to build a bridge between humanitarian and development policies, **in order to achieve the integration of the population**. The cornerstone of this decision is also accompanied by a **principle of equality**, which seeks that the migrant population may enjoy the same goods and services provided by the State like the rest of the population. Thus, although both objectives have different purposes and scopes, they move under the same categorical imperative: to guarantee the fundamental rights to the entire population. There are few countries that move under this logic, which, for this reason, is a model for the world on the decisive commitment that a State must have to welcome the migrant population.

Given the speed with which this migration process has taken place, some gaps still need to be closed, in order to achieve more inclusive public policies that continue to provide benefits for both Colombian society and Venezuelan migrants. Thus, the government should focus on addressing these *second-generation* rights-based policies that further strengthen this Colombian model and, at the same time, generate the mechanisms of social cohesion.

Colombia, like every country on the continent, is going through a situation of great challenges. Among them, the COVID-19 pandemic stands out as well as the global economic recession that accompanies. But, as a space for new opportunities emerges from every crisis, perhaps this is the most propitious moment for the government to perfect its model. Taking advantage of this hiatus in the face of the number of migrant population entering the Colombian territory, perhaps it could allow a moment to prepare a response to future challenges that will probably be unleashed and that will come from the neighboring country.

**i) Regularization:** Although the PEP has been an exceptional measure to regularize the status of Venezuelan migrants, by June 2020, the majority of those who now live in the country do not have such a document. This is due to the fact that a large number of Venezuelans who entered the country irregularly, or whose permission of permanence in the country expired, have not had a new regularization process, for example, through a new round of PEPs. Although this is a time when large concentrations of population should not be incentivized, to avoid the spread of the virus, this may be a time to consider enabling a new round for those who entered the country irregularly, since flows have decreased significantly. Likewise, the Educational PEP, which is under consideration, would be a great advance to ensure that the next generations can integrate into universities, technical and technological education, and the labor market. The recently announced labor PEP has been a great advance

in the matter, although mechanisms may have to be created to make it more flexible in the medium and long term. Said flexibility would allow independent workers to have access to this benefit and, thereby, the country would be able to welcome a larger number of migrants, while promoting entrepreneurship programs within the population.

**ii) Permanence:** The PEP was, without a doubt, an innovative and useful measure to achieve the regularization of migrants. However, with the passing of time, it will be essential to find a way to generate a transition towards a category that allows the Venezuelan migrant to rely on a longer stay permit. For example, that after a certain number of years, and depending on some criteria set by the government, the migrant holding a PEP may receive a green card (residency) and that same may even be conducive to a nationality. This will allow Venezuelans to have access to several of the services provided by the state, such as the enrollment in technical and technological training programs offered by the country.

**iii) Validation of degrees and work:** There are several obstacles that prevent taking advantage of the potential of migrants and refugees, reason for which the country should have public policy strategies that allow promoting the integration into the labor market and local economies. It is worth mentioning that the majority of Venezuelan adults of working age were working before COVID-19. In fact, 8 out of 10 Venezuelan migrants in Colombia were employed before the pandemic. Although it is recognized that the labor market in Colombia is characterized by a high degree of informality, effective routes must be created to guarantee that immigrants have better-paid, more stable job options, and in the field or discipline in which they were trained. For example, it is estimated there are almost 10,000 Venezuelan physicians (in Colombia), whose potential can be exploited, especially in some rural sectors where there is a shortage of health professionals. Perhaps, by working hand in hand

with medical unions and associations, these barriers can be overcome and better use can be made of the workforce.

**iv) Access to health:** Barriers to healthcare must be addressed through clear access and financing policies. Like the other countries in the region, Colombia offers emergency medical care services to migrants and refugees regardless of their immigration status in the country. Even so, the policies still have gaps that do not allow them to be implemented effectively at local level, which in practice, hinders access to medical care. In Colombia, local and regional governments assume part of the emergency health care costs, and it is for this reason that the distribution of the financial burden is not entirely clear; a fact that leads to the hospital network being the one who assumes the costs, perhaps not reimbursable. This is why clear policies and procedures must be created to define both the services offered and the amount of costs to be covered. Colombia is a country where its residents must register with the health care system and, with it, play a kind of dreidel game, where everyone plays and everyone takes. Therefore, and as the health sector strategy points out, it is vital to find agile ways to guarantee that new migrants and refugees can sign up and find more cost-efficient forms of coverage.

**v) Access to education:** Access to education could be improved through flexible enrollment practices and ongoing support. One of the most critical decisions in Colombia has been to offer primary and secondary education to all students, regardless of their immi-

gration status. This is something which, somehow, was already included in the Political Constitution, but where the Colombian State has had to overcome a series of barriers which, in practice, impeded access and had to do with technical, technological, political, economic, and social aspects, among others. To continue along this line will prevent a generation of young people from growing up without education and will allow the country to take advantage of the human capital of Venezuelan children who will surely grow up in Colombia. However, in many parts of the country, registration measures still persist, involving a series of procedures, documents



and more, which makes it difficult to allow migrant and refugee children to enroll in school. Besides, there are practical barriers of infrastructure, school food and others, where the support of the international community and other sectors will be needed to guarantee access under equal conditions.

**vi) Social cohesion:** We have seen that Colombian society -like any society- can be reluctant to accept facts fully supported with evidence, if the same go against, or do not fit within their shared mental models. For example, in Colombia, there is a clear distinction between narrative and reality on the issue of security

and migration. Popular belief takes for granted the fact that crime and insecurity have grown due to migrants coming from Venezuela, although the data contradicts this claim. To empower the municipality, the public official should not concentrate on seeking and spreading alternative sources of information closer to reality, without first understanding how people absorb, process and remember the information, or without first understanding and studying under what circumstances people are more inclined to believe in something. There is a joint work that needs to be done between the national government and municipal governments and between the government and society to begin to generate new models of coexistence at the present time.

When immigrants have access to regular status, education, health care, financial services, and ways to validate their studies, they tend to become contributors to the country's innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic growth, as evidenced by Colombians who have gone to live in other countries as migrants. Colombia has taken important steps in the matter, it has even been a country of important innovation in migration matters, but these steps should not only be improved but also be able to sustain themselves in the medium to long term, even in the midst of a humanitarian crisis that will continue to impact the region. Policy makers require assistance in guiding the public debate on migration by showing the medium and long-term benefits and designing policies to help achieve them. From the MPI, we are committed to supporting Colombia and the region in this task.



## The world offers a helping hand: the role of international cooperation

### Coordination between the Colombian government, implementing agencies, donor countries and governments of the region

Within the framework to respond and give attention to the immigration phenomenon from Venezuela, the National Government's priority has been coordinating all actors in the country to harmonize offers of international cooperation and humanitarian assistance with the competent national and local institutions.

The national government seeks to ensure adequate care for communities and populations in need, avoid duplication of efforts and the inefficient use of human, technical and financial resources, and strengthen the institutional capacities of national and local authorities.

#### 1. Inter-Institutional Unit for International Cooperation for the Migratory Crisis coming from Venezuela.

As part of the response strategy, the government of Colombia established in 2018 the Inter-Institutional Unit for International Cooperation for the migration crisis.

The Inter-Institutional Unit is permanently composed of the Presidency of the Republic, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Directorates for Development and Border Integration, International Cooperation, America and Migration, Consular Affairs and Citizen Service) and the Presidential Agency for International Cooperation (APC) in charge of managing coordination with different cooperation actors.

The Inter-Institutional Unit has served as a space to define needs and priorities, hand in hand with the central sector lead institutions in the response, such as: Migración Colombia, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Family Welfare, National Disaster Risk Management Unit, National Registry, departmental governments and municipal administrations, among others

Various types of international cooperation actors have been invited to the Unit to provide technical and financial support for the efforts, in particular from donor country embassies and cooperation agencies, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations and from the private sector.

The coordination of International cooperation with bilateral and regional partners and coordination of actions with the Interagency Group of Mixed Immigration Flows (GIFMM) has been led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Coordinating international agencies with non-governmental actors, private companies, foundations and NGOs aligned with priorities of the national Government has been led by the Presidential Agency for International Cooperation APC.

The work plan of the Inter-Institutional Unit has been developed in weekly meetings every Tuesday morning, with the participation of the Presidency of the Republic and the APC - Colombia. In coordination with the Ministries and State entities, direct cooperation is oriented towards national and local governments to generate and strengthen capacities, and the work between the embassies and missions is articulated with the national entities and institutions concerned.

The Unit also coordinates field visits by UN agencies, international partners, and non-governmental actors to ensure alignment with the actions of national and local authorities.

Some achievements of the Interagency Unit of International Cooperation for the Venezuelan Migration Crisis that can be highlighted:

- Identification of needs and definition of priorities with the leading entities of each sector.



- Presentation of a comprehensive and unified vision of the needs and priorities that incorporates a territorial approach for cooperation actors.
- Implement actions focused on comparative advantages and contribute to the efforts of the State.
- Strategies aimed at contributing to the nexus between humanitarian aid and development for sustainable interventions over time.
- Create and improve skills at national and local levels.
- Include all affected populations (Venezuelan migrants, Colombian returnees and host communities).
- Involve the private sector, other key actors and stakeholders in the response.

## 2. InterAgency Group on Mixed Migratory Flows [GIFMM]

At the request of regional governments, the UN established a coordination platform and interagency group on mixed immigration flows (GIFMM)<sup>67</sup>, ensure improved coordination to respond to the migration crisis due to the flow from Venezuela.

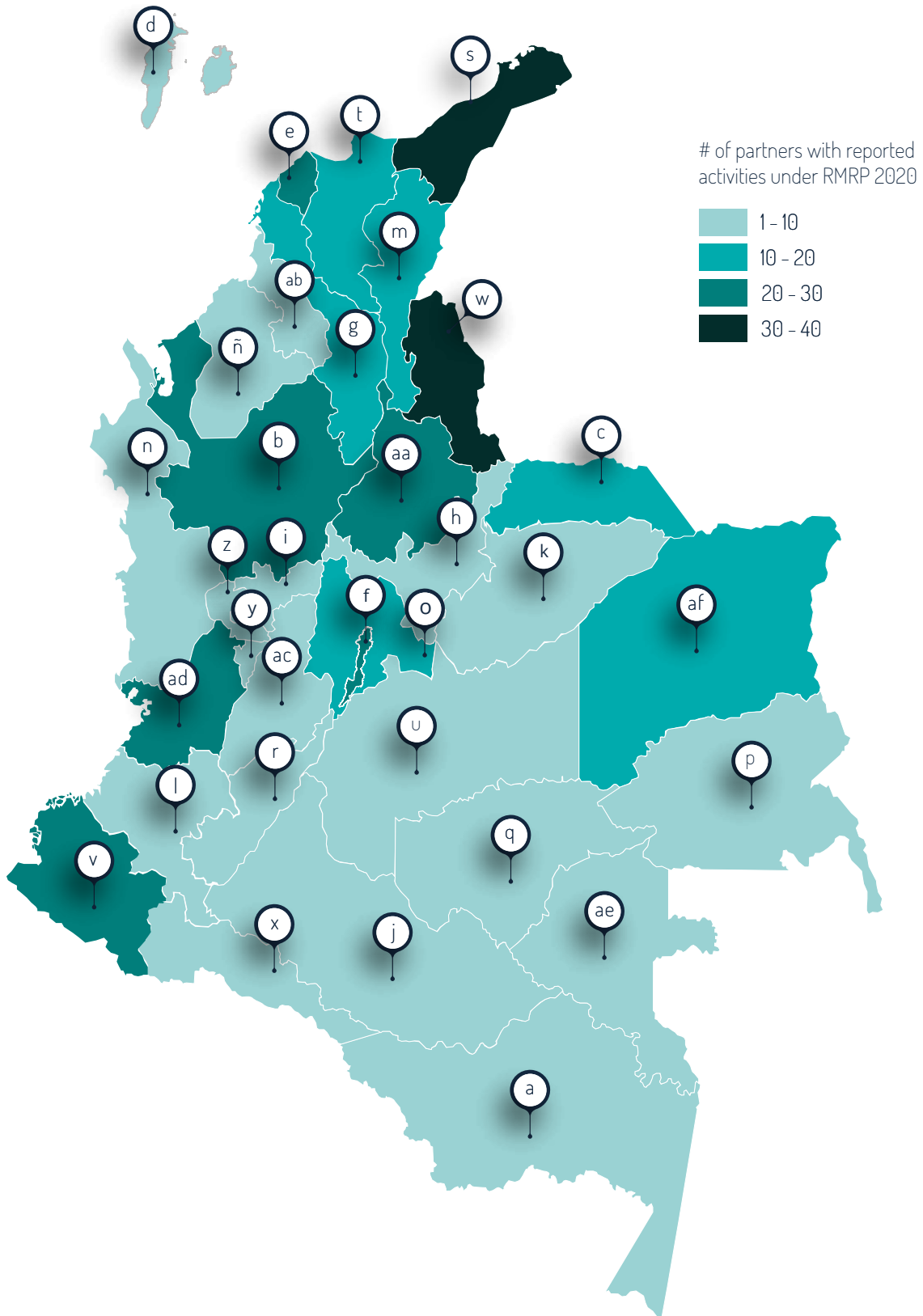
The Group operates under the joint leadership of the Office of the Resident Coordinator, IOM and UNHCR, and coordinates the actions of 17 UN agencies, 6 Red Cross movements and 48 NGOs, with a total of 71 members as of June 2020.

At a local level, local GIFMMs coordinate with departmental and municipal authorities within the framework of the Migration Boards and the Unified Command Posts (PMU). A total of eight local GIFMMs operate in Antioquia, Arauca, Atlántico (covering Magdalena and Bolívar), Bogotá (covering Cundinamarca), La Guajira (covering Cesar), Nariño, Norte de Santander (covering Santander) and Valle del Cauca (Map 5).

<sup>67</sup> For more information, visit: <https://r4v.info/es/situations/platform>.



Map 5. GIFMM Partners by department (May 2020)





RESPONSE FOR VENEZUELANAS  
Coordination platform for Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants

**a** AMAZONAS

OPS/OMS • Save the Children •

**b** ANTIOQUIA

ACNUR • ADRA • AID FOR AIDS • Caritas Alemania • CISP • COLVENZ • Cuso International • DRC • Fundación mi sangre • Fundación ProBono • Hias • Humanity & Inclusion • IRC • Mercy Corps • NRC • OIM • OIT • OPS/OMS • Opción Legal • Pastoral Social • Profamilia • Save the Children • SNCR • TECHO • World Vision •

**c** ARAUCA

ACDI/VOCA • ACNUR • AIDS Healthcare • Americares • CISP • FAO • FLM • FUPAD • Hias • NRC • OIM • OPS/OMS • PNUD • Profamilia • Consorcio PUI and SI • Save the Children • SNCR • UNFPA • UNICEF • WFP •

**d** ARCHIPIÉLAGO DE SAN ANDRÉS

Save the Children •



**e** ATLÁNTICO

Acción Contra el Hambre • ACNUR • AID FOR AIDS • Americares • Cuso International • DRC • Fundación ProBono • FUPAD • Hias • Humanity & Inclusion • IsraAID • Mercy Corps • NRC • OIM • OIT • OPS/OMS • Onu Mujeres • ONU-Habitat • PLAN • Profamilia • Save the Children • SNCR • Tearfund • TECHO • UNICEF • WFP • World Vision •

**f** BOGOTÁ, D.C.

Acción Contra el Hambre • ACNUR • AID FOR AIDS • AIDS Healthcare • Aldeas Infantiles • Alianza por la Solidaridad • Bethany • Caritas Suiza • Cuso International • DRC • Fundación mi sangre • Fundación ProBono • FUPAD • Hias • Humanity & Inclusion • IMMAP • IRC • NRC • OIM • OIT • OPS/OMS • Opción Legal • PLAN • PNUD • Profamilia • REACH • Save the Children • SNCR • TECHO • UNFPA • UNICEF • War Child • WFP •

**g** BOLÍVAR

Acción Contra el Hambre • ACNUR • AID FOR AIDS • Americares • Fundación mi sangre • FUPAD • Hias • Mercy Corps • NRC • OIM • OPS/OMS • Onu Mujeres • PLAN • Profamilia • Save the Children • Tearfund • TECHO •

**h** BOYACÁ

ACNUR • AIDS Healthcare • Alianza por la Solidaridad • Hias • NRC • OPS/OMS • Profamilia • Save the Children • SNCR •

**i** CALDAS

ACNUR • Fundación mi sangre • Hias • OIM • OPS/OMS • Profamilia • Save the Children •

**j** CAQUETÁ

NRC • OPS/OMS • Profamilia • WFP •

**k** CASANARE

ACNUR • CISP • FLM • OIM • OPS/OMS • Save the Children • SNCR •

**l** CAUCA

ACNUR • AID FOR AIDS • NRC • OIM • OPS/OMS • Opción Legal • Profamilia • Save the Children • SNCR •

**m** CESAR

Acción Contra el Hambre • ACNUR • Americares • Hias • Mercy Corps • NRC • OIM • OPS/OMS • Save the Children • SNCR • UNICEF • WFP •

**n** CHOCÓ

ACNUR • AID FOR AIDS • Heartland Alliance • OIM • OPS/OMS • Opción Legal • Profamilia •

**ñ** CÓRDOBA

Acción Contra el Hambre • ACNUR • Caritas Alemania • Heartland Alliance • OPS/OMS • Profamilia • Save the Children •

**o** CUNDINAMARCA

Acción Contra el Hambre • ACNUR • Caritas Alemania • DRC • Fundación mi sangre • Hias • IRC • Médicos del Mundo • NRC • OIM • OPS/OMS • PLAN • Profamilia • Save the Children • SNCR • TECHO • WFP •

**p** GUAINÍA

ACNUR • Diakonie • NRC • OPS/OMS • Save the Children • SNCR •

**q** GUAVIARE

NRC • OPS/OMS •

**r** HUILA

NRC • OPS/OMS • Profamilia • Save the Children •

**s** LA GUAJIRA

Acción Contra el Hambre • ACNUR • AID FOR AIDS • Aldeas Infantiles • Americares • Caritas Suiza • Corporación Minuto de Dios • DRC • FAO • Fundación Baylor • FUPAD • Halú • Hias • Humanity & Inclusion • Malteser International • Mercy Corps • NRC • OIM • OPS/OMS • Onu Mujeres • OXFAM • PNUD • Profamilia • Renacer • Samaritan's Purse • Save the Children • SNCR • UNFPA • UNICEF • War Child • WFP • World Vision • ZOA •

**t** MAGDALENA

ACNUR • AID FOR AIDS • Americares • CESVI • Hias • Malteser International • NRC • OIM • OPS/OMS • Onu Mujeres • Profamilia • Save the Children • SNCR • TECHO • WFP •

**u** META

ACNUR • Alianza por la Solidaridad • NRC • OPS/OMS • Save the Children • SNCR •

**v** NARIÑO

Acción Contra el Hambre • ACNUR • AID FOR AIDS • Aldeas Infantiles • Alianza por la Solidaridad • Caritas Alemania • GIZ • Heartland Alliance • Hias • Médicos del Mundo • Mercy Corps • NRC • OIM • OPS/OMS • Opción Legal • PLAN • Profamilia • REACH • Save the Children • SNCR • UNICEF • WFP • World Vision •

**w** NORTE DE SANTANDER

ACDI/VOCA • Acción Contra el Hambre • ACNUR • AID FOR AIDS • AIDS Healthcare • Americares • Ayuda en Acción • Bethany • Capellanía Ofica • Care Colombia • Caritas Alemania • CISP • Compassion • Consorcio PUI y SI • Diakonie • FUPAD • GIZ • Hias • IRC • MedGlobal • Mercy Corps • NRC • OIM • OIT • OPS/OMS • ONU-Habitat • Opción Legal • OXFAM • PLAN • PNUD • Profamilia • Samaritan's Purse • Save the Children • SNCR • TdH Italia • TECHO • UNFPA • UNICEF • WFP • World Vision •

**x** PUTUMAYO

Acción Contra el Hambre • ACNUR • AID FOR AIDS • CISP • OIM • OPS/OMS • Save the Children • SNCR •

**y** QUINDÍO

ACNUR • Alianza por la Solidaridad • OIM • OPS/OMS • Save the Children • SNCR •

**z** RISARALDA

ACNUR • Fundación mi sangre • Hias • OIM • OPS/OMS • Profamilia • Save the Children •

**aa** SANTANDER

Acción Contra el Hambre • ACNUR • ADRA • AID FOR AIDS • AIDS Healthcare • Aldeas Infantiles • Caritas Alemania • CISP • Consorcio PUI y SI • Hias • Mercy Corps • NRC • OIM • OIT • OPS/OMS • OXFAM • Profamilia • REACH • Samaritan's Purse • Save the Children • SNCR • UNICEF • WFP • World Vision •

**ab** SUCRE

Hias • OPS/OMS • Save the Children •

**ac** TOLIMA

ACNUR • Hias • OIM • OPS/OMS • Profamilia • Save the Children • SNCR •

**ad** VALLE DEL CAUCA

ACNUR • AID FOR AIDS • Americares • Caritas Alemania • Corporación Minuto de Dios • Cuso International • Diakonie • FUPAD • Heartland Alliance • Hias • NRC • OIM • OIT • OPS/OMS • Opción Legal • PNUD • Profamilia • REACH • Save the Children • SNCR • TECHO • WFP • World Vision •

**ae** VAUPÉS

OPS/OMS •

**af** VICHADA

Acción Contra el Hambre • ACNUR • AID FOR AIDS • CISP • Diakonie • DRC • NRC • OIM • OPS/OMS • SNCR • WFP •



Map 6. GIFMM Groups (May 2020)

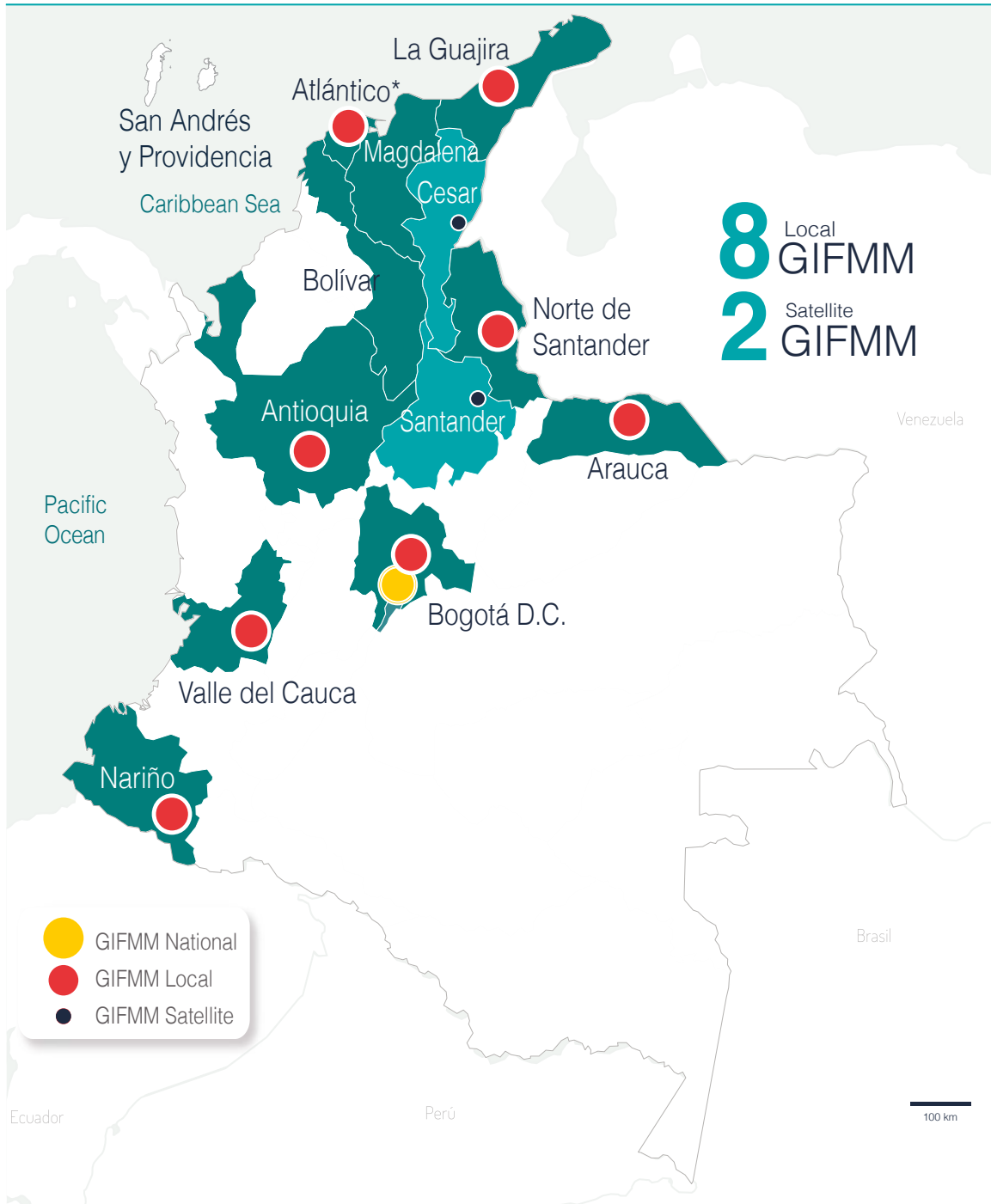
**GIFMM COLOMBIA**  
**OPERATIONAL PRESENCE**  
 2020



**GIFMM**  
 INTERAGENCY GROUP ABOUT  
 MIXED MIGRATORY FLOWS



**RESPONSE FOR  
 VENEZUELANOS**  
 Coordination platforms  
 for Venezuelan Refugees  
 and Migrants.



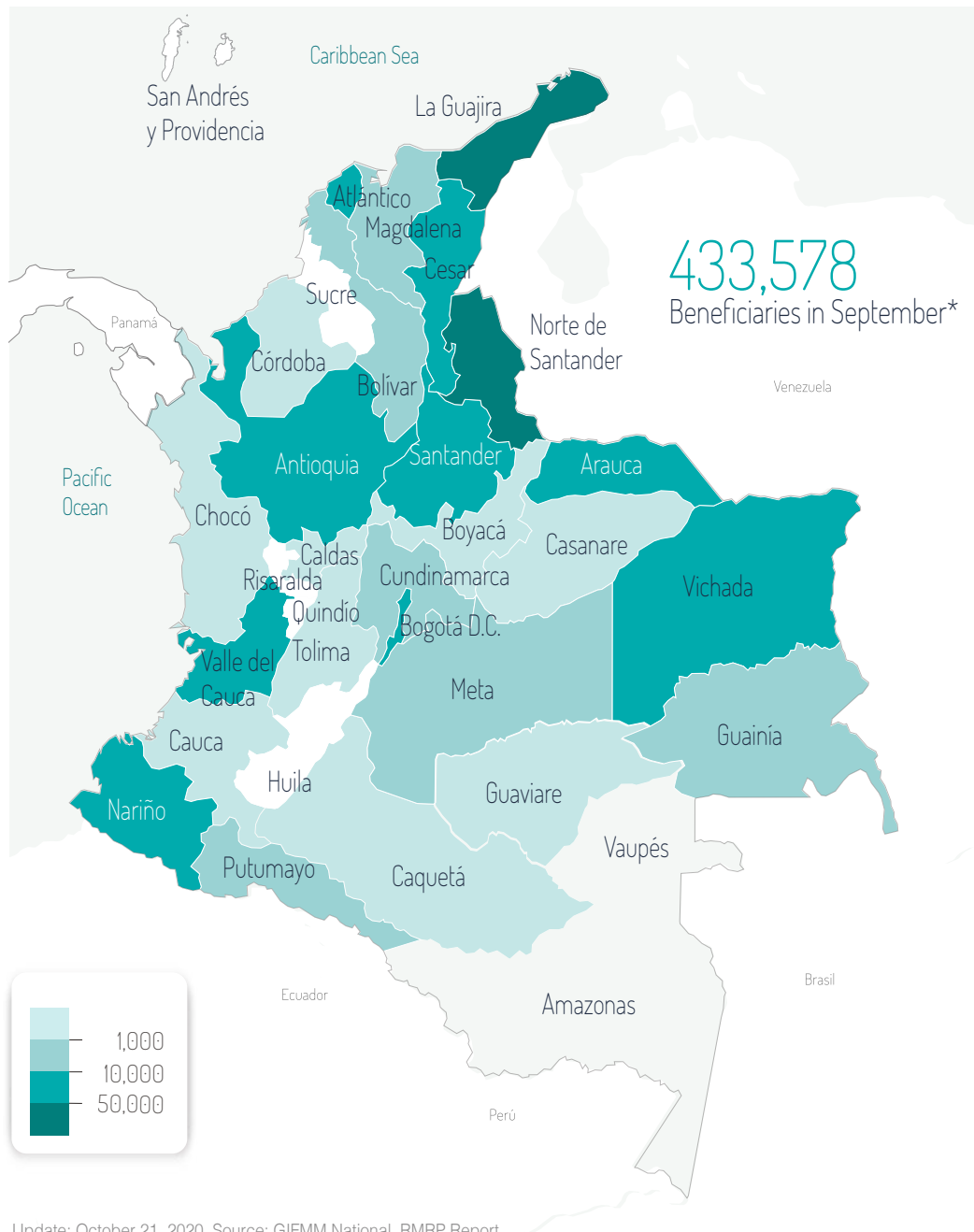
Update: October 21, 2020 Source: GIFMM National \*The Caribbean Coast GIFMM covers Atlántico, Bolívar and Magdalena The Santander Satellite GIFMM is covered by the Norte de Santander GIFMM and the Satellite Cesar GIFMM is covered by La Guajira GIFMM.

Source: R4V Platform. "GIFMM Colombia: Q&A". Looked up in <https://r4v.info/es/documents/download/73132>



Actions taken by the GIFMM go beyond coordinating working tables; the GIFMM acts throughout the country, as evidenced in the following map.

**Map 8. Territorial coverage of actions by the GIFMM (May 2020)**



Update: October 21, 2020 Source: GIFMM National, RMRP Report.  
\*Beneficiaries analyzed by one or more partners assistance during September.

Additionally, the GIFMM has nine sectorial roundtable groups where both members of the GIFMM and government representatives participate:

- Health Sector Group
- Food Security and Nutrition Sector Group (SAN)
- Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Sector Group (WASH)
- Education Sector Group
- Multisector Sector Group
- Group of Monetary Transfers
- Protection Sector Group (which is divided into the Subgroups of Communication with Communities/Communication for Development;

Protection of Children; Gender Violence; Human Trafficking Task force)

- Integration Group

Coordination between the Government of Colombia and the national GIFMM achieved:

- The Country Chapter for Colombia of the Regional Response Plan for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela was designed according to the most pressing needs and prioritized sectors.
- Follow-up and feedback of actions in the field.
- Financing focalization of the Regional Plan.
- Response coordination between cooperation partners and local authorities.



## Coordination Results: Inter-institutional Unit of the Government and Interagency Group on Mixed Migratory Flows [GIFMM] for Cooperation

The Interagency Group on Mixed Immigration Flows (GIFMM) was created in Colombia as requested by the General Secretary of the United Nations to the United Nations High Commission for refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IMO)<sup>68</sup> and in line with the Regional Platform for Coordination (R4V)<sup>69</sup>, in order to coordinate the response to the needs of Venezuelan refugees and migrants, returning Colombians, and host populations. Since then, this space has worked to supplement the government response while working in close collaboration with national authorities and State Institutions and to strengthen the coordination response through its 71 current members on a local and national level, out of which 17 are United Nation Agencies, 48 are National & International Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and 6 are members of the Red Cross Movement..

This shows a great expansion in the reach of its operation, considering that at the end of 2018, the GIFMM was made up of 36 members (15 agencies, 18 NGOs and three members of the Red Cross Movement). The growth of the GIFMM throughout the years has been the result of the needs of thousands of people who have crossed the border, especially those who are

refugees and migrants in conditions of greater vulnerability such as pregnant and breastfeeding women, children and teenagers (particularly children who travel alone), people with chronic diseases or disabilities, cross-border indigenous populations, senior adults, LGT-BI+ population and victims of human trafficking and gender violence. The GIFMM is present in 12 departments throughout eight local coordination platforms and two satellites<sup>70</sup>, in order to address the specific needs of each territory along with the local authorities.

The work of the 71 members of the GIFMM on a national and local level, in support of the National Government, has translated into successful experiences of immigration documentation and regularization, starting with the establishment of the Temporary Residence Permit in the month of August of 2017, a process which the Government has been implementing under eight modalities adapted to specific characteristics and needs of refugees and migrants<sup>71</sup>.

This subject was one of the priorities from the beginning of the joint work with the GIFMM under the leadership of the government, and

<sup>68</sup> For more information, visit: <https://reliefweb.int/report/colombia/regional-inter-agency-coordination-platform-refugees-and-migrants-venezuela>.

<sup>69</sup> The platform for regional coordination promotes a coordinated and coherent response, programmed annually through the Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plans [RMRP], which are strategic documents made from 2019 with a regional coverage. For more details on the context, structure and work plans, visit: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/67013>

<sup>70</sup> Local GIFMMs are territorial expressions of the national platform located in Antioquia, Arauca, Bogotá and in the Caribbean Coast region (spanning Atlántico, Bolívar & Magdalena), Guajira (satellite in Cesar), Nariño, Norte de Santander (satellite in Santander) & Valle del Cauca.

<sup>71</sup> This is in addition to the Administrative Registry of Venezuelan Migrants and the Special Residence Permit (PEP-RAMV), which benefitted more than 442,000 refugees and 281,000 migrants. According to the Official Presidential Bulletin No. 174 from Migration Colombia, up to August 18, 2020, 2,800 new permits have been granted since February 2020 and 97,949 have been renewed. Moreover, 613,158 PEP remain valid.



it was decided to develop initiatives for socioeconomic integration. Efforts have been carried out in close coordination in order to promote integration of Venezuelan migrants and refugees by promoting income generation in these households, including the development of employment routes in the network of Public Service of Employment, by structuring the “*Empleo Sin Fronteras*”<sup>72</sup> (Employment without Borders) webpage and through mechanisms for COVID-19, as well as through promoting the new Special Residence Permit for the Encouraging of Formalization (PEPFF)<sup>73</sup>, through training for local authorities, humanitarian personnel and migrant and refugee populations.

In turn, progress was made in attention routes for the prevention and protection of Migrants and refugees, as well as in support for projects and business ventures to strengthen community initiatives while promoting population participation, including the host communities, to design solutions and proposals for local integration, and to start an operation system to include Venezuelan healthcare professionals as supporting personnel to address the emergency caused by COVID-19.

In terms of protection and working hand in hand with the Human Rights Ombudsman’s Office, the mechanics for prevention and mitigation of protection risks for Venezuelan refugees and migrants arriving in Colombia, and along with the protection partners, 89 support spaces were created<sup>74</sup>. For many people, these spaces gave them access to medical check-ups, vaccinations for their children, the chance to make a phone call to speak with their loved ones across the border, get a hot meal and get hydrated, and to receive orientation to continue on their way.

The crisis made it necessary to create spaces and lodging which could help alleviate the needs of walkers and refugees and migrants living on the streets who have basic unsatisfied needs and are exposed to risks for longer periods of time, and said initiatives were pioneered in this region. The Comprehensive Care Center (CAI) in Maicao (La Guajira), managed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Office, the Mayor’s Office and the National Unit for Disaster Risk Management (UNGRD) was an interagency effort that has cared for 3,705 vulnerable people since March 2019 with specific protection needs. They have received lodging, food, medical check-ups and first aid, help to contact relatives, psychosocial support, legal counseling and orientation, due to the contributions from different humanitarian donors. The Center for Provisional Attention for Migrants (CATM) in Villa del Rosario (Norte de Santander) is another example of interagency work coordinated with local authorities.

<sup>72</sup> Ministry of Labor. Website “Empleo sin Fronteras”. Available at: <https://www.mintrabajo.gov.co/web/empleosinfronteras>

<sup>73</sup> Ministry of Labor. Website. PEPFF. Available at: <https://www.mintrabajo.gov.co/empleo-y-pensiones/movilidad-y-formacion/grupo-de-gestion-de-la-politica-de-migracion-laboral/pepff> | Presidency. Decree 117 from January 28, 2020. Available at: <https://dapre.presidencia.gov.co/normativa/normativa/DECRETO%20117%20DEL%2028%20DE%20ENERO%20DE%202020.pdf>

<sup>74</sup> UNHCR (October 24, 2019). GIFMM Colombia: Espacios de apoyo. Available at: <https://r4v.info/es/documents/details/71950>; Plataforma Regional (R4V). Available at: <https://espacios.r4v.info/es/map>.

Since 2018 this center provides provisional housing to migrants and refugees. Considering the health emergency, the center has been adapted as a place to isolate possible cases of COVID-19 while providing comprehensive services to the population. Likewise, the National Border Assistance Center (CENAF), located at the Simón Bolívar International bridge (Norte de Santander) operates with the presence of seven GIFMM partners<sup>75</sup> that provide services in attention and orientation, first aid, psychology, sexual and reproductive health, primary healthcare, vaccination, environments to protect children, water, sanitation and hygiene, medicine delivery and contacting people at an average of 400 people the day before the COVID-19 emergency was declared. More recently, and as an example of adaptation of services due to the lockdown measures, the *Tienditas* Center of Sanitary Attention (CAST) in Cúcuta, under the leadership of the Government of Norte de Santander and the Presidency, provides healthcare, water, sanitation and hygiene, and protection and orientation for 400 - 450 people a day. As a result of a joint effort with inter-religious sector entities such as the Clamor Network, the Foundation for Assistance to Migrants (FAMIG), the Social Pastoral entity, the Archdioceses and the Churches, it was possible to create dignified spaces for many families that lacked a place to stay. They now have spaces that provide help and psycho-emotional attention.

On the other hand, work was done with the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare (ICBF) to include unaccompanied and separated children, for which special protection guidelines and directives were created. More than 110 Spaces for the Protection of Childhood were established between the partners throughout the country with the objective of providing boys and girls, including refugees and migrants, a safe

place. They ensured that those with a desire to stay could access education through the routes decreed by the Ministry of Education, while also ensuring local projects that resulted in the Education Cannot Wait<sup>76</sup> project.

In order to ensure registration and right to nationality, the government designed various projects, including its project with the National Registry of Civil Status by issuing Resolution 8470 of 2019<sup>77</sup>, Law 1997 of 2019<sup>78</sup> and leading the “Childhood First”<sup>79</sup>, initiative and reiterating its commitment to prevent and eradicate statelessness<sup>80</sup>. During these years of work, it was possible to consolidate a comprehensive outlook towards gender violence by identifying specific risks to refugee and migrant women (including human trafficking) and to people with diverse sexual orientations and identities, and to develop effective response mechanisms on a territorial level, as well as joint prevention work with the National Police Force, the host communities, and migration authorities.

<sup>75</sup> High Commissioner of the United Nations for Refugees, International Organization for Migrations, Norwegian Council for Refugees, National Society of the Colombian Red Cross, United Nations Fund for Infancy, Halü Foundation and the Pan-American Health Organization.

<sup>76</sup> The *Education Cannot Wait* project, implemented under the World Fund with the same name, gathers four national and international organizations (Save the Children, PLAN Foundation, World Vision & the Norwegian Council for Refugees), recognized by working for girls, boys and teenagers from the country in context of Migration, aims to provide access to quality education to 969 refugees and migrant girls, boys and teenagers, and 1.000 teachers in the departments of Guajira, Norte de Santander, Arauca, Bolívar, Atlántico & Magdalena. Learn more here: <https://www.educationcannotwait.org/tag/colombia/>

<sup>77</sup> National Registry of Vital Records. Resolution 8470 from August 5 of 2019. Available at: [https://www.registraduria.gov.co/IMG/pdf/resolucion\\_8470.pdf](https://www.registraduria.gov.co/IMG/pdf/resolucion_8470.pdf)

<sup>78</sup> Presidency. Law 1997 from September 16 of 2019. Available at: <https://dapre.presidencia.gov.co/normativa/normativa/LEY%201997%20DEL%2016%20DE%20SEPTIEMBRE%20DE%202019.pdf>

<sup>79</sup> Migration Colombia. Childhood First. Website available at: <https://www.migracioncolombia.gov.co/primerolaninez/>

<sup>80</sup> Resolution 8470 of 2019, as an administrative measure, has allowed for the confirmation of Colombian Nationality for 47.277 boys and girls born in Colombia, children of Venezuelan parents, up to July 26 of 2020.

Maybe one of the main challenges was to ensure access to food and healthcare for the population coming from Venezuela. Soup kitchens remain one of the most necessary services, and served more than 139,000 people per month before COVID-19, and, in a few cases temporary housing has been provided with the inter-sector impact this entails. In the face of the situation caused by COVID-19, health care attention and social protection, which was already a priority beforehand for refugees and migrants— took on a new dimension and, in coordination with the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, the National Institute of Health and with local health authorities, Healthcare Working Groups were activated, strengthened and accompanied to identify breaches and to design and implement joint routes of attention, both in person and virtual that follow bio-safety measures. With joint actions between the members of the GIFMM and the Government, more than 422,100 persons have been benefitted throughout the country this year.

The coordination between the GIFMM and the Government through the Inter-Institutional Unit<sup>81</sup>, the Migration Working Groups and the Unified Command Post (PMU)<sup>82</sup>, clearly evidences a fruitful coordination at all levels and a clear interest by the government towards generating spaces to coordinate and position the refugee and migrant crisis in the Public Agenda. This synergy was also evidenced through the joint work to create the Colombian chapter of the Regional Plans for Response to Refugees and Migrants (RMRP) for 2019 and 2020, including the revision of the latter, given the change in context

due to COVID-19<sup>83</sup>, which has been essential to draw attention towards the situation on a regional and national level, generate resources, the direct involvement of the Government in international stages for the movement of funds<sup>84</sup> and planning with other countries in the region in the framework of the Quito Process<sup>85</sup>.

This joint work has also advanced the development of contingency plans in case borders are closed, as well as react in a timely manner to emergencies in places where the presence of the GIFMM partners is limited: Casanare, Vichada, Guainía, Boyacá and Santander, for example. In turn, the GIFMM recognizes the work of the government in ensuring that the local plans include a refugee and migrant approach, and the involvement of Migración Colombia in addressing the Mixed Immigration Flow phenomenon.

COVID-19 has been, without a doubt, the greatest Challenge, since it has aggravated the situation of Venezuelan refugees and migrants, returning Colombians and host communities, and has put even more pressure on the Healthcare and Social Protection systems. On this front, the GIFMM keeps working with its members in order to adapt its online attention due to lockdown and bio-safety measures in order to reach the

<sup>81</sup> Sole Instance of Inter-Institutional coordination under the Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia, and made up by the Presidency, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Presidential Agency for Cooperation [APC].

<sup>82</sup> Unified Command Post, initially located in Cúcuta with coverage on all the frontier, and which was later decentralized to Guajira & Arauca.

<sup>83</sup> UNHCR (2019), Response Plan to Refugees and Migrants. RMRP. Available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/es/documents/details/68669>; UNHCR (March, 2020), RMRP 2020. For Refugees and Migrants. Available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/es/documents/details/74747>; Summary Colombia. Available at: <https://r4v.info/es/documents/details/72303>; RMRP 2020 (revised COVID-19). Available at: <https://r4v.info/es/documents/details/77581>.

<sup>84</sup> International Conference of Donators in solidarity with Venezuelan refugees and migrants (May 26, 2020). Summary, main results and information related with the conference available at: <https://bit.ly/2FBOyRZ>.

<sup>85</sup> ACNUR (November 18, 2019). ACNUR and IOM celebrate advances of the Quito Process in response to the crisis of Venezuelan refugees and migrants. Available at: <https://www.acnur.org/noticias/press/2019/11/5dd-29f8f4/acnur-y-oim-celebran-avances-del-proceso-de-quito-en-respuesta-a-la-crisis.html>



population, prioritize their needs, and provide remote attention to prevent contagion by the virus. To achieve this, a virtual approach to provide water, sanitation and hygiene, health, food security, monetary transfers, lodging and protection has been a priority.

The economic impact of this sanitary emergency has been devastating for refugees and migrants, since they do not have any income or means to sustain themselves, and more than 1,100 people have been evicted from their homes. The effects of COVID-19 have created profound needs for food (around 95%), housing (between 50% and 66%) and employment and opportunities for subsistence (between 45% and 53%)<sup>86</sup>. Ensuring economic recovery to avoid losing what has already been obtained in terms of livelihood and stabilization, as well as ensuring socioeconomic integration despite the exacerbation of xenophobia and peaceful coexistence due to the impacts of COVID-19, will continue to be priorities for the GIFMM.

On the other hand, more support is needed for the Regional Plan for Response to Refugees and Migrants (RMRP). Despite the contributions received, the low funding for the plan, at 61.4% (US 193 million) for 2019 and 15.1% for the time elapsed in 2020 (USD 117.98 million<sup>87</sup>), continues to be a challenge. This, together with the fact that humanitarian needs continue to grow and new profiles with specific needs are starting to appear, such as the people who decided to return to Venezuela and for whom a reentry to Colombia is expected, evicted people who are living on the streets, and the people living in places where there is presence of illegal armed groups, particularly in the border where different dynamics of territorial control and mining exploitation are starting to take place.

<sup>86</sup> GIFMM Colombia. Joint Evaluation of Needs (Ronda 1, April 2020 | Ronda 2, April 2020).

<sup>87</sup> *Financial Tracking System* – OCHA. Up to August 17 of 2020.

### 3. Participation of Colombia in international scenarios of fund raising to address migration

On October 28 and 29, 2019, the International Solidarity Conference on the Venezuelan Refugee and Migrant Crisis was held in Brussels. The objective of this event was to draw attention to the serious effects of Venezuelan migration, which currently represents the second most critical migration in the world.

Donor countries, as well as United Nations Agencies and other actors, participated in this conference. Colombia was the main host country. As a result, the need was established to organize a platform to mobilize resources from international technical and financial cooperation and to hold a Donors Conference in the first semester of 2020.

Thus, on May 26 of 2020 the Conference of Donors for Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants was held in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. This conference was co-organized by the IOM, UNHCR, Spain, and the European Union, among others. The president of the Republic, Iván Duque Márquez, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Claudia Blum intervened during the conference and presented the work done by the Colombian State to address all the migrants in providing basic goods, especially during the pandemic, as well as a call to search for ways to quickly use mobilized resources.

As a result of the Conference, announcements were made for both donations and credits for € 2,500 million (USD 2.7 billion), given by donor countries

including the European Union, Spain, Germany and Canada, and International Financial Institutions. Most of the announcements mentioned that the funds collected would be used to finance the Regional Plan for Refugees and Migrants (RMRP), to supplement the response of the host countries in Latin America, the region that is most affected by the immigration phenomenon.

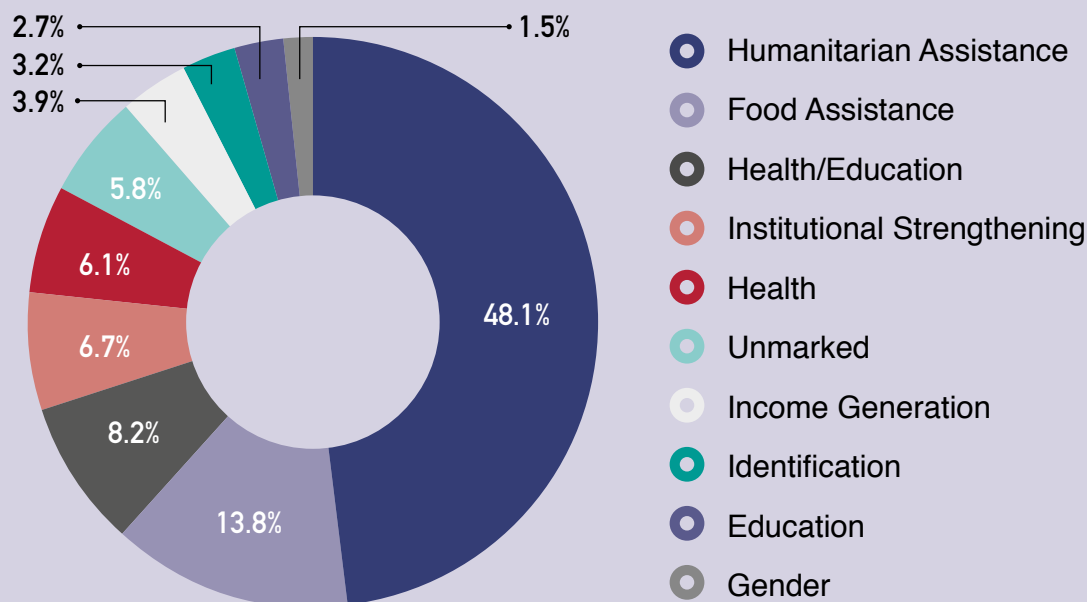
It is important to mention that some donor countries specifically highlighted the work of Colombia in accepting the migrants and announced that their contributions would be destined directly towards the humanitarian attention of Venezuelans and host communities.

Likewise, Canada stated that it would organize the next International Conference to mobilize support of the community around this immigration phenomenon.

Between 2018 and 2020, a total of USD 487,118,362 was mobilized towards addressing the migrants coming from Venezuela into Colombia. Out of this amount, USD 350 million have already been paid, while USD 137 million correspond to pending payment announcements. On the other hand, the international community has contributed through donations and announcements of financing in which Colombia is included, of approximately USD 21 million. The main donor has been the United States, followed by the European Union and Canada, and the main intervention areas have been humanitarian attention and food (Graph 11).



**Graph 11. Resources received from international cooperation, by sector (2018 - 2020)**



Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July, 2020.

#### 4. The Quito Process: The search for agreement and harmonization of the regional response to Venezuelan migration

The National Government considers it to be appropriate to promote through mechanisms of regional integration and agreement an exchange of information on the best practices and information on caring for immigration flows while seeking, as much as possible, to coordinate and organize measures to address the situation of Venezuelan Migrants with a humanitarian approach, thus ensuring their rights in conditions of vulnerability.

In this dialogue, the countries most affected by these circumstances (Colombia among them) agreed on the need to organize a response plan implemented on a national level aimed to design, if possible, a joint response to face the effects of migration in the region.

This is how the common points can be identified:

- The need to exchange information on the flows of Venezuelan migrants in the region.
- According to the national legislation and regulations, to strive for the regularization of these migrants.
- Prevent Venezuelan migrants from falling victim to human trafficking.
- Fight discrimination and stereotypes towards migrant population.
- Highlight the importance of bilateral and multi-lateral international cooperation to face the crises and provide humanitarian assistance and attention to the migrant population in Host States.

- Offer the migrants attention in healthcare, education and humanitarian assistance, with special emphasis on girls, boys and adolescents (NNA).

This is how, by initiative of the Government of Ecuador, the Regional Meeting on Human Mobility of Venezuelan Citizens in the Americas was organized in September of 2018. It was technical in nature, with discussions surrounding, among other subjects, the documentation and regularization of Venezuelan Nationals, cases of vulnerability, prevention of human trafficking, and socioeconomic integration of migrants.

Within the framework of this meeting, the Colombian representatives in charge of Immigration, Consular and Citizen Service Matters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs drew attention to the greater impact that the Venezuelan exodus and pendulum migration had on Colombia.

As a result of this encounter, the Quito Declaration on Human Mobility of Venezuelan Citizens in the Region<sup>88</sup>, was signed, which lists the main commonalities of these countries concerning the immigration phenomenon and its impact, as well as recognizing the importance of establishing concrete actions for its attention, starting with the Quito Process.

This initiative doubtlessly represents a very important impulse in the search to coordinate and harmonize responses to migration from Venezuela, which motivated Ecuador to organize a second encounter in November of 2018, which was formally called “International Technical Meeting on Human Mobility of Venezuelan Citizens in the Region,” resulting in an Action Plan<sup>89</sup> aimed at materializing the contents of the Declaration subscribed in September of that year.

<sup>88</sup> Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Colombia. “The Technical Meeting of Human Mobility held in Ecuador ended”. September 4, 2018. Available at: <https://www.cancilleria.gov.co/en/newsroom/news/finalizo-reunion-tecnica-movilidad-humana-celebrada-ecuador>.

<sup>89</sup> *Action Plan on Human Mobility of Venezuelan citizens in the Region*. November 23, 2018. Available at: <https://r4v.info/es/documents/download/68101>.

The Plan includes 10 commitments and 22 actions orientated mainly towards:

- Articulating mechanisms which facilitate the regular permanence of Venezuelan migrants.
- Coordinating the regularization processes in the region.
- Providing humanitarian assistance towards Venezuela.
- Establishing and strengthening international cooperation through multilateral entities with the countries in the region.
- Defining the role of the CAN, Mercosur and SE-GIB within the process.
- With the accompanying of the OAS, coordinating a response aimed towards the prevention of human trafficking of migrants.
- Including the topic of exodus from Venezuela in the Work Plan of the South American Conference on Migrations (CSM) and the Regional Conference on Migrations (Central America, the Caribbean and North America).

From that moment, the Quito Process started to have a relevant role as a regional mechanism, highlighting its voluntary and technical nature, which facilitates the possibility of dialogues and consensus removed from the political stances each country may have on the political and social situation of Venezuela.

This is how a third encounter was carried out in April 2019 that highlighted the importance and the



urgent need for bilateral and multilateral international cooperation to support both national and regional responses. Likewise, emphasis was made on the need to have greater support from the international community through non-refundable funds and more immediate access to contribute in a solidary manner the attention that the host and transit countries (Colombia is considered both) are providing to Venezuelan migrants<sup>90</sup>.

In July 2019, the Process changed its headquarters and the fourth encounter was carried out in Buenos Aires, where various initiatives were proposed to further harmonize measures to respond to the situation, among them a single document for the transit of migrants, as well as the exchange of information between authorities which not only includes information regarding immigration status but also information concerning vaccination, and more. By the end of the encounter, a series of guidelines were agreed upon to prioritize the actions contained within the Quito Work Plan and materialize these proposals in a shorter term<sup>91</sup>.

Within the framework of this encounter, and by initiative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Colombia offered to be the host for the fifth encounter, which constitutes a key opportunity to allow the discussion of priority topics concerning documentation before immigration provisions. Some States had made this decision individually, and while this may be a sovereign decision, it has regional effects and especially leaves migrants in a condition of even greater vulnerability. Additionally, the meeting in Bogotá was set in a context of social protests in various countries in the region and incidents with public order, which leave migrants in a difficult situation due to possible outbursts of xenophobia and the risk of them being blamed for these incidents.

<sup>90</sup> *Joint Declaration of the III International Technical Meeting on Human Mobility of Venezuelan Citizens in the Region*. April 9, 2019. Available at: <https://www.refworld.org/es/pdfid/5cec7e4e4.pdf>.

<sup>91</sup> *Joint Declaration of the IV International Technical Meeting on Human Mobility of Venezuelan Citizens in the Region*. July 5, 2019. Available at: <https://r4v.info/es/documents/details/70300>.

This is how Colombia became the host of the fifth meeting, which allowed them to not only re-launch the Quito Process, but also to stand out among accompanying countries and agencies by highlighting its maturity and consolidation as a regional example of coordination in terms of great immigration flows, underlining, among others<sup>92</sup>:

- The adoption, on a national level, of measures meant to recognize expired Venezuelan passports.
- Presentation of a regional vaccination card.
- Advances towards implementing a regional platform for the exchange of immigration information.
- The internal evaluation of the States for the adoption of the Protocol for Attention to Unaccompanied Girls, Boys and Adolescents.
- The follow-up to the agreements of the meetings of the Ministers of Labor concerning the socio-economic inclusion of migrants.
- Evaluate the adoption of minimum services and procedures in Orientation Centers and Centers of Temporary Reception.
- The presentation of the Reference Terms for the constitution and functioning of the Group of Friends of the Quito Process.
- Motivating Mexico and Uruguay to subscribe to the declaration despite their political differences towards the Venezuelan matter by reiterating the purely technical nature of the Process.
- The proposal to create a Technical Secretariat with support from the IOM and the UNHCR which allows for follow-up and thematic commitments and initiatives converging in the Quito Process (childhood, documentation, prevention of trafficking, sanitary measures, etc.)

<sup>92</sup> *Joint Declaration of the V International Technical Meeting on Human Mobility of Venezuelan Citizens in the Region*. November 14, 2019. Available at: <https://www.cancilleria.gov.co/sites/default/files/quitov.pdf>.



With this momentum, the Process continues its progress, now under the supervision of Chile, the country which will host the sixth meeting with the challenge of continuing advances in a context that is even more challenging as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, resorting even to the use of technology to facilitate the continuity of dialogues and organized work.

## Shared Goals: a strong partnership

**Lawrence J. Sacks**

USAID/Colombia Mission Director

“Welcome to Colombia.” This is what the sign says when you cross the Simon Bolivar bridge to enter Cúcuta. Due to one of the worst political and economic crises in Venezuela, since 2015 Colombia has been facing an immigration flow never before seen in the country’s history. Nearly two million people, including Venezuelans and Colombians, are fleeing the neighboring country because of political persecution, the breakdown of democracy, and the lack of opportunities to feed not only their families but also to fulfill the dream of having a better life in Colombian territory. It is heartbreaking to hear the stories of the migrants who walk to Colombia from Venezuela to escape hyperinflation, lack of medical care and violence that is increasing every day in the country. And, as it says on the sign, “Colombia has opened its border, its doors and its heart to its Venezuelan neighbors and we have witnessed that great effort and compassion.”

The suffering we see on the faces of the thousands of families crossing the border should call us all to action. The United States and Colombia have a strong partnership to fight for the rights of Venezuelans. For Colombia, supporting migrants from Venezuela is a challenge in financial and social terms that complements the efforts of

the country to generate hope and opportunities for the most vulnerable Colombians, including victims of the conflict.

For this reason, the United States makes the commitment to accompany the Government of Colombia in addressing the humanitarian emergency, stabilization, and the longer-term goal of integrating the migrant population as the country’s economic driver. We know that the vast majority of migrants are young, hard-working, have sacrificed much to leave their countries and come in search of opportunities. This is something that millions of Colombians also did en masse in the 1980s and 1990s when they migrated in search of work opportunities in Venezuela. While this seems like a difficult challenge, studies by Oxford University and the World Bank suggest that, if managed correctly, migration can bring great benefits to the economic and cultural development of host communities in Colombia.

### Colombia, a model country regarding care of migrants

In five years of migration from Venezuela, Colombia went from being a country of emigrants to becoming a model for the region in receiving immigrants. The will to carry out massive regularization processes, as we saw with the registration of more than 442,000 Venezuelans 2018,

the historic decision to grant nationality to the more than 45,000 Venezuelan children born in Colombia, the recognition of the universal right of children to guarantee access to education and health, and the efforts to create economic opportunities and improve the income of the migrant population, demonstrate the solidarity of the Colombian government with the brothers and sisters from Venezuela.

We have seen that hospitals such as Erasmo Meoz in Cúcuta have adapted with great effort to deal with the increase in deliveries and other emergencies within the migrant community. On one of our visits in 2017, we saw patients crowded into hospital corridors waiting for medical attention and how the staff was barely able to cope with the most vulnerable. We saw the pressing needs but also the efforts to optimize the resources available to care for these people without discrimination of identity or nationality. We saw solidarity, brotherhood and, above all, hope. At that moment we understood that it was necessary to act.

What Colombia has done shows a strong political will that is backed by strong actions that are an example not only for the region, but for the world. At a time when many countries are already feeling the economic and social impact of the coronavirus, Colombia is successfully facing those same challenges, and others like them, with enormous generosity.

## Response to the Emergency

From the beginning of the crisis, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) supported the Colombian government and host communities in addressing the first and most urgent needs of migrants. On the border with Venezuela and along the walkers' route, we have seen how desperate families have left everything behind in search of things as simple as food.

To date, we have provided food assistance to approximately 600,000 people and more than

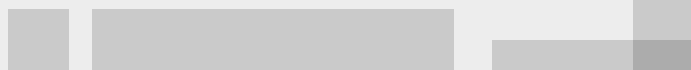
12,000 migrant children in border schools. President Duque's initiative to establish an office for the coordination of the immigration crisis with a manager from the Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia demonstrated the interest and urgency of the National Government to respond to the needs of the municipalities most affected by migration. This leadership on the part of the Colombian government provided us with the inputs to ensure that our assistance through NGOs, international organizations, and contractors could effectively reach the most vulnerable persons.

## Opening Opportunities for Development

Hand in hand with Colombia's national and local government and recognizing that the vast majority of migrants from Venezuela have come to stay, we have expanded our aid to include a focus on medium- and long-term processes. Our assistance now goes beyond meeting immediate life-saving needs and is focused on promoting long-term development in critical areas such as governance and the improvement of information systems that empower local actors and generate comprehensive solutions.

It is clear that not everyone feels a connection with migrants and one of the consequences we are observing with concern is intolerance and xenophobia towards Venezuelans. We have seen that the lack of integration of immigrants in some countries has increased crime and that inclusion has been a great investment to fight social challenges. To prevent xenophobia and promote inclusion, we are working with local governments and receiving communities to implement cultural or artistic activities to combat stigmatization and rejection in cities such as Cúcuta and Riohacha, where large numbers of migrants are located.

We are also working to ensure that minors coming from Venezuela have access to educational centers and under the same conditions as Colombian students. For example, we not only



support the provision of school meals in places like La Guajira, but we also strengthen committees of teachers, parents of Venezuelan students, and the host community to mitigate tensions and improve learning within the schools. These efforts are aimed at avoiding a cycle of dependency that we have seen in other immigration experiences around the world and promoting greater integration for the good of the community, rebuilding trust and strengthening the social fabric.

The added value of USAID is the improvement of these systems and the State policies towards inclusion. In what regards governance, with the increase of users in the health and education systems, USAID launched two new projects focused on strengthening not only the policies and capacities of the Ministries of Health and Education, but also the links to facilitate the implementation of these national policies in the municipalities. These programs that strengthen local capacity, as well as those we are implementing in Norte de Santander, La Guajira, Arauca, Cartagena, Santa Marta, Ciénaga, Cali, and Medellín, are investments that help improve the management and transparency with which public resources are executed in these municipalities.

One of the difficulties faced by many service providers such as doctors and officials of Migración Colombia or the Public Employment Service is the lack of information for these officials to know what the rights and processes are for serving the migrant population. For this reason, USAID is working with Migración Colombia to implement a new biometric system to have better control over migration and more updated data on those entering the country. And, together with the civil society, we are supporting the implementation of justice mechanisms to guarantee the rights of the migrant population and Colombian returnees.

## The Road Ahead

In the United States there is a saying: the mind is a terrible thing to waste, but a wonderful thing to invest in. One of the situations experienced by Venezuelan migrants who, in recent years, have settled in Colombia is the search for an income that will allow them to establish themselves and provide a better quality of life. To respond to this need, our next steps are focused on working at the local level to support the economic fabric of the border departments and where there is the greatest concentration of migrants. We are supporting a strategy that seeks the financial inclusion of the migrant population, simplifying the processes of opening bank accounts and offering financial education to those who need it most. This represents an opportunity to contribute to the economy to thrive and take advantage of the capacity and skills of the migrant population to promote economic development in the most vulnerable areas. With these new projects, Colombia is demonstrating strong political will, which is backed by strong actions that are an example not only for the region but for the world.

In a world where many countries already face difficult economic times due to the coronavirus pandemic, Colombia is demonstrating that, despite the enormous challenges the country faces domestically, its generosity knows no bounds. It is this generosity that has led us to reinforce our commitment to help Colombian society, and that includes their brothers and sisters in Venezuela, in their efforts to the advancement of peace and development in the country. We see this as an opportunity to improve not only the health and education systems, but also to use migration as a tool for economic revival in Colombia.



## The contributions of multilateral banking

The Colombian Government has also worked hand in hand with multilateral banks to obtain resources with the objective of financing the attention and integration for migrants, refugees and returning Colombians. Multilateral banking has responded effectively both with loans and with non-refundable resources, as well as with technical assistance for projects with specific guidelines for handling the immigration phenomenon.

### World Bank

Since the beginning of the Venezuelan exodus, the World Bank has used its global expertise to respond to situations of human mobility and to support host countries in the process of integrating this population. In particular, it has supported the Colombian Government with analytical capacity, financial and technical assistance and convening power, and positively impacting the response to the unprecedented situation in the country.

In terms of analysis, in October 2018, the World Bank published the report *Migration from Venezuela to Colombia. Impacts and response strategy in the medium and long term*<sup>93</sup> that analyzes the social, sectoral and economic effects that the sustained migration of people from Venezuela is having in Colombia and proposes a strategic framework of response to the migration phenomenon. This study was a fundamental step in understanding in greater depth the impact of migration to date, creating a road map of actions and public policies that would make it possible to face the challenges and take advantage of the benefits of this phenomenon. This report was an important contribution to preparing CONPES 3950 and including the migration issue in the National Development Plan 2018-2022.

<sup>93</sup> International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and World Bank (October 2018), report “Migration from Venezuela to Colombia. Impacts and response strategy in the medium and long term”. Available at: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/30651/131472SP.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y>

Furthermore, it became an international model for similar analyses in Peru and Ecuador. In addition to this report, the World Bank is currently supporting efforts to systematically collect and analyze information on Venezuelan migrants, with the help of the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE) and the Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia.

In terms of financial support, in January 2019, Colombia became a beneficiary of the *Global Concessional Financing Facility (GCFF)*, becoming the first country outside the Middle East to access this fund<sup>94</sup>. The GCFF is the effort of multiple donors that seek to support development in middle income countries affected by the refugee crises, with the World Bank playing the role of managing these resources. This mechanism mobilizes grants funding to complement credit from multilateral banks or other financial institutions oriented to improve infrastructure and service in migrant recipient regions through development projects. The funds mobilized are used to significantly reduce interest rates on resources requested by recipient countries to the World Bank or other financial institutions.

Likewise, the World Bank financial support to respond to migration in Colombia has consisted of four funding projects, including two approved projects and two to be approved in the coming weeks. To date, a total of USD 937.6 million has been approved by the Bank's board of directors, including USD 69.1 million in GCFF concessional resources. Another one for approximately USD 140.5 million is in the process of being approved, including USD 21.8 million in GCFF concessional funding, USD 15 million in non-reimbursable resources from the Global Public Goods Fund (GPG), and a USD 3.7 million grant from the State and Peacebuilding Fund (SPF)<sup>95</sup>. Once these resources are approved, the Bank would have mobilized a total of USD 107.81 billion in financial resources, including USD 109.6 million in grants through the aforementioned funds.

<sup>94</sup> See: <https://globalcff.org/>.

<sup>95</sup> See: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/state-and-peace-building-fund>

Additional resources could be mobilized in the coming months through a fifth project aimed at supporting the country's response to the pandemic, which could include activities aimed at the migrant population in Colombia.

The first project, approved in 2019, includes support for government policies for the regularization and integration of Venezuelan migrants, through the development and approval of CONPES 3950. Also, support will be given to regularize 442,462 Venezuelan migrants identified through the Administrative Registry of Venezuelan Migrants in Colombia (RAMV). This project obtained USD 750 million in funding from the World Bank, which includes co-financing with non-reimbursable resources from the GCFF for USD 31.5 million.

The second project, for a total amount of USD 187.6 million (including USD 37.6 million in concessional financing from the GCFF), is aimed at improving the health system and increasing the number of migrants affiliated with the General System of Social Security in Health (SGSSS), increasing access of this population to such services while reducing the costs of care that the State must cover. It is estimated that the project will include 260,000 migrants. In parallel with mobilizing GCFF funds, the World Bank has provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Health to identify sustainable health interventions for Venezuelan migrants in Colombia and thus contribute to the creation and exchange of global and regional knowledge regarding health in contexts of Fragility, Conflict & Violence (FCV).

The third project, which is in the process of being prepared, is aimed at increasing access to decent housing for migrants and host communities, with a total funding of approximately USD 136.8 million including advance co-financing of non-reimbursable resources from the GCFF for USD 21.8 million and USD 15 million from the GPG. The project is aimed at (i) improving housing for Colombians who rent spaces to Venezuelans in regions with high immigration impact and rental subsidies for migrants; (ii) improving urban infrastructure in communities with high immigration impact; (iii) providing institutional support and

adequate technical assistance for the socioeconomic integration of migrants.

Finally, in light of COVID-19 and the economic effects of the pandemic, the World Bank mobilized USD 3.7 million in non-reimbursable resources to finance unconditional cash transfers to the vulnerable migrant population, complementing the national government's efforts aimed at the Colombian population. These resources will be implemented in partnership with the World Food Program (WFP) and benefit some 75,500 migrants in the country. In addition, this project will also give technical support to the Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia to improve coordination of emergency responses to COVID-19 and the integration of the migrant population in the country's recovery efforts. Such support includes the implementation of innovative solutions for social cohesion and the fight against xenophobia, such as the promotion of positive interactions between Venezuelans and Colombians in the context of the pandemic, creating opportunities to reduce misperceptions about this population.

In addition to these funding resources, the Bank has managed non-reimbursable financial resources of over USD 3 million through bilateral donors such as Canada, or funds such as the SPE, to provide technical assistance in response to migration from Venezuela. Most of these resources have been executed jointly with the Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia, focusing on addressing needs in four main areas:

- 1. Strengthening of the institutional and public policy framework**, which seeks to reinforce high-level coordination, institutional adaptation, and data collection and management. Also, technical assistance is provided to other government entities, particularly those overburdened due to migration, including key sectors such as health, education, labor and housing, and others. In addition, a strategy for coordinating technological solutions is being developed in order to have an updated information repository for migration management, humanitarian assistance, and the social and economic integration of migrants.



## 2. Increasing the resilience of key sectors and recipient regions.

As part of this technical assistance, the World Bank and the Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia worked together with the Mayors and local stakeholders in Mai-cao, Villa del Rosario, and Arauca City to design specific municipal response plans to address the migration phenomenon. In order to design the strategy, an analysis was conducted on the local multi-sector and inter-institutional immigration response under three perspectives: what has been done well and has generated good responses; what lessons have been learned from the actions taken; what are the bottlenecks that still persist, and based on the situational diagnosis, the action plan was formulated for each of the sectors and population groups covered. The action plan, entitled *Municipal Plan of Response to Migration from Venezuela (PMR)*, was delivered to each mayor for implementation during the following years. Each PMR addresses in 30 lines of action and 60 projects, 5 sectors and 3 population approaches foreseen in the CONPES 3950 of 2018 and a cross-cutting

axis; these will allow the territorial entities to implement an integral strategy in the short, medium and long term. In addition, together with the Ministry of Labor, the Public Employment Service, the IOM and the SENA (National Training Service), a mapping of Critical Occupations (LOC) was carried out at a national level, which was then replicated at the territorial level for three cities interested in developing projects for labor inclusion of migrants: Cúcuta, Barranquilla and Armenia. These results complemented the exercise by the IOM to identify jobs (vacancies), for which it was difficult to obtain labor supply. The intersection and complementarity of both methodologies led to the current work on unifying them into a single national methodology that will serve as technical support for the development of programs and projects aimed at labor inclusion of migrants and identification of skills gaps that can be filled by entities such as SENA.

## 3. Assistance to highly-vulnerable migrants.

This assistance would be aimed at developing differentiated standards to care for particularly



vulnerable populations, which could include children, women or indigenous people.

**4. Knowledge, strategic communications and policy dialogue.** The World Bank has been providing comprehensive technical assistance to the Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia by carrying out a study of the positions and perceptions of Colombian citizens towards Venezuelan migrants, the impacts of their arrival and the government's response to this phenomenon. Based on this analysis, a communications strategy was designed that addresses, in a comprehensive manner, the context, implications, government efforts, and social circumstances that this migration brings to Colombia. Finally, the World Bank will be supporting the implementation of this strategy, improving the conditions for social and economic integration between the local and migrant populations in the main recipient regions.

#### Inter-American Development Bank [IDB]

Considering the growing importance of immigration processes in the economies of the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, in October 2018 the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) developed the Initiative for Migrations (MIG), an interdisciplinary work group aimed at supporting countries in the region that are responding to the challenges derived from these processes and making the latter into an opportunity for development. To this end, in May 2019 the IDB approved the allocation of resources for USD 100 million out of its Donation Fund, along with non-refundable resources from other sources in order to supplement existing credit operations to support projects related to migration.

On these lines, the IDB has focused the activities of various credit operations in Colombia on priority aspects of the Government response to Venezuelan migration, the main aspects of which are summarized below.

Concerning housing and urban development, it has developed the Strategies for the Socio-urban



Integration of Migrants in Colombian Cities project<sup>96</sup>, for an original amount of the credit operation of USD 150 million and an amount of non-refundable resources of USD 15.1 million – USD 11.1 million (EUR 13.5 million) of the Latin American Investment Facility of the European Union and USD 4 million (EUR 3.5 million) of the Alliance for Knowledge in Technology and Innovation from South Korea (KPK).

The project is centered around: 1. Improving fiscal performance through the design and implementation of Migrant Attention Systems (MAM) with their corresponding Performance Management Systems according to the particularities and possibilities of the urban zones subject to intervention; 2. Improve planning, infrastructure and urban services through the development of plans and/or designs for expansion and density; setting or strengthening Workshop Schools for the migrant population and host communities, and adjusted to the demand in workforce for each urban zone subject to intervention, according to the guidelines of the Ministry of Culture; assistance to implement a pilot in order to facilitate migrant access to rented housing; a fund for community rehabilitation (home improvement); and 3. Improved access to and improved quality of public utilities through plans and designs of water and sewer networks.

The IDB has also invested in labor markets through the project *Program to strengthen employment policies*<sup>97</sup>, for an original amount of the credit operation of USD 20 million and an amount of non-refundable resources of USD 5 million – USD 2.5 million of the Grant Facility of the IDB and USD 2.5 million of the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO).

The components of the project are: i) Coverage and effectiveness of employment policies (Technology Platform): from an information system to improve the coordination between the providers of the Public Service of Employment; the strengthening of the

model of attention to job-seekers and businesspeople from the SPE and a system of managerial information for the Ministry of Labor; ii) Belonging and quality of the technical formation and the certification of competences from a model of quality assurance and belonging of the Formation for Work; an information platform on the system of qualifications and formation for work; the strengthening of the ability of the Ministry of Labor to promote and confirm processes for certification of labor skills and training and certification services in labor competences for migrants and nationals in host communities.

Concerning investment in water and sanitation, there is the project for Drinking Water and Sanitation for the Department of La Guajira<sup>98</sup>. For an original amount of the credit operation of USD 50 million and an amount of non-refundable resources of USD 12.5 million – USD 7.5 million of the IDB Grant Facility and million USD 5 million from other donors.

The *Guajira Azul*<sup>99</sup> strategy is a government initiative through which, with the support of various actors from the private sector and Multilateral Banking, infrastructure works will be carried out for the water supply in the department of Guajira with the objective of improving coverage in the rural area and of ensuring continuity in the urban area, and of increasing the number of municipalities with access to water fit for human consumption and the population with access to waste water facilities. The credit operation of the IDB will contribute to the global financing of the strategy, the impact of which will necessary be relevant in terms of response to migration, given the location of Guajira on the border between Colombia and Venezuela and the high numbers of migrant population in all the municipalities.

The components of the project are: i) Broaden and improve potable water systems and urban sanitation; ii) Broaden and improve potable water and sanitation, and iii) Strengthen local entities in this sector.

<sup>96</sup> For more information, visit: <https://www.iadb.org/es/project/CO-L1155>.

<sup>97</sup> For more information, visit: <https://www.iadb.org/es/project/CO-L1250>.

<sup>98</sup> For more information, visit: <https://www.iadb.org/es/project/CO-L1242>.

<sup>99</sup> For more information, visit: <http://www.minvivienda.gov.co/guajiraazul>.

The IDB has also been working on the design of additional credit operations in the sectors of education<sup>100</sup> and health<sup>101</sup>, to be implemented starting in 2021, which would also include non-refundable resources and specific actions aimed to solve shortcomings in the provision of services related with the migrant populations and the host communities in key locations. In terms of technical cooperation, a project funded with the support of the Government of Japan<sup>102</sup>, implemented since 2020, will support the administration of the Special District of Barranquilla in providing social services and management of public space in Villa Caracas, one of the main settlements in that city for migrant population coming from Venezuela.

In terms of knowledge management, the MIG has been acting as an organizing node for various initiatives aiming to improve the generation of knowledge on migration in the region, to increase the availability of information on the effects of immigration processes in different sectors, to facilitate the implementation of inter-government initiatives in matters of public interest, and to facilitate the exchange of knowledge.

Regarding the generation of knowledge, a report<sup>103</sup> from the Department of Andean Countries of the IDB published in June 2020 analyzes the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Andean region and suggests short-term and mid-term scenarios and action courses specific for the case of Colombia.

<sup>100</sup>For more information, visit: <https://www.iadb.org/es/project/CO-L1229>.

<sup>101</sup>For more information, visit: <https://www.iadb.org/es/project/CO-L1248>.

<sup>102</sup>For more information, visit: <https://www.iadb.org/en/project/CO-T1544>.

<sup>103</sup>Abuelafia, Emmanuel (2020) Migration in the Andean Region: Impact of the crisis and mid-term expectations. Department of Andean Countries. Available at: <https://publications.iadb.org/es/migracion-en-la-region-andina-impacto-de-la-crisis-y-expectativas-en-el-mediano-plazo>

Concerning the consolidation of inter-government actions in immigration matters, within the framework of the initiative or Regional Public Goods of the IDB, various actors in the Government of Colombia have been participating in specific projects on immigration matters, which are summarized below.

The Project *Improving the Information Systems of Migrations in the Region*<sup>104</sup> will bridge information gaps and design specific recommendations as well as provide mechanics to improve inter-institutional coordination between countries in the region to diagnose, project and manage a safe and orderly migration and to protect migrants through the design of a road map to standardize immigration policies between the four participating countries, and the exchange of information in a more agile and coordinated way between the participating countries.

The participating government actors are the Department of Foreign Affairs and Migration of the Ministry of the Interior and Public Security of Chile, Migración Colombia of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Colombia, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility of Ecuador and the National Superintendence of Migrations of the Ministry of the Interior of Peru.

Additionally, the project *Strengthening of the regional ability for social integration and inclusion of migrant populations*<sup>105</sup> aims to contribute to the social inclusion and integration of the migrants and to the development of the host communities through the creation of organized models of social services which facilitate access to basic social services for all the vulnerable population, and for them to have protocols with gender and diversity approaches to provide specialized attention to migrants. In order to promote a comprehensive approach for the attention to Migrants and Vulnerable persons, the organization of social services will include the public sector, the private sector and civil society, as well as different levels of the national and sub-national government.

<sup>104</sup>For more information, visit: <https://www.iadb.org/en/project/RG-T3546>.

<sup>105</sup>For more information, visit: <https://www.iadb.org/en/project/RG-T3543>.

The participating government actors are the Republic of Colombia, the Republic of Ecuador, the Republic of Peru and the Republic of Costa Rica. Finally, the *Strengthening of the Public Service of Employment Network* (SEALC Network) Project to face the challenges of new technologies in the labor market and inclusion of the migrant population<sup>106</sup> aims to strengthen Public Service of Employment through the improvement of its ability to manage the increase in labor migration, as well as its response capability in face of other scenarios contemplated by the fourth industrial revolution. This strengthening will be developed through the promotion of the SEALC Network, of which the beneficiary countries are part, which will serve to provide technical assistance with results shared with other countries, to coordinate participation in studies and technical events, to spread workshops and courses, to cooperate with other countries in matters of common interest, and to establish a network of experts.

The participating government actors are the Ministry of Labor of Colombia, the Ministry of Labor in Ecuador, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor of Haiti, the Secretariat of Work and Social Welfare of México, the Ministry of Labor and Workforce Development of Panamá and the Ministry of Labor and Employment Promotion of Perú.

### Development Bank of Latin America [CAF]

The Development Bank of Latin America (CAF) has granted non-refundable resources to the Government of Colombia for a total amount of 500,000 USD. The first donation was made on 2018, for 200,000 USD, and it was earmarked for the provision of biomedical equipment for the strengthening of mother-child attention to migrant population and vulnerable population in the district of Santa Marta, in the Alejandro Prospero Reverend and the San Juan de Dios Hospitals, in Puerto Carreño, Vichada, as well as the strengthening of Information and Communication Technologies in the Center for the Regulation of Urgencies and Emergencies –(CRUE) in order to support the attention of Emergencies of the irregular and non-affiliated Venezuelan population, located in the department of Magdalena. The second donation, for USD 300,000, was made in 2020, and it was destined to the strengthening of the biomedical equipment of the Social State Enterprise Calvo Castaño Maternity Clinic in Cartagena, Bolívar. The objective of the project is to support the improvement of the provision of health services in emergencies, obstetrics and hospitalization care, considering the increase in attention to migrant population in the district of Cartagena.

---

<sup>106</sup>For more information, visit: <https://www.iadb.org/en/project/RG-T3541>.



## Management of contributions of international cooperation through the Presidential Agency for International Cooperation

In order to respond effectively to immigration flows, the identification, linking and organization of the different cooperation initiatives have been fundamental, which has been possible thanks to the active participation of international cooperators, the role of the Presidential Agency for International Cooperation (APC Colombia) and the follow-up of the Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia. The role of international cooperation in the support to the response to the immigration phenomenon has been fundamental, since thanks to their will, initiatives and resources, it has been possible to implement important actions related with the attention to migrants and host communities.

The Presidential Agency for International Cooperation is the government entity tasked with managing, coordinating and technically guiding non-refundable international cooperation received and given by the country, as well as with executing, administering and supporting the allocation and execution of resources, programs and projects of international cooperation. With this objective, it works hand in hand with ministries, national and department entities, and non-governmental organizations in order to promote and implement international cooperation actions for the development of different regions in Colombia.

In complying with its mission in response to the challenge that accepting migrants coming from Venezuela represents to the country and the national government, and within the framework of the Inter-Institutional Unit for International Cooperation for the Immigration Crisis, APC Colombia contributes its experience through technical management of international cooperation, resource administration and allocation of donations in kind. To achieve this, and following the priorities of the National Government to care for the immigration phenomenon recorded in the CONPES 3950 of 2018, it was necessary to structure work areas of the Agency in the following way:

- Steering bilateral, multilateral and private donors in the formulation of projects that respond to national, sectorial and territorial needs, considering the priorities of the National Government for the attention to the immigration phenomenon.
- Accompanying public entities and civil society organizations the formulation of projects.
- Channeling of resources from the national and international private sector to contribute to the response and attention to migrant population.
- Co-financing of projects of international cooperation with resources from the National Matching Funds project.
- Administration of non-refundable cooperation resources, according with the instructions imparted by the cooperator.
- Channeling of donations of goods and facilitation of procedures related with their entry to the country while being exempt from taxes.

International donors have different ways of channeling resources; they are either directly paid to cooperation agencies such as the United Nations and other NGOs, and most are received in this manner, or paid through the APC so it can execute or channel the donation towards State entities or other actors. Up to April 1, 2020, in regards to managing the immigration phenomenon, the APC has worked hand in hand with 12 donors from different countries such as the United States, Portugal, Korea and Spain, among others, who have donated around 3.5 million, of which approximately 60% has been directed towards acquiring and improving technology, biomedical equipment and medicine for the migrant population, while the remaining 40% has been directed towards humanitarian assistance related with healthcare and employability (Table 18).

**Table 18. Channeled resources through APC by sector**

BUDGET INVESTED APC - DONORS				
Item	Item Budget (USD)	Item Budget (COP)	Percentage of the total	Estimated Budget for Attention to Migrants (COP)
Technology, Equipment, Medicines	USD 2,153,844	COP 7,058,098,005	61%	COP 7,058,098,005
Humanitarian Assistance	USD 1,376,409	COP 4,510,495,078	39%	COP 4,510,495,078
Total Budget	USD 3,530,253	COP 11,568,593,083		COP 11,568,593,083

The allocation of resources received by the APC has focused mainly on border departments and departments with high concentration of migrant populations, such as Norte de Santander, La Guajira, Atlántico, Valle del Cauca, Magdalena, Santander, Antioquia, Cundinamarca, Vichada, Nariño and Córdoba, as well as some projects and donations for national coverage.

According to the APC work areas regarding the immigration phenomenon, 57% of resources are related to management and project formulation, 31% to administration of resources, and the rest for national matching projects and donations.

Technical assistance to formulate projects, which corresponds to a donation of about two million USD, has been related to providing biomedical equipment, furniture and shelter, improving quality of attention, brigades for visual care, humanitarian care, cultural integration of the migrant population, designing a system to register and identify migrants coming from Venezuela, employability, among others.

Regarding administration of resources, APC Colombia has a mechanism through which it can receive non-refundable international cooperation resources, previously managed and coordinated by and with the national and/or territorial entities, to be administrated and executed through standardized procedures which generate efficient low cost processes, and has resulted in administrating around 1 million USD in projects related



to biomedical equipment, comprehensive attention to migrant pregnant women and newborns who have no access to the health System, and improving technology and communications in the Center for the Regulation of Urgencies and Emergencies (CRUE) in order to regulate emergency care for the irregular and unaffiliated Venezuelan population located in the department of Magdalena.

In turn, donations of goods have focused on anti-retroviral treatment for HIV patients, medicine and medical devices for the attention of migrants on a national level.

## Challenges

These initiatives, which have undoubtedly contributed to difficult situations in the immigration phenomenon, have demonstrated that great efforts are required to design and implement in the mid and long-term, considering that different surveys carried out on migrant population indicate that the reasons for which said population has migrated to Colombia follow a shortage of food, inflation and a precarious access to the health system in their country of origin, among others. All of these problems will hardly be solved in the short-term and that entails a permanent stay in Colombia.

In this sense, it is also necessary and urgent to collect and channel cooperation funds, as well as credits and other means of financing which support managing immigration policies for the population coming from Venezuela and which help them in their economic and social insertion in Colombia.

In like manner, it is necessary to reinforce coordination mechanisms between agencies to avoid duplicating initiatives and ensure that implemented projects correspond to the needs of the country.

## Alignment with the Global Compact for Migration

The Colombian Government's international cooperation policy is aligned with the following objectives of the Global Compact for a Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration:

- **Objective 23.** To strengthen international cooperation and world alliances for a safe, orderly and regular migration.

## An overview of Venezuela's migration crisis from the experience in Colombia of UNHCR and IOM

### Eduardo Stein

Joint Special Representative of UNHCR and IOM for Venezuelan Migration

From the perspective of the joint effort of UNHCR and IOM in contributing to the Colombian experience of the migration crisis in Venezuela, we would like to highlight the *complexity* and *simultaneity* of the major challenges of this humanitarian catastrophe in *which all had to be cared for at the same time* and dig into some of their most important and significant structural conditions.

One of the main characteristics of complex problems such as the present one is the *simultaneity* with which the diverse developments and impacts occur, the conditions of *poor planning* in which all the countries of the region found themselves, and therefore, the degree of *constant flexibility and adaptability* required to take charge of each dimension, *foresight* and possible consequences, with the *constant limitations of technical and budgetary resources in the face of an onslaught of requirements that nobody expected*.

And all this, without ever forgetting the very difficult combination of the humanitarian needs of the population on the move, on the one hand, and the national/constitutional responsibilities of each government with its own population, on the other, as well as the sub-regional, and international agreements and pacts. And all this in a constant exercise of striving for the best possible coordination and effectiveness. It is not easy to make this explicit, but we find this enormous combined effort in Colombia.

For this reason, the approach attempted here is a *sketch* of successive approaches that allows us *to deepen in the CHALLENGES, in the DIFFICULTIES and COMPLEXITIES as well as*

*to dimension the SIMULTANEITY with which different ingredients of the crisis appear and intermix, and thus be able to do justice to the wonderful experience that the Colombian nation has allowed us to be able to accompany in favor of Venezuelans who were in need of leaving their land.*

### First approach: valuable reactions to a crisis unlike any other

In order to face this multidimensional crisis, all the governments of the countries receiving the largest numbers of refugees and migrants from Venezuela had to face internal difficulties in terms of legislation, regulations and procedures, as well as internal requirements of the respective security authorities of each country, in addition to one of the most important problems in this whole process: the lack of immigration documents and personal identity documents. This makes it very difficult for migrants and refugees to REGULATE their migration, as well as their access to basic health services, education for minors, and work permits.

However, we found very high levels of responsibility and willingness to collaborate in the staff of the various ministries and secretariats. We were very impressed by the serious and competent ways in which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the migration authorities and the Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia combined to respond to the magnitude and degree of difficulty of the challenges they faced at every step. Beyond the staff of each agency, of their skills and capacities, and their high degrees of responsibility, all of this would not have been possible without the leadership and direct support of the highest authorities of the Colombian government.

Another extraordinary aspect that we found and continues to be the construction of diverse equilibriums and collaborations between local governments (municipal authorities) and local citizens' organizations with the central government. This relationship, which is normally difficult and not free of resentment from the local level towards the institutions of the central government, gave rise to extraordinarily generous and meritorious experiences of multiple collaboration. And this, beyond the border crossing points, where Cúcuta for example, became the most emblematic place in the international media, illustrating the dimensions and demands of the crisis. The crisis, however, was also being fought inland. And there too we could see that creative and intense collaboration between local and national actors.

### Second approach: beyond the bilateral

The complex web of changing challenges that the transit of migrants *not only to Colombia but to other countries in the region has demanded not only a careful handling of difficult equilibriums and conflicting positions in the political-diplomatic BILATERAL relations between both governments of Colombia and Venezuela, added to the needs of humanitarian attention but also has had to enter into the field of the REGIONAL and the INTERNATIONAL:* both with other neighboring countries that are also recipients of Venezuelan forced migration, which have passed through and are passing through Colombian territory as well as with the international - due to the nature, impacts and implications of this crisis in other countries of the hemisphere and other latitudes.

Therefore, although *it is essential to address the very complex, inter-locking and demanding bi-national agenda, it is impossible to deal with the problem from an exclusively bilateral perspective*, because the political-diplomatic structure that is intertwined with the humanitarian demands has meant the involvement of other

governments in the hemisphere and of governments on other continents in at least three areas:

- i) In the efforts to harmonize migration and labor policies and measures
- ii) In the efforts to obtain in a prompt and orderly manner the necessary International Cooperation for populations on the move; and
- iii) In the search for and promotion of platforms or mechanisms for international political agreement.

#### a) Coordination of migration and labor policies and measures

To the extent that thousands of migrants used Colombian territory to try to reach other countries such as Ecuador, Peru, Chile and Argentina (the so-called "walkers"), Colombian authorities had to come to an agreement with these other countries on the treatment of these populations on the move and on one of the most serious and difficult problems to solve that was and continues to be the personal documentation of Venezuelan men and women, in order to be able to regularize their immigration status and have access to basic services, as well as to work opportunities.

This has not always been easy since each government of each host country has been reacting to internal situations, sometimes opposing pressures, which have forced the temporary closure of border crossings in those countries, increasing the pressure for irregular crossings and therefore the personal and family risks of the walkers.

The issue of work permits has also been and continues to be another major problem. This gave rise to the so-called Quito Process, an effort to reach a regional agreement on migration policies and procedures, which, despite the difficulties encountered along the way, has been bringing positive results.



## b) International cooperation

The dimensions of this crisis (the largest ever experienced in our continental history) immediately demanded extraordinary resources, initially provided exclusively by the governments of the countries receiving this migration, within their own budgets (although in no case did the national budgetary provisions for emergencies managed to anticipate the immense and varied demands of this unprecedented crisis). And then by regional and international cooperation organizations that also never imagined the enormity of this crisis. Almost immediately, international cooperation began to manifest itself both bilaterally and multilaterally. But the exodus grew and continued to grow at unsuspected speeds and at enormous proportions, raising needs for external support always ahead of the contributions that were being made.

This is where the European Union's effort came in, with participation of the UNHCR and the IOM, from a first Solidarity Conference held in Brussels to raise the international profile of the crisis and the urgent international cooperation needs. Although it was not a "*pledging conference*," important cooperation commitments were made. And then an international donor meeting promoted and organized by the European Commission and the Government of Spain, also with the collaboration of the UNHCR and the IOM was held.

## c) Political agreement platforms

As it is known, while great efforts were made to articulate care and protection services within the humanitarian agendas, several governments in the area tried to seek in the sub-regional integration schemes the timely meetings for dialogue and consensus to find possible solutions to this huge migration and refugee crisis.

This was not achieved. So, in order to avert this massive exodus and stop it, ad hoc understandings were created from which the so-called Lima Group emerged, seeking to coordinate, with firm positions, the possible

ways to resolve the crisis at its very roots. In the same way, firm positions emerged in favor of a strict respect for non-intervention in Venezuela's internal affairs.

Meanwhile, the number of people leaving Venezuela continued to grow and international attention involved other governments from other latitudes in efforts to cooperate with humanitarian agendas, but also in the search for political solutions.

## Third approach: The scope and limits of the humanitarian mandate, and the integral contexts in which it is carried out

Our mandate (for the IOM and the UNHCR) is limited to a humanitarian agenda in favor of the Venezuelan population that has left or continues to leave their country towards the neighboring countries and to the immediate goals of safeguarding their basic needs and protecting their basic human rights.

In this perspective and based on the resulting agendas, the Secretary General of the UN, António Guterres, instructed the High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, and the Director General of the IOM, António Vitorino, so that both agencies of the UN system (the UNHCR and the IOM) would develop a joint effort and organize a scheme of coordination and joint operation in order to take care of the sudden and growing demands of this enormous human exodus and to coordinate with other agencies of the UN system for this purpose. They will also designate a special joint representation to deal fundamentally with the governments of the host countries of this migration and asylum seekers, as well as with the regional humanitarian organizations in the territories of this mobilization and with the international community of both bilateral and multilateral cooperators.

However, this enormous human displacement and the precarious conditions in which it is

occurring do not take place in isolation, as if in a laboratory test tube, disconnected from the causes and motivations that provoke it, and isolated from the regional and international political, social, economic and diplomatic conditions and scenarios in which it has been taking place, with its own dynamics and fluctuations, in constant evolution.

For this reason, in order to carry out our work in support of these more than 5 million people who have been forced to leave their country, and of the governments of the host countries as well as the various organizations involved in this effort to provide care and protection, *it is absolutely essential to keep our eyes and ears open to the evolution of political, social and economic agendas in all the sub-region, and to maintain a constant effort of analysis and forecasting with the most possible reliable information*, so precisely - without intervening in the respective public policy debates - be able to generate the most relevant, realistic and viable recommendations; be able to make the most appropriate and timely decisions and achieve the best and most effective results in support of this population on the move and in need, and the populations that receive them, *in full coordination with government authorities*.

In this sense, the efforts to provide constructive responses to the demands of a humanitarian agenda such as the one we have experienced and continue to experience *cannot be separated from permanent attention to the realities and apparent causes that produced this crisis within Venezuela* (although this, of course, does not indicate or imply that UN agencies should intervene in this political debate), as well as the *SIMULTANEITY* with which many of the conditions of this flood of people were and continue to be experienced and faced by the Colombian authorities and their populations.

Here we are referring to obvious aspects, but which often tend to be overlooked or minimized. In the case of Colombia, they have been experienced with unusual intensity:

- i) On the one hand, the challenges posed by this immigration crisis and its additional aggravation by the pandemic *cannot be analyzed from an approach and with a linear/sequential methodology* (like someone who designs and builds a bridge, no matter how complicated it is), but rather the government authorities as well as support agencies (donor governments, international cooperation agencies, local and regional NGOs, religious organizations, development banks), had to understand the *SIMULTANEITY of the PROCESSES and the IMPACTS, in some cases creating drastic changes in the conditions of the movement of migrants and refugees, starting from the border crossing points, passing through all the consequences derived from their internment*.
- ii) Equally important to take into account is the *diversity and nature of PRECONDITIONS generated by the own history and recent contexts of both Colombia and Venezuela. And, of course, the complex and changing network of mutual influences from one factor to another and vice versa, as the migration crisis developed and evolved*.

For our work and for the possible collaborations that we could offer to all those people and institutions involved in these support efforts, solid and constantly updated INFORMATION was needed: the most reliable, trustworthy, objective and publicly verifiable information that we could have, in order to base decisions, policy contents, plans, projects and implementation procedures, precisely in order to be able to meet in the best possible way the basic needs of so many people on the move, both in their immediate needs and urgencies, as well as in the efforts of economic and social insertion.

Similarly, this reliable, publicly verifiable and constantly updated information sometimes became a territory of interpretative and ideological tensions. But it was also indispensable in the dialogue with international cooperation sources,



precisely to nourish their internal award processes in the decision-making instances of their respective support windows or external cooperation agencies.

To this end, it was always necessary to maintain a permanent dialogue with the diplomatic and consular representations accredited in Colombia. The vision of these embassies and offices of international agencies was absolutely essential and appropriate not only to enrich the information on the field but also to guide us in our work with cooperation agencies in the capitals. Of particular interest was the interaction with the Bogotá offices of the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, which provided special soft financing facilities to support the Colombian government in these efforts.

This led to the creation of the Regional Intera-gency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela, R4V: "Response for Venezuelans."

#### Fourth approach: scope of international dimensions

One of the main questions of this crisis, "Why are so many people being forced to leave their land?", has generated abundant attempts to answer as well as diagnostic and argumentative combinations to explain it. Much has been said about the complexity and severity of internal conditions in Venezuela and the general scarcity of basic goods and services for the population, which have caused and continue to cause these enormous flows. We have heard about the extreme shortages directly from the mouths of refugees and migrants from Venezuela, from crossing points to transit and/or settlement sites in various countries of destination.

On the contrary, the current Venezuelan regime and its allies have put forward other arguments regarding external sieges and penalties, as well as pressures and attempts to interfere in the internal affairs of that republic, which are

an attempt against Venezuela's sovereignty and which have caused and led to the lack of resources and basic internal services in that country.

The international discussions have given rise to and continue to fuel an intense international debate with differences and opposing positions, which faced the insufficiency or inability of the existing sub-regional mechanisms (such as UNASUR and others) to think about the difficult conditions and implications of this crisis and its consequences on the entire sub-region.

- i) This generated on the one hand the organization of "ad hoc" political meetings or forums (such as the so-called "Lima Group", or later the "International Contact Group" promoted by the European Union, and later the dialogues sponsored by the government of Norway). Political forums *other than humanitarian assistance mechanisms, in order to find ways to promote an agreed political solution within Venezuela, which the pre-existing mechanisms were not able to generate. And to seek to promote and sponsor possible forms of internal dialogue within Venezuela* between the government and the opposition, that would really advance towards those agreed democratic solutions that the Venezuelan administration of Nicolás Maduro could accept, that would stop that enormous exodus, and that would benefit the entire region.
- ii) On the other hand, fifty countries - including the Colombian government - chose the decision to disregard, for being illegitimate, the current Venezuelan regime (arguing serious irregularities in the observance of internal legislation, and the manipulation of electoral processes), and to recognize instead the temporary interim validity of the current President of the National Assembly, Juan Guaidó, while promoting internationally the holding of truly transparent elections with rigorous international observation.

The above, and the *real internationalization of the crisis*, which has reached the UN Security

Council, has meant a very complex web of additional obstacles, limitations and difficulties beyond the strictly humanitarian agendas, but which inevitably condition them. Countries from other latitudes have joined the controversy, in favor and against various political options as they were outlined and presented. All this and more Colombia has had to confront and continues to do it.

Despite deep political differences with the current Venezuelan regime, Colombia has maintained an open-door policy to Venezuelan migration, refusing to close its borders for security reasons, resorting only until this year - as well as other countries - to these extraordinary temporary measures in the face of the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- i) The Colombian government, as well as several governments of other host countries, have always tried to *separate political-diplomatic agendas from humanitarian ones*, so that political frictions do not hinder, divert, or obstruct humanitarian aid, which must go through other ways of care and protection.
- ii) But the current Venezuelan administration has argued the opposite on several occasions: that the Venezuelan population is being induced to leave their country with false promises and the exodus of the Venezuelan population is being used for political reasons that attempt against the sovereignty of the Venezuelan State.

These complex political-diplomatic processes are not the area of work of UN agencies, and therefore neither is it our work (of the UNHCR and IOM). But they are the framework in which these huge and dramatic movements of people out of their country occur and the possible causes that provoked them and continue to fuel this exodus are found.

So, from our side, even if we do not comment or even participate in these discussions, we need to take them into account. Because in fact, all these processes experienced together are

having consequences in all the neighborhoods, starting with the Venezuelan migrants and refugees themselves who leave their land and seek better conditions in various neighboring countries. And, of course, also in the development, internal and regional security agendas, and in the humanitarian agendas and their possible routes of care and support.

### **Fifth approach: contexts and deep meanings of statistics**

The figures available from the records of immigration crossing points are very eloquent in characterizing the magnitude of these displacements and the precarious conditions in which they occur, especially considering that it is an exodus of millions of people from a country that is not at war and that has abundant natural and energy resources. If we also add up the number of people who have ventured to move along irregular routes - paths or tracks - without crossing through official migration posts, the numbers increase considerably, as do the conditions of vulnerability and the humiliations suffered when trying to do so.

But often the numbers, although shocking and overwhelming, need to be contextualized, interpreted and discerned so that, beyond the emergencies and concrete needs for humanitarian care (shelter, clothing, food, health and hygiene, etc.), they manage to reflect with sufficient eloquence many deep aspects of the suffering that these displacements entail for those who risked leaving their homeland among so many needs and hardships, as well as for those they left behind. And of course, the experiences - often hard, difficult and contradictory - of seeking how to survive day by day in a strange land, how to try to find better living conditions and be able to settle down facing totally new situations in a country different from their own.

Similarly, often the numbers are not so clear reflecting those extraordinary aspects of solidarity, generosity and openness of the families and

communities that receive them; of abnegation, devotion and dedication of those who have organized themselves to take care of their most urgent and immediate needs; as well as very meritorious and imaginative performances that deployed and continue to deploy officials from different agencies, achieving extraordinary levels of inter-institutional coordination, as well as creative and audacious solutions in complicated, and often surprising circumstances; with constantly changing scenarios, with the numbers and demands constantly increasing; exponential agglomerations at border posts; sudden emergence of settlements and improvised camps in the main and intermediate cities; enormous burdens on the health and education systems; and emergencies always exceeding any traditional planning scheme... And with the ever-present anguish of a public institutional-ity that is overflowing and exceeded, and the constant insufficiency of resources.

If we could put in a single “basket” - for example, on a blackboard or on a computer - all the complex and pressing challenges that this human drama has posed for the neighborhoods to where hundreds of thousands of Venezuelans have had to move – both for the central governments of the host countries and for the local governments and host communities, as well as for the various civil society organizations, churches and donor governments and international cooperation institutions – *what has been happening is the closest thing to a true miracle.*

The generous reaction of the host countries in Latin America and the Caribbean – especially those that have received the largest numbers of refugees and migrants, in addition to Colombia, has been internationally recognized and valued (especially when compared to the reactions of other countries in other regions to other simultaneous migration crises). The openness and flexibility of the host countries was immediate, despite the sudden administrative, financial, and internal security burdens that this human exodus suddenly imposed.

The Colombian Government, moreover, managed to visualize beyond the immediate difficulties conceived by this human flow in extreme need, the potential benefit that this migration could bring to Colombia’s integral development, if the distorted swarm of humanitarian demands could be skillfully transformed into processes of socioeconomic insertion and productive investment, which could represent a net contribution to economic growth.

It was therefore essential that the same importance given to humanitarian issues be also given to economic integration and development efforts in the host communities, focusing efforts on the integral development of the receiving community to avoid from the very start the risks of resentment by the local population and outbreaks of xenophobia. The search for livelihoods or jobs for the newly arrived Venezuelan population should not be promoted alone but should be integrally invested in improving the conditions of dignified life in the entire host community so that the opportunities for improvement will be multiplied for all.

### **Sixth approach: the impact of the pandemic and looking forward**

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been devastating in the hemisphere. In the entire hemisphere, *the inability of refugees and migrants to maintain their means of support and access basic goods and services, or to move between countries, has exposed Venezuelans to situations of extreme vulnerability.*

Migrants and refugees, particularly those under an irregular situation, continue to be at high risk of being excluded from health and social welfare programs, and are increasingly vulnerable to health and protection risks.

Measures to contain the spread of the virus, including *border closures, mobility restrictions*

*and the closure of businesses, have left large numbers of people without the means to support themselves and their families. In many cases, they have no other support. According to a recent impact survey, 90% of Venezuelans in Colombia are unable to meet their basic needs such as housing, food, hygiene and health care. As a result, evictions, loss of employment, inability to access health and education, and the practical impossibility in most cases of complying with the rules of social distancing and isolation, have generated significant setbacks in the possibility of integrating into host countries.*

As a result, many migrants and refugees see no other option but to consider returning to their country of origin. The use of irregular border crossings exposes them to greater risks of contagion and to the dangers of human trafficking

and exploitation. There has been a disorderly return of about 2% of Venezuelan migrants and refugees who, desperate for the situation, have tried to return home or continue to do so. Despite the laudable efforts of receiving countries to integrate these populations into their national responses, as has been mentioned with encouraging and concrete examples –which we hope will multiply– the situation is urgent and requires an even greater effort to include Venezuelans in the national plans of the countries in order to promote and make effective their integration.

It is hoped that, in these coming months when economic recovery is beginning to be promoted, international cooperation efforts will be added to national efforts to address these needs and shortcomings, which have not yet been addressed.



## A safe, calm and harmonic migration: the advances in citizen security and cohabitation

### Diagnostic

The CONPES 3950 document, besides defining the guidelines and the institutional agreement to respond to each of the challenges faced due to the migration, includes the need to analyze the existing relation between the figures of citizen safety and cohabitation, with the identification that “there is not enough information to determine possible links between safety, cohabitation and the immigration phenomenon. For this reason, the first strategy consists in characterizing the dynamics which affect security and cohabitation, among which a relation can be found with the arrival of migrants coming from Venezuela<sup>107</sup>.

Among the effects that the Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia have denominated as second generation of Venezuelan migration in Colombia, the potential changes in perception and the situation of citizen safety and cohabitation in the receiving regions is a matter of vital importance to ensure an effective social and productive integration. Although current evidence does not seem to indicate the existence of a positive relation between Venezuelan migration and the increase in criminality in receiving regions, it is necessary to design strategies aimed towards not only addressing existing risks, but also towards timely preventing the mid- and long-term effects of the immigration flow on citizen safety. In the same manner, it is important to generate strategies for the communication and coordination between the different entities in the national and local government in order to carry out an effective compression and diffusion of the relation between Venezuelan migration and citizen safety and cohabitation.

<sup>107</sup>CONPES 3950 de 2018.

### Cohabitation

In order to start addressing the effects that become evident with the growing migration coming from Venezuela, it is possible to assert that there are currently no rigorous studies which effectively demonstrate that there is a connecting relation between migration and the increase in the crime rates or in Behaviors Contrary to Cohabitation (CCC, for its acronym in Spanish)<sup>108</sup> in Colombia.

Among the literature that has been published recently, it is worth mentioning the study by Brookings Institution & Migration Policy Institute: “Immigration and Crime: The case of Venezuelan refugees in Colombia, Peru, and Chile”, which in summary, reaches the conclusion that Venezuelan Migrants commit less crime when compared with their host communities in Chile and Peru. In the case of Colombia, this is similar for violent crimes such as homicide, but not for general crime given that this community is over-represented, which also generates variance in the behavior, depending on the region. For instance, the border departments show greater crime rates by Venezuelan migrants than the departments further inside the country; this may be a consequence of the traffic networks that are present in the region. It was also found that these levels of criminality are higher in the regions where labor integration for Venezuelans has lagged behind<sup>109</sup>.

<sup>108</sup>Behaviors classified in the National Code of Citizen Security and Cohabitation (Law 1801 of 2016, Law 2000 of 2019).

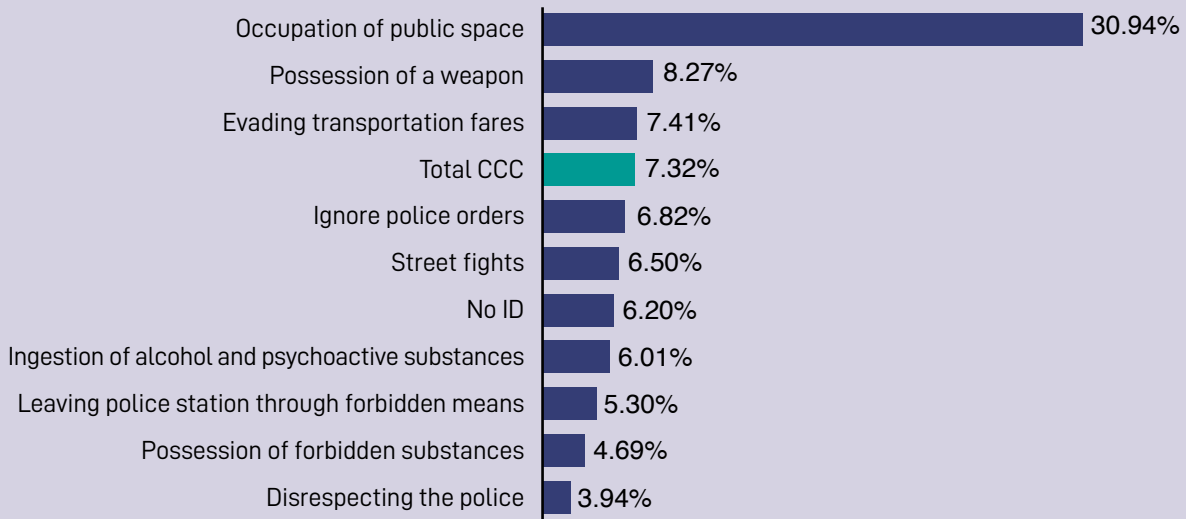
<sup>109</sup>Brookings Institution & Migration Policy Institute: “Immigration and Crime: The case of Venezuelan refugees in Colombia, Peru, and Chile”. Dany Bahar, Meagan Dooley, and Andrew Selee. June 2020.



Nevertheless, considering the magnitude of the immigration phenomenon coming from Venezuela in the country, a periodic follow-up must be made to these dynamics, which allow, in turn, to design and implement prevention strategies. Between the months of January and March of 2020, the National Police registered 32,988 Behaviors Contrary to Cohabitation (CCC) in which persons of Venezuelan nationality incurred. This corresponds to nearly 7.3% of the total CCC registered in that year throughout the country. As is can be seen in graph 12, a behavior contrary to cohabitation that it is worth noting is the one corresponding to occupation of public space, with a 30,9% well above any other behavior registered. This is relevant since it indicates that this behavior reflects a need of the migrants to generate income through commercial activities, which are, for most cases, informal.



**Graph 12. Percentage of CCC committed by Venezuelans compared with the national total during the first trimester of 2020<sup>110</sup>**



Source: DNP Calculation - National Police Force RNMIC.

<sup>110</sup> Only CCCs are shown in which more than 1% of cases involve Venezuelan people.

**Graph 13: Percentage of CCC committed by Venezuelan people compared to the total number of cases of Venezuelans reported in the first trimester of 2020**

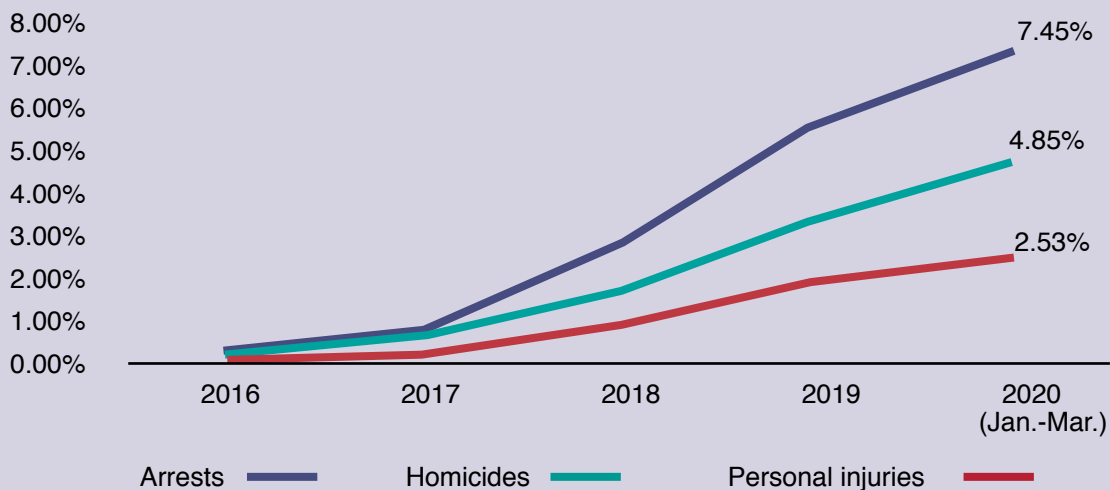


## Citizen Security

### Participation of Venezuelan People in Criminal Activities: Victims and arrests

According to the Administrative records of the National Police Force, in the last four years people of Venezuelan nationality have passed from representing less than 0.2% to almost 7.5% of the total arrests made by this institution per year. At the same time, as can be seen in graph 14, the number of people from Venezuela who are victims of homicide has increased from 0.1% in 2015 to 4.9% out of the total cases in the country in 2020 (January - March). It is worth noting that the number of Venezuelan victims of personal injuries follows a similar trend.

**Graph 14. Arrests of Venezuelan people and cases where Venezuelans are victims as percentage of the national total**



As it was previously noted, close to 7.5% of the total people arrested in Colombia during 2020 were of Venezuelan nationality<sup>111</sup>. Particularly, as it can be seen in graph 15, the crimes of theft from a commercial entity, receiving stolen goods<sup>112</sup> and robbery to people had, throughout 2020, a participation of Venezuelans that was above the national average, with the noteworthy feature that this corresponds to activities which allow to generate economic income, compared with violent crimes such as homicides, which had a participation of people from Venezuela that was lower than 4.3% of the total of arrests in the country.

<sup>111</sup>Initially, there is no solid empirical evidence for Colombia which evidences a negative impact of migration on the crime rates. However, increases have started to be seen in the administrative records related with arrests by the National Police Force, in Behaviors Contrary to Cohabitation and in the number of people arrested. As an example, we can see the increase, between 2017 and 2018, of the national number of arrested Venezuelans, which passed from 2,069 to 7,239.

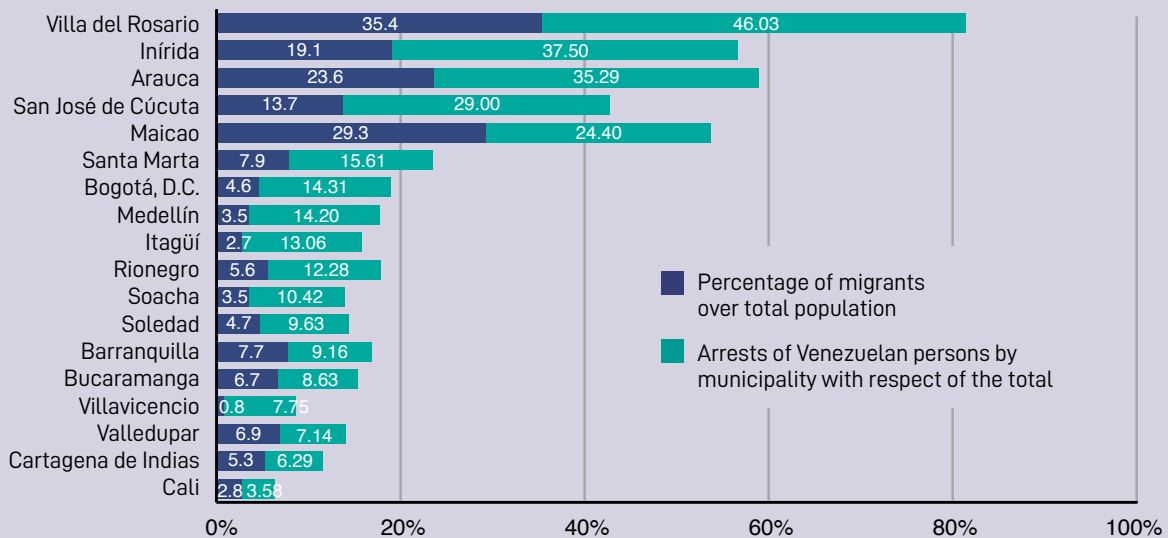
<sup>112</sup>Receiving of Stolen Goods: Article 298 of the Penal Code: "... to the person who, seeking profit and with knowledge that a crime against patrimony or economic order was committed, in which said person has not intervened neither as an author nor as an accomplice, helps the culprits take advantages of the effects of said crime, or who receives, acquires or conceals said effects".

**Graph 15. Arrests of Venezuelans compared to the national total in 2019<sup>113</sup>**



Source: DNP Calculations - National Police Force SIEDCO.

**Graph 16. Arrests of Venezuelans by municipality compared to the total in 2019<sup>114</sup>**



Source: DNP Calculations - National Police Force SIEDCO.

<sup>113</sup> Only Crimes are shown which Venezuelan People represented more than 1% of total arrests.

<sup>114</sup> Only the municipalities are presented which represented more than 0.5% of captures of Venezuelan people in the whole country.

Concerning the number of Venezuelans in total arrests on a Municipal level, graph 16 shows that it is above the country average in 15 cities, among which border municipalities such as Villa del Rosario (Norte de Santander), Inírida (Guainía), Arauca (Arauca) and Cúcuta (Norte de Santander) stand out, where more than 25% of people arrested in 2020 were of Venezuelan nationality.

## Perception and Discrimination

The migration of people from Venezuela in Colombia has been massive and in a short time period. Although the phenomenon does not resemble other cases of migration in the world, in which migrants have profound cultural differences with the host communities (language, religion, among others), the sheer number of people arriving to Colombian cities has generated a perception of insecurity as well as social and economic instability. This phenomenon is repeated in most of the cases analyzed in different countries. Colombians believe that migrants come to compete for the State's social offer and for job opportunities; they are perceived as coming to receive healthcare and education opportunities, and that this will negatively affect the wellbeing of nationals, and is directly linked to an increase in taxes to cover such a demand. Civil society has stated that migrant populations continue to be perceived as a "threat" to the local labor market, since it displaces the Colombian workforce and increases informal work<sup>115</sup>.

In the survey by "*Cúcuta cómo vamos 2019 (Cúcuta how we are doing 2019)*", it is worth mentioning that the community considers the presence of Venezuelans to be among the causes for worsening indicators. This survey reflects that in Cúcuta, where around 12% of the population is Venezuelan, the percentage of Colombian citizens who saw the migration of Venezuelan or Colombian-Venezuelan citizens as a threat grew from 66% to 74% from 2017 to 2018. This generates an alert to prevent

xenophobic incidents against Venezuelans, especially in municipalities that have more immigrants than local population.

However, on a national level we observe a relatively low negative perception of migration. According to the DNP's Survey of Citizen Perception of the National Development Plan 2018- 2022 (EPC-PND), close to 24% of Colombians completely disagree with employing migrants from Venezuela, while 57% of the surveyed population agree or completely agree with this question. While the percentage of people in favor is still far greater than the percentage of people against, this situation by itself merits a close follow-up to determine the growing trends of disagreement, scenario in which it would be necessary to implement communication strategies to prevent these negative concepts about the Venezuelan population.

## What is being done

### Creation of the Integrated Center for Monitoring and Analysis of Migration information [C12M]

This immigration phenomenon, which is a new situation in the country, has generated conditions that oblige the government to adapt its institutional structure and capabilities in order to provide an efficient and effective response.

This is why it is fundamental to consider the production of indicators which measure the impact of interventions and initiatives of the national government both in terms of attention and integration of migrants coming from Venezuela. For this, a proposal is made for the design and start-up of an Integrated Center to Monitor and Analyze Migration Information, which analyzes administrative records in terms of citizen safety and cohabitation and which produces comprehensive documents by cross-referencing the latter with diverse sector and territorial information under an immigration approach. This will have to be supplemented with innovative studies that give a broader understanding of the behavior of the phenomenon.

<sup>115</sup>Ideas para la Paz Foundation, Citizen Security and Venezuelan Migration: Follow-up document No 1 (August 2019). María Victoria Llorente, Director; Jerónimo Castillo, Director Security and Criminal Policy, p. 13.

### Process of Identification to Prosecute Migrants who commit crimes (process developed by Migración Colombia)

When a Venezuelan citizen is arrested in Colombian territory they are not prosecuted, since there is no way to fulfill the penal identification requirement, which is necessary to formalize the process.

For this reason, given the lack of diplomatic relations and the lack of legal support from Venezuela, it is up to the attorney of the case to solve this problem and do a *full individualization* on the arrested person. The document issued by Migración Colombia is vitally important, since it contains fingerprints, Foreign Records (HE) and the signature of the arrested individual.

Until now, 330 such procedures have been filed in the Andean region and similar situations are seen in the rest of the country, while prioritizing regions that have higher crime levels by Venezuelan foreigners.

### Offer of support in the development of Comprehensive Plans of Citizen Safety and Cohabitation

Through the Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia, resources from cooperation agencies have been channeled to provide technical support to newly appointed public workers to develop the Comprehensive Citizen Safety and Cohabitation Plans. At that point, when regional governmental leaders took office in January of 2020 began to create these documents, it was very important to have technical assistance which included attention plans and strategies for matters related to migration, crime and cohabitation to ensure resources and develop a clear strategy to react and finance any project which aims to mitigate adverse effects or to strengthen initiatives for a harmonic integration of migrants into the host community.

The organizations in charge of this process are ACIDI-VOCA through EAFIT of Medellín, which will do this through workshops, the MSI Colombia Foundation, which will provide consulting, and Ideas for

Peace Foundation, which will also provide assistance and consulting for prioritized municipalities especially those on the border. This process has been carried out in coordination with the DNP, the Ministry of Defense, and the Ministry of the Interior to ensure that this assistance is not centered only on certain municipalities, but rather that, besides harmonizing subjects and methodologies, it is possible to access as many municipalities as possible that may require it.

These municipalities are:

- La Guajira: Uribia, Maicao y Riohacha
- Arauca: Arauca capital, Arauquita
- Norte de Santander: Cúcuta, Villa del Rosario
- Magdalena: Santa Marta
- Atlántico: Barranquilla
- Caquetá: Florencia
- Chocó: Quibdó

### Challenges faced by Citizen Safety in the context of migration

Within this process of administrative reorganization and adjustment to provide a proper response to migration coming from Venezuela, actions were identified that must be taken to increase the efficient use of resources destined to this response and to have an effective reaction before the criminal activities that have been identified.

These challenges have been the subject of discussions in forums and settings promoted by Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia and their strategic partners such as ACIDI-VOCA, the cooperation agency USAID, and EAFIT University, and which experts have attended and made suggestions on topics and actions that could contribute to strategies to face these challenges. The main conclusions and suggestions of said forums and discussions are presented below.

Table 19. Action plan to address challenges

	ACTION PLAN
Identified Challenge	Action and Description
<p><b>Better comprehension and understanding</b></p> <p><b>Generate more and better information</b></p>	<p><b>Establish a system for the management of information and knowledge.</b></p> <p><b>Develop a basis of evidence through monitoring and evaluation.</b></p> <p><b>Learn from territorial lessons.</b></p> <p>Colombia has various administrative records with information on migrants, and while they are not exact, they are a tool to understand what data says about the relation between citizen security and migration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Great Integrated Household Survey [GEIH]</li> <li>ii) Life Quality Survey [ECV]</li> <li>iii) Multidimensional Poverty Index [IPM]</li> <li>iv) Statistical, Criminal, Contravention and Operational Information System of the National Police Force [SIEDCO]</li> <li>v) PEP I, II, III</li> <li>iv) Perception Surveys</li> <li>vii) Administrative Registry of Venezuelan Migrants -RAMV-</li> </ul>

ACTION PLAN	
Identified Challenge	Action and Description
	<p>However, access to each database is done independently, which is why there is a proposal to create an “information bank” where each base has a certain degree of homogenization to unify available information. Additionally, institutions must be aligned on the basic information that each institution needs to collect in order to have clarity on the information corresponding to each one.</p> <p>It is necessary to generate an evidence base and systematic documentation on good experiences as the cross axis of diverse interventions. The academic community plays a fundamental role in providing key theoretical and methodological frameworks. For that reason, it is necessary to generate a platform to exchange information as well as an inter-regional and intra-regional collaboration born from the relation between the academic community and the State.</p> <p>It is vital to establish systematic monitoring and evaluation of different public policy interventions that generate robust results to precisely document arrangements, institutions and processes which may be effective in handling the relation between citizen safety and migration. It is thus necessary to create spaces where researchers and state institutions can interact in order to identify the possible fields of action for joint work. Said efforts in evaluation and experimentation allow for a greater chance of success and for international comparability.</p> <p>It is necessary to systematize the lessons learned by creating a bank of experiences where information on institutional responses is compiled and, from a local level, adopted and used to address the challenges of mass migration.</p>



	ACTION PLAN
Identified Challenge	Action and Description
<p><b>Lack of knowledge and technical support in the regions</b></p> <p><b>Need to coordinate multiple actors, information and actions</b></p>	<p><b>Strengthen local governance on the handling of migration</b></p> <p><b>Strengthen the national instance of cooperators, resources and actions</b></p> <p>It is necessary to strive to understand the different types of migration and the composition of the local and migrant population in order to establish local policies focused on specific populations that not only contemplate interventions focused on different contexts (border territories and capitals), but which also propose interventions that consider individual characteristics and which focus on the wellbeing of people in risk situations.</p> <p>In this context, it is necessary to channel support and resources to improve management and governance capabilities of the teams appointed for this purpose: Department and municipal Secretariats, Police Units, Risk Management Units and Care/Service, and others.</p>



	ACTION PLAN
Identified Challenge	Action and Description
<p><b>Communication Capability</b></p> <p><b>Resource Management</b></p>	<p><b>Constructing a Communication Strategy</b></p> <p>There are important shortcomings in the way in which the State and media deliver, transmit and communicate information on the Venezuelan migrant population. These shortcomings have a magnifying effect which could translate into a negative perception of Venezuelan migrants by the national population and which may spark waves of xenophobia.</p> <p>The main actions of this strategy are:</p> <p>Numbers and figures must not be disclosed out of context; these must be included within the total population or the total number of criminal activities.</p> <p>It is fundamental to clearly identify crimes committed by migrants, since these represent a “small percentage” if compared with the total number of crimes committed by year throughout the national territory, which is why establishing the participation of these crimes gives a clear understanding of the impact Venezuelan migrants have not only as criminals, but also as victims.</p> <p>Communication concerning the services and benefits of the Colombian State must be easily accessible by migrants. Therefore, it is important to understand how and through what channels they access information. Moreover, this clear and timely communication will allow resources to be channelled from international funds and cooperators.</p>

## Actions to fight human trafficking with a migratory approach

The Directorate of Government and Territorial Management of the Ministry of Interior are in charge of making policies to fight against human trafficking through the Fight Against Human Trafficking Group.

In accordance with the provisions of Decree 1066 of 2015, it is the competence of Territorial Committees to provide assistance required by alleged victims of Human Trafficking. When there is a report from an alleged victim, the corresponding committee must process, within their capabilities, agreements with agencies specialized in providing lodging to alleged victims, or alternately, to facilitate temporary lodging in host houses.

The Anti Human Trafficking Operations Center (COAT) is in charge of coordinating and organizing attention for victims of human trafficking through programs to mediate and give immediate protection and assistance as established in Decree 1066 of 2015, which seek the physical, psychological and social recovery of the victim while ensuring the reestablishment and protection of their human rights. The victims are treated by the department, district or municipal committees that fight against human trafficking.

In 2019, the strategy of the fight against human trafficking had a budget of COP 2,377,000,000 (USD 632,364) (in 2018, this budget was COP 2,877,178,155 – USD 765,381).

### I. Tools available for the fight against human trafficking:

- The toll-free national telephone line 01 8000 52 2020 operates 24/7 and is managed by an interdisciplinary group of professionals trained to receive reports of possible cases of Human Trafficking and detection of fraudulent job offers.
- The Anti Human Trafficking Operations Center (COAT) is an internal strategy of the Ministry of the Interior for the inter-institutional coordination and organization of the services for assistance to victims. Email is managed by four professionals in weekly schedules and provided 24 hours a day: [coordinacion-coat@mininterior.gov.co](mailto:coordinacion-coat@mininterior.gov.co).
- The National Human Traffic Information System (SNITP) is a technological tool to systematize the supply of information from the Inter-Institutional Committee Entities and department, municipal and/or district committees that fight against human trafficking.
- [Tratadepersonas@mininterior.gov.co](mailto:Tratadepersonas@mininterior.gov.co) is an institutional group email; all the warrants, summons and requests from different organizations and entities related to the crime of human trafficking are forwarded to this email.
- The Observatory of the Crime of Human Trafficking is a consultation tool dedicated to researching and providing information on the crime of human trafficking. The regulations, functions, committees, statistics, research, monitoring of news stories, and Memorandum of Understanding can be found here.

### II. Ongoing actions for the development of Anti-Human Trafficking Policies

- On March 4 the national anti-human trafficking working group was held with all the secretaries of the government or their representatives in order to define the actions to develop strategies against human trafficking in each department. In this meeting, the schedule of department committees against human trafficking was defined.

- Two organizations reiterated their intention to finance projects against human trafficking: The European Union and the Embassy of Norway.
  - We are currently working with border departments to identify the projects that would receive financing with these resources, with a focus on campaigns to prevent and support competences of the technical team which cares for and researches the cases.
  - The 10 competent national entities have provided an effective response, management and processing and by government agencies to early alerts issued by different entities through the Departmental Committees against Human Trafficking, where instructions are given and decisions are made for each case.
  - Improve information and statistics on crime: it has been difficult to have records due to the very nature of the crime, in which the network threatens victims.
  - Inter-institutional coordination (on a national and department level) for effective prevention actions and a more effective and robust route of care/service which leads to prosecution as well as reparation to victims.
  - Improved presence of authorities throughout the country so that, while acting to prevent the crime, it is possible to send effective information through channels used by migrants, to help prevent them from falling victim to human trafficking networks and to open investigations for each case to dismantle all human trafficking schemes.
  - Position the subject of human trafficking as regional priorities so that through department committees it is possible to assign qualified personnel and an appropriate budget to face this type of crime.
- ### III. Challenges
- Improve technical skills of teams leading the judicial processes.
  - Improve reporting channels and response and service routes (people do not report due to their condition as irregular migrants).

## Alignment with the Global Compact for Migration

The Colombian Government policies of Citizen Safety and Social Cohesion are aligned with the following objectives of the World Pact for a Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration:

- **Objective 10.** Preventing, fighting and eradicating human trafficking in the context of international migration.
- **Objective 17.** Eliminating all forms of discrimination and promoting a public discourse with an empirical basis in order to modify the perception of migration.

## The impact of the covid-19 pandemic

With a migrant population of more than 1.8 million people, the arrival of the COVID-19 epidemic generated considerable challenges in Colombia, both for the government and local and regional authorities, as well as for cooperation agencies in our country, pushing them to join efforts in an agile and efficient manner, and adjust their actions to address the epidemiological risk and the social effects brought by this pandemic.

Precisely, one of the first measures adopted was closing the Venezuelan border on March 14, 2020, to respond on one hand to the high epidemiological risk represented by crowds on the border bridges, and on the other hand, to the limited information there was from the health authorities in Venezuela, an indispensable condition for the design and implementation of prevention and containment actions in the border area. Moreover, Migración Colombia made the decision to suspend the expiration terms of all migrant permits and documents, in order to not affect their stay in the country during the quarantine.

Considering this context, and following the principles stipulated by the office of the High Commissioner of the United Nations for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Office of the High Commissioner of the United Nations for Human Rights, to ensure the highest standards in response to this contingency, the Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia developed a 6-point plan focused on the attention to migrant population, prioritizing the most vulnerable groups.

This plan, developed on the basis that the responses to the emergency must seek the wellbeing of all people residing in Colombia, regardless of their nationality, contemplates the following lines:

In the first place, **a responsible and humanitarian management of the border**. This action plan is based on the priority of protecting the

healthcare system in the border departments, which it is worth noting, was already saturated even before the pandemic, as well as protecting the health of the national and migrant population in the border departments of Colombia.

In this sense, humanitarian passages were set up based on the needs stated by the local authorities in the municipalities where there are border control posts. Since the moment of the closing of the border, and until June of 2020, about 80,000 migrants returned to Venezuela, out of which 26,000 did so during the first few days. This return implied a coordinated work with the Administrative Service of Identification, Migration and Foreigners (SAIME), the Immigration Authority in Venezuela, with the objective of establishing the effectiveness of humanitarian passages and the special schedules for the transit of a limited number of persons per day between the two countries.

In second place, the Plan prioritizes the **guarantee of access to healthcare**. For this point in particular, and even when the route of attention for Venezuelan Migrants with possible contagion or infected with COVID-19 is exactly the same to that of any other Colombian citizen, the Ministry of Health published the “Guidelines for the prevention, detection and handling of COVID-19 cases among migrant population” which must be followed by the competent entities.

These guidelines establish that if the migrant is insured in the country, they must go to their Healthcare Providing Entity (EPS), which will provide the service of healthcare in accordance with the Guidelines of the Ministry of Health and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). If the migrant is not insured and is the holder of a Special Permit of Permanence (PEP), they will be immediately affiliated to an EPS, and they will be attended through said EPS; if the migrant does not have a PEP, they will be attended through the route of emergencies for all uninsured foreigner in our country, which ensures in this case, the required treatment with no cost.

In third place, the Plan contemplates the necessary adaptation of cooperation programs for the care/service to migrants, which is why work has been done hand in hand with international donors; international, humanitarian and cooperation organizations gathered in the GIFMM; and with local authorities in order to adjust existing measures in each region. This work has resulted in the prioritization of the following actions:

- Improve programs for the delivery of multi-purpose cash transfers among the vulnerable migrant population to use for food and shelter.
- Care/service related to water, sanitation and hygiene, prioritized for vulnerable migrant population, including homeless population and walkers (drinking water, cleaning kits, access to restrooms and showers, etc.).
- Adapt healthcare services, giving priority to possible cases of infection and establishing isolation measures, in accordance with the guidelines of the WHO, PAHO and the Ministry of Health.
- Adapt logistics of food attention with plans for Social Home Contingencies or cash transfers to exchange for food.
- Improve measures taken in shelters such as the restriction of new entries, periodic visits and constant supervision by health authorities, conditioning of the isolated areas for possible cases of infection, and food delivery by turns to avoid crowds.
- Improve spaces for walkers and homeless population, especially in border areas.
- Adaptation of food services and soup kitchens through the discontinuation of soup kitchens by following the directives which prevent gatherings of large numbers of people, the implementation of mechanisms for food delivery in places of residence, in coordination with organizations from civil society, and the definition of sanitary protocols by the people responsible for the production and delivery of food products.

As a fourth point, the plan establishes the need to prioritize **care/service to the most vulnerable migrant population**, especially those who are not included in the State's social programs that have been used to respond to this contingency, such as the Solidarity Income program, through which and after an exercise comparing official government databases, it was identified that 50,000 people of Venezuelan origin met the conditions to enter the program and receive monetary subsidy.

In this regard, on the one hand, efforts were made to deliver 200,000 groceries packages in 71 municipalities of the country with the aim of benefiting around 1,000,000 people who are part of these vulnerable populations. The delivery is carried out through the National Unit for Disaster Risk Management (Unidad Nacional de Gestión del Riesgo de Desastres (UN-GRD), governments, mayors, social organizations and agencies that are part of the GIFMM (Interagency Mixed Migration Flows Group in Colombia).

On the other hand, the continuity of actions aimed at girls, boys and adolescents (NNA) was guaranteed during this situation through the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare (ICBF), making early childhood care more flexible, cancelling the telephone and virtual attendance mode, and guaranteeing the delivery of food packages for preparation and consumption at home for 73,655 Venezuelan children; ensuring constant support to continue with the pedagogical schemes and upbringing guidelines with the families of children between 0 and 5 years old; adapting spaces for quarantine and isolation of possible cases of contagion for the 2005 Venezuelan girls, boys and adolescents who are in the administrative process of re-establishment of rights PARD (The Administrative Re-establishment of Rights Project); allowing the 135,371 children from Venezuela that were covered by the PAE (School Food Program) in 2019 to continue receiving this benefit during the emergency; and working to send home schooling kits to students living in Venezuela who cross the border to attend educational institutions in Colombia.

Fifth, the plan contemplates **targeting programs at high-impact points**, specifically in municipalities that are home to a large number of vulnerable

migrant populations. With the support of international, humanitarian and cooperation organizations, as well as local authorities, the following steps have been taken, as of June of 2020:

- Villa del Rosario (Norte de Santander): 2 rounds of deliveries of food kits took place, which benefitted more than 12,000 people, in addition to dignity kits for women and early childhood kits. Several medical assessment days were carried out with the population located at La Parada, the closest point to the Simon Bolivar International Bridge, and Las Margaritas Medical Center was also set up.
- Maicao (La Guajira): more than 38,000 food kits and grocery packages were delivered, more than 36,000 meal vouchers and more than 6,000 money transfers in 8 municipalities with the support of the international cooperation; with the support of UNHCR, work was done on the expansion of the San José de Maicao Hospital, with the setting up of 25 *Refugee Housing Units* that will be used as isolation and care centers for possibly infected persons; 2 additional RHUs in the San Juan del Cesar Hospital and 11 tents delivered in Maicao, Riohacha, Uribia and San Juan; 449 people in the hotel network were provided with temporary accommodation with protection, health, food and education measures, as well as 163 shelter kits, 406 mats and 90 household kits in Riohacha, Maicao and Uribia; almost 4,000 units of educational material that include recreation kits and 3,393 school kits in Riohacha, Maicao, Uribia and Fonseca were distributed, in addition to the adaptation of 3 educational classrooms in Maicao; and activities were reorganized within the Comprehensive Care Center (CAI) for the migrant population of Maicao.
- Soacha (Cundinamarca): we are working to deliver multipurpose monetary transfers during the emergency to more than 2,200 families among the vulnerable migrant population and host communities that do not yet have this benefit. Likewise, we are coordinating the delivery of more than 9,000 kits, including food, hygiene, kitchen and household items, and sleeping bags, among this population.

- Ipiales (Nariño): More than 800 food kits were delivered in Ipiales with the support of the local authorities, international cooperation and the associations of Venezuelans present in the territory; the coverage of shelters for vulnerable migrant population in the municipality was expanded; and work has been carried out in coordination with different governmental actors, the public force, local authorities and international and cooperation organizations that are present in the region, as well as with Ecuadorian counterparts, to establish measures to strengthen the follow-up and control of activities in the border.

As a sixth and final point, the Plan calls attention to the need for **a greater coordination and information**. With respect to the first, it is important to emphasize that the design and implementation of measures to assist the vulnerable migrant population have been developed in coordination with regional and local authorities; and on the second, it is worth mentioning that the provision of platforms that bring together the available channels of attention so that migrants can inform themselves and seek attention has been coordinated with local authorities, the GIFFM and Venezuelan associations.

## Challenges

Despite the huge effort made by all the actors involved, significant challenges continue to be faced.

On the one hand, and in view of the growing demand of migrants who want to return to Venezuela from different cities in the country, work is being done with local authorities to establish protocols for the corresponding transfer under the necessary sanitary conditions and coordinating flows to avoid the funnel effect at border points. Likewise, work is being done to implement surveillance or supervision protocols for transport companies to ensure compliance with these guidelines.

On the other hand, there are difficulties for migrants who need to isolate at home but do not have the conditions to isolate themselves. In this sense, we are working with cooperation actors and humanitarian

organizations to create new isolation or hospital zones. Due to this issue in particular, the need to follow up the problem of housing for the vulnerable migrant population is now more evident.

Likewise, the COVID-19 contingency is uncovering latent anti-immigrant feelings, which requires follow-up on the part of the national government, the most affected local authorities, and international and cooperation agencies.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that, despite the inclusion efforts and an increase in the funding sources with international donors and cooperation organizations, resources are insufficient to meet the migration phenomenon in times of pandemic, which suggests the need of all sectors of Colombian society and of the international community to commit themselves.





## Eyes on the process: The role of control bodies

### Defending the human rights of migrants and refugees

The Human Rights Ombudsman's Office, an institution of the Colombian State responsible for promoting the effectiveness of human rights for the inhabitants of the national territory and Colombians abroad, has been incorporating into its activities since 2016 attention for migrants and refugees in need of international protection. The Human Rights Ombudsman's Office is strengthening teams of professionals, incorporating the regulations of International Human Rights Law, International Refugee Law and the pronouncements of the Constitutional Court on migrants, increasing the monitoring of the situation on the border, dealing with diverse immigration flows, having an impact on the different authorities, and exercising legislative initiative.

The actions of the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office have been oriented towards four areas: i) Promotion and dissemination of rights; ii) Advice, guidance and assistance; iii) Influence in the formulation of protective measures and mechanisms; and iv) Defense Research.

#### 1. Activities for the Promotion and Dissemination of the Rights of Migrant and Refugee Population

The Ombudsman's Office trains border officials and communities on the rights of migrants and refugees. These activities are provided for local government officials and communities located in border areas, transit and host territories. Part of these activities cover topics such as migrant and refugee population rights and those in need of international protection, access routes to rights and institutional and community strengthening actions.

In addition, two activities to promote and disseminate high-level rights were carried out. On the one hand, an "International Seminar on Human Mobility" was held with the participation of 200 experts, in order to analyze the problems of this mobile population and management of coordination and cooperation mechanisms to influence public policies in this area. On the other hand, an "Encounter and Forum on Migration and Armed Conflict on the Colombo-Ecuadorian Border" was held with the purpose of generating spaces for work and reflection about the situation of people in forced human mobility and to strengthen actions in the field for the attention, assistance and activation of routes for people who cross borders and travel through the national territory.

#### 2. Advice, guidance and accompaniment activities

Through professional teams connected to the Regional Ombudsmen of La Guajira, Norte de Santander, Arauca, Ocaña, Vichada, Guainía, Vaupés, Putumayo, Amazonas, Nariño, Chocó and Urabá Antioqueño, communities located in border areas and populations from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (migrants, mixed families, returned victims, returned Colombians and members of the Yukpa and Bari indigenous communities) were accompanied and attended. By the end of July 2020, 17,383 people received attention within the framework of the strategy "Houses of Rights" in Soacha (Cundinamarca) in Granizal village (in Bello, Antioquia) and in Soledad (Atlántico) during 84 days of decentralized attention to locals, migrants and people in need of international protection.

### 3. Influence in the formulation of protective measures and mechanisms to protect the rights of the migrant and refugee population and those in need of international protection

The Ombudsman's Office shaped and established the Border Affairs Committee (CAF) by Resolution No. 176 of 2017 dated January 25, 2017 to, among other objectives, follow up on recommendations of the Ombudsman's Report on Border Areas, including meetings with related national and territorial authorities, as well as working groups in Bogotá, Arauca, Urabá and Chocó with institutions and the population moving in border areas.

The Ombudsman's Office also supported the creation and implementation of the Migrant Network Strategy in the departments of Norte de Santander, Guajira, Nariño, Arauca, and Urabá Antioqueño and Chocoano, and the creation of the Network of Corregidores to monitor, accompany and strengthen mobile communities in the Guajira border area with the support of UNHCR, and participated in the creation of the Administrative Registry of Venezuelan Migrants (RAMV).

The Ombudsman's Office also presented the Legislative Project that later became Law 1997 of 2019, "by which a special and exceptional regime is established to acquire Colombian nationality by birth, for sons and daughters of Venezuelans in a situation of regular and irregular migration or of asylum seekers, born in Colombian territory, in order to prevent statelessness."

It has also taken steps to assist the Venezuelan indigenous Yukpa community that settled in Cúcuta and was living on the streets, and has communicated the rights of transnational ethnic communities and the guarantees that the Colombian State should provide them in view of their vulnerable situation.

### 4. Defense Research

Four defense reports related to the migrant and refugee population and people in need of international protection have been issued, as follows:

- Defense Report in Border Areas<sup>116</sup>, carried out with national and territorial entities and communities in the land borders of Colombia. Among the main findings, a high index of Unsatisfied Basic Needs (UBN) and a low capacity of attention and infrastructure in the territories were identified. Likewise, it was also evident the absence of differentiated programs for the migrant population that are susceptible of becoming victims of criminal networks of trafficking and/or smuggling of migrants. In this regard, the Ombudsman's Office made requests to the Ministries of Health, Education, Foreign Affairs, the National Registry of the Civil Status, Migración Colombia, and the National Unit for Disaster Risk Management (UNGRD).
- Defense Report of the rights of girls, boys and adolescents, national or foreign in departments and border municipalities, institutional actions and commissions<sup>117</sup>, result of the characterization of the situation of the rights of children and adolescents, nationals and foreigners, at risk or victims of sexual violence, child labor or labor exploitation in the targeted municipalities of the border departments of Amazonas, Arauca, Boyacá, Cesar, Chocó, Guajira, Guainía, Nariño, Norte de Santander, Putumayo, Vaupés and Vichada.

<sup>116</sup>Ombudsman's Office (January 25 of 2017), "Defense Report on border areas, a roadmap for the construction of public policies in these territories". Available at: <https://www.defensoria.gov.co/es/nube/destacados/5963/Informe-defensorial-sobre-zonas-de-frontera-una>

<sup>117</sup>Ombudsman's Office(2018), "Defense Report". Available at: <https://www.defensoria.gov.co/public/pdf/Derechos-ninos-ninas-adolescentes-frontera.pdf>

- Defense Report, gender analysis and human mobility at the border<sup>118</sup>, on women and people of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities (OSIGD) in situations of forced displacement and need for international protection, at the borders with Panamá, Ecuador, Perú, Brazil and Venezuela.

## Challenges

- To contribute to the issuance of a Law that creates a National Migration System based on human rights that recognize migrants, refugees and people in need of international protection based on their needs and rights as human beings.
- To advance qualification processes for national and territorial public servants who are in charge of and responsible for the institutional response to the migrant population, those in need of international protection, asylum seekers, and refugees.
- To promote a campaign to prevent and protect migrants from xenophobia and hate crimes.
- To promote a process of regulation and/or massive international protection of the irregular migrant population of Venezuelan origin who are present in Colombian territory.
- To promote and accompany institutional improvement to investigate and punish crimes related to trafficking and smuggling migrants.
- To contribute to protecting the defense rights and due process of migrants before the administrative immigration sanctioning regime and the criminal system.

The Ombudsman's Office expresses its commitment to continue collaborating and supporting public entities towards the respect and guarantee of rights of the migrant population, in need of international protection, asylum seekers and refugees in Colombia and nationals abroad.

## Attorney General's Office

### Protection of the rights of girls and boys born in the national territory and at risk of statelessness

Within the framework of the preventive function and in the development of a process of Superior Monitoring with respect to the situation of children and adolescents who present high permanence under the system of protection of the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare (ICBF), the General Attorney's Office of the Nation evidenced the situation of a countless number of children, with Venezuelan parents, born in national territory, who had their right to nationality stripped as a result of the situation in the neighboring country and against which it was impossible for the Colombian state to take certain legal measures of protection in their favor that would guarantee their rights, among them, their right to have a family and not to be separated from it. For this reason, together with high-level officials from the competent entities, possible legal mechanisms were evaluated to regulate the situation of more than 24,000 Venezuelan children who were born in the national territory and who were at risk of statelessness.

The result of this initiative was materialized under Resolution 8470 of 2019, issued by the National Civil Registry Office, which allows this population to initiate procedures aimed at acquiring Colombian nationality. The measure adopted by the Colombian state showed that the protection of children's rights transcends borders.

<sup>118</sup>Ombudsman's Office (April 1st, 2020), "Defense Report". Available at: <https://www.defensoria.gov.co/es/nube/noticias/9273/Informe-defensorial-An%C3%A1lisis-de-g%C3%A9nero-y-movilidad-humana-en-frontera-Defensor%C3%ADa-informe-defensorial.htm>

### Public hearing for the eradication of human trafficking and sexual exploitation of migrant girls, adolescents and women in Santander and Norte de Santander

On July 10, 2019, in the city of Cúcuta, the Attorney General's Office led the VI Public Hearing on the Fight against Human Trafficking, Abuse and Sexual Exploitation of Venezuelan migrant women, children and adolescents in Colombia, which was aimed at raising awareness on the trafficking and sexual exploitation that affects the population of Santander and, especially, the migrant population in the region. The hearing culminated with the signing of the Great Pact for the fight against these violations in order to join efforts aimed at eliminating these serious Human Rights violations.

This scenario allowed the departmental governments of Santander and Norte de Santander to be accountable to the control body and the citizens, and to reinforce actions in the fight against human trafficking and sexual exploitation of women, adolescents and girls in their territories.

During the hearing, it became clear that the migrant population, being a group that is in a highly vulnerable condition and in deplorable socio-economic situations, with high rates of unemployment, lack of opportunities, malnutrition, labor exploitation, psychological effects, neglect of their health and physical, sexual and reproductive integrity and constant violations of their human rights, is at extreme risk of being subjected to human trafficking for sexual exploitation, whose victims are mainly girls, adolescents and women. The above is confirmed by the survey carried out by the Observatory of the Women's Secretariat of Bogotá (2018)<sup>119</sup>, where it was found that of 7,094 people consulted in a situation of prostitution in the city, 2,316 (32.7%) are foreigners and of these 2,312 are Venezuelans (99.8%). 84.1% of them began to be sexually exploited after

their arrival in Colombia, 23.7% consider that this is the only option they have and 20.2% state that this is the activity they are forced to carry out.

This hearing in Santander is part of eight public hearings that the Attorney General's Office led throughout the country aimed at fighting these crimes. Currently, with the support of UNICEF and the IDB, a follow-up of compliance of the pact is being done, a strategic action to guarantee migrant children and women a life free from one of the worst forms of violence.

### Fight against xenophobia

The Attorney General's Office issued Directive 005 of April 8, 2019, with the purpose of preventing the use of xenophobic speeches against the Venezuelan refugee and migrant population by candidates running for election on October 27, 2019. As a complement, they led the campaign "Aquí Cabemos Todos" (There is room in here for all of us), whose purpose is to raise awareness about the condition of the migrant population that has been forced to seek opportunities in the national territory and to bring the message to the citizens and authorities to promote harmonious and peaceful coexistence with foreigners and migrants, especially with those who come from the neighboring country and who are in the country due to the social, economic and political situation.

On the other hand, the control entity issued Directive 012 of March 31, 2020, through which it pronounced on the strategic aspects that should be included in the territory development plans, among them, guidelines for the protection of the migrant population.

Currently, the entity is working together with international cooperation, in particular with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), on a project for institutional strengthening in the area of public policy on migration, which provides for the issuance of an educational document on the rights of migrants and migration management in Colombia, as well as the creation of a monitoring tool for the territory development plans that develop migration components.

<sup>119</sup>Women's District Secretariat (July of 2019), "Diagnostic document and identification of strategic factors". Available at: [http://www.sdp.gov.co/sites/default/files/diagnostico\\_politica\\_publica\\_de\\_actividades\\_sexuales\\_pagadas.pdf](http://www.sdp.gov.co/sites/default/files/diagnostico_politica_publica_de_actividades_sexuales_pagadas.pdf)

### Aiding the migrant population and border closure during the health emergency caused by COVID-19

Once the national government decreed the health emergency in March 2020, the Attorney General of the Nation ordered the creation of a work team within the entity to follow up on the issues that arose from closing the borders and the effects that the situation caused by the COVID-19 had on the migrant population. The control body has issued early warnings to prevent rights violation of the migrant population.

In the same vein, it issued Directive 017 of 2020 in order to provide “compliance with protocols and guidelines for the transfer of the migrant population that is in the national territory.” The instrument calls on various entities to work in a coordinated manner to comply with the protocol route regarding the exit, entrance, moving, transport, and feeding of migrants who, although in Colombia, voluntarily wished to return to their country or to a neighboring country, as appropriate.

Similarly, the Attorney General of the Nation has paid special attention to border points located in the departments of Nariño, Arauca, Norte de Santander and La Guajira that require guidance from national and territorial government authorities to adopt health, public order and basic care measures for those migrants who enter Colombia via porous borders or who, while in the country, wish to travel to their place of origin. The Regional and Provincial Attorney’s Offices have done a strict surveillance of the actions of governors and mayors, intervening among other aspects.

From the disciplinary missionary axis, the control entity currently carries out different actions through which it studies, analyzes and assesses the behavior of local governors in the face of possible breaches of the aforementioned directive and of the protocols and regulations defined by the central government. In fact, the entity has investigated alleged xenophobic behavior or actions that allow the irregular transport of migrants, especially Venezuelans, without compliance with the biosecurity protocols and a safe and dignified transportation



# Transitory Commission to Monitor the Venezuelan Migration Crisis within the National Context

## H.R. Adriana Magali Matiz Vargas

Member of the House of Representatives  
Congress of the Republic of Colombia

The Transitory Commission to Monitor the Venezuelan Migrant Crisis was created by Resolution 2982 of December 4, 2018, by Representatives Adriana Magali Matiz and Juanita Goebertus, among others. The purpose of the Transitory Commission is to promote a coordinated work among public and private entities, control bodies and academic communities, for the benefit of Venezuelans and Colombians who have returned to the country in the face of the serious social, economic, political and institutional crisis faced by the Venezuelan state.

The role played by the Transitory Commission created to Monitor the Venezuelan Migrant Crisis within the Congress of the Republic has been that of: i) promoting dialogue between the Congress of the Republic and the different sectors, ii) carrying out a special follow-up to all those commitments that the National Government acquires in view of the Venezuelan migrant crisis, and iii) coordinating all the institutional actions aimed at achieving the issuance of the Immigration Law and in addition creating a immigration policy that includes mechanisms for labor mobility, social integration and anti-xenophobia.

In the development of its functions, the members of the Transitory Commission created to Monitor the Venezuelan Migrant Crisis have promoted work spaces with different academic and political sectors. This has allowed them to enrich their position and knowledge on the Venezuelan migrant crisis. Additionally, it has highlighted the need to have a comprehensive migration law that will allow to cope with the current scenario, but also generate the necessary conditions to face the phenomenon in the long term.

On the other hand, the Colombian State has organized a series of actions to address the various challenges in humanitarian, social and international policy matters. The Congress of the Republic has not been unaware of this problem and understands its role in proposing solutions to the current problem within the institutional organization; therefore, the Transitory Commission has been carrying out various actions to address the Venezuelan migrant crisis, such as:

## 1. Inter-party pact

The development of an inter-party pact which was signed by the different parties on March 20, 2019 and where several commitments were advanced as follows:

- i) To eliminate all practices of language and/or speech by candidates and other members of the electoral campaigns that promote, incite or make apologies for xenophobia, racial discrimination and intolerance against migrants in Colombian territory.
- ii) Give no support to candidates who engage in xenophobic practices or emit xenophobic statements and to require from those candidates who are endorsed a signature of their commitment that they will not act or send messages of a xenophobic nature both during their electoral campaigns and in the exercise of their functions.

## 2. Sessions of the Transitory Commission

The Transitory Commission created to Monitor the Venezuelan Migrant Crisis from the House of Representatives and the Interim Committee for the Monitoring to the Declaration of Cúcuta by Venezuela have held joint sessions to monitor the problems surrounding the crisis in Venezuela, and it should be noted that:

- i) On October 2, 2019, a session of the Transitory Commission was held in which 20 of the deputies who are currently being persecuted by the regime of Nicolás Maduro participated. In addition, congressmen from Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Venezuela and other nations participated in order to coordinate a comprehensive migration policy with common issues among all the countries of the region; likewise, the meeting was the stage for the creation of inter-parliamentary alliances.
- ii) On March 25, 2020, a virtual session was held where the Transitory Commissions of the House of Representatives and Senate met together with the Advisory Office for Venezuelan Migration from the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia, Felipe Muñoz, where the response and contingency plan of COVID-19 was communicated in the face of the Venezuela migration challenge. The commissions called on the Advisor regarding the strengthening of the border, the strengthening of the health system in the border departments and the validation of medical degrees as a possible incorporation to the Colombian health system in response to the situation generated by the COVID-19.

## 3. Requests

The Transitory Commission to Monitor the Venezuelan Migrant Crisis from the House of Representatives and the Transitory Commission for the Monitoring to the Declaration of Cúcuta by Venezuela have jointly made different requests regarding the issue of Venezuelan migrants, such as:

- i) Request made to all Colombian departments so that the governors, elected for the period 2020-2023, will include in the Departmental Development Plan, actions to guarantee a safe, organized, regular and unhindered migration. Understanding migration as a long-term national reality, which requires joint work to solve issues such as access to health, education, income generation, humanitarian aid and border management, security and coexistence, protection and gender, girls, boys, adolescents and ethnic groups.
- ii) Request to President Iván Duque, in response to the situation generated by COVID-19 and the situation of migrants in Colombia, through which he was asked to prioritize the mechanisms for validating migrants' medical degrees, in order to incorporate Venezuelan doctors into the Colombian health system in response to COVID-19, as well as to open a channel for humanitarian assistance for migrants.

## 4. Feedback among experts regarding the migrant topic

The House of Representative's Transitory Commission on the Venezuelan Crisis has had multiple exchanges of ideas with experts on immigration issues in order to have a better perspective when generating laws that seek to effectively address the immigration crisis, and it is worthwhile mentioning:

- i) The exchange of experiences: Local Responses to Migration with the International Republican Institute (IRI), where the experience of Bogotá was discussed by the Secretariat of Social Integration of the Mayor's Office in relation to Venezuelan migration (2017-2019), as well as the experience of the Archdiocese of Palmira in relation to Venezuelan migration.
- ii) Exchange of experiences with Spain: Incorporation of Venezuelan doctors into the Spanish health system in response to COVID-19. This meeting addressed issues such as:



communicating Royal Decree 463 of March 14, 2020 (Spain) that declared the state of alarm to manage the health crisis situation caused by COVID-19 by which migrants are incorporated into the Spanish health system as part of the measures taken.

iii) Discussion with *Semana* magazine in relation to the Venezuelan Migrant Project that the magazine has been developing; at this meeting, the socialization of the Venezuelan Migrant Project, the measures adopted against xenophobia, the section of services in favor of the migrant and the functions of the project's observatory were discussed.

iv) Several virtual dialogues were held with the Sergio Arboleda University and the Interna-

tional Republican Institute in which different Department Development Plans to assist the migrant population were communicated.

v) Multiple working groups have been held with the Venezuelan Observatory of the Universidad El Rosario, where the issue of comprehensive migration policy has been addressed from different perspectives and the relevant legislative needs that it requires.

## 5. Monitoring of bills in progress

The Transitory Commission of the House of Representatives monitors the different bills that have been introduced in the Congress of the Republic in order to determine if they really respond to the legislative needs that have been





evident in the different sectors, to develop proposals and modifications in response to strengthening the comprehensive immigration policy.

With regard to this point, it is important to note that at present, together with the technical support provided by the International Republican Institute (IRI), an analysis of the various legislative needs in Colombia with respect to the issue of Venezuelan migrants is being carried out, with the aim of influencing the bills currently in the Congress of

the Republic, in a proactive manner, in addition to proposing other projects that seek to meet the needs of the migrant population.

By means of the aforementioned actions, the Transitory Commission of the House of Representatives has played an active role in the current immigration crisis and has promoted a continuous dialogue among the different sectors in order to respond to the diverse legislative needs regarding the Venezuelan crisis.





# BALANCE AND CONCLUSIONS

Photo credits: Hanz Rippe for USAID/Colombia (pp. 226-227, 237)  
Greta Granados for the World Bank (p. 232)



## Migration Costs

### Tax balance sheet

As a consequence of the high immigration flow that Colombia has had in recent years, the demand for public services in the country has increased significantly, especially in border areas, and on many occasions exceeds the existing supply capacity. The World Bank<sup>120</sup> estimated that between 0.26% and 0.41% of the GDP is required to provide access to public services to the migrant population and the population that returns annually. In turn, Fedesarrollo<sup>121</sup> calculated the fiscal cost associated with providing goods and services to assist migrants, concluding that it would be between 0.19% and 0.42% of the GDP given the growth of the migrant population in the national territory. On the other hand, according to a macroeconomic analysis carried out by Corficolombiana<sup>122</sup>, the impact associated with Venezuelan migration corresponded to 0.5% of the GDP by 2019, and it is expected that the percentage will be reduced to 0.1% in 2023 (Table 20). Finally, according to a study by the Banco de la República<sup>123</sup>, the fiscal cost of migration could fluctuate between 0.19% and 0.42% between 2020 and 2022, depending on the total number of migrants to whom the State provides services.

---

<sup>120</sup>World Bank. “Migration from Venezuela to Colombia - Impacts and response strategies in the short and medium term”. (Page 23).

<sup>121</sup>Fedesarrollo. “Elements for a public policy to face the crisis in Venezuela”. (Page 97).

<sup>122</sup>Corficolombiana. “Fiscal effect of Venezuelan migration”. (Page 2).

<sup>123</sup>Banco de la República. *Working Papers on Regional and Urban Economy. Fiscal Impact of Venezuelan Migration*.

**Table 20. Estimates of the fiscal cost associated with migration from Venezuela**

Source	Percentage of the GDP	Billion COP	Million USD
World Bank (2018)	0.26% - 0.41%	2,563 - 4,042 (2018p)	867 - 1,367
Fedesarrollo (2018)	0.19% - 0.42%	1,873 - 4,140 (2018p)	633 - 1,400
Corficolombiana (2019)	0.5%	5,312 (2019pr)	1,618
Banco de la República (2020)	0.19% - 0.26%	2,018 - 2,762 (2019pr)	615 - 841

\* Average Representative Market Exchange Rate [TRM] 2018: 2,956.43 COP

\*\* Average Representative Market Exchange Rate [TRM] 2019: 3,281.09 COP

Data presented in this section gives insight on the theory of the virtuous circle of socioeconomic integration, where it is argued that as long as the migrant population does not become part of the formal labor market, it will not be subject to tax contributions, which decreases tax collection and increases social spending. Aiding migrants find formal jobs and businesses has a direct effect on increasing consumption and investment, which in turn generates greater economic growth and higher revenues. To the extent that this process is carried out, it will be possible to see how public spending - which at this moment fluctuates between 0.19% and 0.5% of the GDP - decreases for this population segment, and living conditions of migrants improve.

## Investment Balance

Support to migrants from Venezuela has been a priority for the government, mainly in the sectors of early childhood care, health and education. According to CONPES 3950 (Table 21), to develop the actions indicated in the document to finance the four year period, approximately USD 106 million would be needed. This budget includes only the 16 strategies for the attention and integration of the migrant population from Venezuela described in the CONPES and does not take into account the budget associated with the comprehensive care.

**Table 21. Quadrennium  
Finance estimate - CONPES 3950**

Entity	Number of Shares	Cost (in millions)				Total
		2018	2019	2020	2021	
Ministry of National Education	10	COP 38 USD 0.01	COP 2,911 USD 0.8	COP 2,842 USD 0.8	COP 748 USD 0.2	COP 6,539 USD 1.81
Ministry of Work	2		COP 320 USD 0.1	COP 330 USD 0.1	COP 339 USD 0.1	COP 989 USD 0.3
SENA [National Training Center]	3		COP 3,737 USD 1	COP 2,302 USD 0.6	COP 2,114 USD 0.6	COP 8,153 USD 2.2
Public Employment Service Unit	2		COP 400 USD 0.1	COP 412 USD 0.1	COP 424 USD 0.1	COP 1,236 USD 0.3
Victims Unit (x)	5	COP 410 USD 0.1	COP 421 USD 0.1	COP 434 USD 0.1	COP 447 USD 0.1	COP 1,712 USD 0.5
Ministry of Health and Social Protection(x)	6	COP 193 USD 0.05	COP 641 USD 0.2	COP 402 USD 0.1	COP 422 USD 0.1	COP 1,658 USD 0.4
National Health Institute [INS]	1		COP 42 USD 0.01	COP 42 USD 0.01	COP 43 USD 0.01	COP 126 USD 0.03
Colombian Institute of Family Welfare [ICBF]	10		COP 122,479 USD 32.6	COP 126,154 USD 33.6	COP 126,154 USD 34.6	COP 378,575 USD 100.7
Ministry of Mines and Energy	2	COP 28 USD 0.007	COP 28 USD 0.06	COP 213 USD 0.06	COP 213 USD 0.06	COP 667 USD 0.2
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	3	COP 185 USD 0.05	COP 2,150 USD 0.6	COP 2,150 USD 0.6	COP 2,150 USD 0.6	COP 6,635 USD 1.8
Ministry of Interior	8		COP 376 USD 0.1	COP 256 USD 0.07	COP 38 USD 0.01	USD 670 COP 0.2
National Unit for Disaster Risk Management [UNGRD]	4		COP 15,819 USD 4.2			COP 15,819 USD 4.2
Total	56	COP 854 USD 0.2	COP 149,508 USD 39.8	COP 135,537 USD 36	COP 136,881 USD 36.4	COP 422,779 USD 112.5

Source: National Planning Department [DNP], 2018

According to figures reported, in 2019 the ICBF invested more than USD 66 million to provide care in its four programs (Table 22). The Ministry of Health invoiced for services over USD 139 million, leaving a deficit of USD 107 million as of November 2019 (Table 23), the Ministry of Education invested more than USD 116 million just in tuition

(Table 24), and the National Registry invested more than USD 527,000 for the *Childhood First* program. Despite the fact that care for migrants has been provided in all sectors, not all entities have a specific item within their budget and, likewise, not all care/service costs are included in detail in the budget information.

**Table 22. ICBF Investment (2019)**

ICBF Investment – 2019		
Item	Total investment	Cost (USD)
Early Childhood	COP 127,132,710,861	USD 31,873,619
Nutrition	COP 2,602,615,889	USD 652,505
Families and Communities	COP 758,936,315	USD 190,274
Childhood and Adolescence	COP 2,444,162,141	USD 612,779
Total	COP 132,938,425,205	USD 33,329,178

\*Exchange rate (05.04.2020): COP 3,988.65.

**Table 23. Ministry of Health Budget (2019)**

Resources of the Ministry of Health - 2019		
Item	Total Investment	Cost (USD)
Investment in vaccines	COP 1,642,000,000	USD 411,668
Resources allocated	COP 80,000,000,000	USD 20,056,911
Invoicing of services	COP 381,328,150,362	USD 95,603,311.9

\*Exchange rate (05.04.2020): COP 3,988.65.

Table 24. Ministry of Education (2019)

Item	Total Investment	Cost (USD)
Tuition cost	COP 457,618,705,926	USD 114,730,223

\*Exchange rate (05.04.2020): COP 3,988.65

The above balance reiterates the need for migrants from Venezuela to be effectively integrated into the Colombian economy so that the government's investment in providing social services can gradually decrease, and similarly, costs associated with humanitarian assistance can be reduced to transition to more inclusive care/service.





## Conclusions

### Strategic Challenges: Colombia's Decision

Human flows are part of the development of nations. Historical evidence shows that the exchange of knowledge, experiences, customs and rites has been a fundamental factor in the progress of humanity. Latin America today is the product of diverse immigration processes that have shaped its figure, and Colombia is no exception.

Even so, immigration phenomena such as the Venezuelan one in recent years has not been part of our recent history. Despite the fact that Colombia has received populations throughout its two centuries of history, no country could be prepared for the volume of people and the short time in which the Venezuelan exodus has occurred.

Due to the fact that Colombia's experience with migration in recent decades has been related to the departure of its citizens, the country, its institutions and its people have made the decision to welcome and integrate the population coming from Venezuela, overcoming the obstacles that have arisen along the way.

This document reflects the most important elements on which Colombia has focused its commitment to integration, and which it presents knowing that there is a long way to go, but with the conviction that this experience is an example for a world in which millions of people are forced to migrate every year, and where some countries some build walls to stop them instead of bridges to shorten the road.

Facing this challenge, the Colombian Government has identified, along with all the international cooperation allies, local authorities, and control agencies, and of course, with civil society and migrants, the lines of action on which the work of welcoming and integrating the migrant population from Venezuela should be emphasized. That way, this experience becomes a true engine for development in Colombia and a more open, inclusive and equitable society can be constructed.

There are 5 areas in which the country's efforts, and those of all its allies, are focused to ensure that this migration process continues to consolidate as a chapter Colombia can be proud of in its history:

#### Increase regularization rates

Of the 1,748,716 Venezuelans living in Colombia wishing to stay, up to June of 2020 only 43.6% have regular immigration status, and the full effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on these figures is not yet perceptible in its real magnitude.

For this reason, Colombia has decided on an ambitious goal for the next few years. It is expected that by 2022 this figure will increase considerably. This position is based on recognizing the great difficulties that a Venezuelan has to access regular immigration status, therefore making immigration registration more difficult.

It is essential, in the short term, to strengthen and expand the range of exceptional measures that have been developed, such as the various Special Permits of Permanence (PEP).

In this sense, it is essential to make the mechanisms to renew the PEP with the Administrative Registry of Venezuelan Migrants in Colombia (RAMV) more flexible. This also strengthens the State's capacity to characterize the migrant population and improve the design of public policies to include them.

Likewise, different government institutions recognize the evident need to promote PEPs such as the one launched at the beginning of 2020 to promote formalization, or the one that will be issued in the second semester of the same year to favor the population that is studying and being trained in the country. Even opening the spectrum to new permits that respond to particular needs, such as one for people who have managed to link to seasonal productive activities, a recurrent situation in the agricultural sector.

Colombia's limited experience in this area has meant that the current system presents obstacles for many migrants who decided to establish their lives in this country, closing opportunities. This immigration phenomenon represents an opportunity for the country to restructure its immigration system according to the conditions of the 21st century.

The adoption of the Migration Law through the Colombian Congress is an example of the country's commitment to establishing a more stable and comprehensive system for all those who arrive in the country and deserves a thorough follow-up by the various actors so that this government's impetus succeeds in building a foundation so that migration be indeed, an engine for the country's development.

### Mitigation of xenophobia and reduction of discriminatory manifestations

The success of all the efforts that Colombia has made to welcome and integrate the migrant population depends on how society adopts this process as part of its daily life. This makes it clear that a transversal risk of the whole condition lies in the citizen rejection of the migration phenomenon.

In this sense, the coordinated, systematic and strategic efforts to combat any xenophobic manifestation and to inform about the development of this social process require permanent support from all the actors involved.

Generating and providing complete, pertinent and easily accessible information on all care packages for all migrants and all institutions and individuals that provide services in this process is an unavoidable priority. Progress has been made in this task from different platforms, but it is essential to coordinate these efforts so that any resident in Colombia can find out quickly and easily what is happening in this phenomenon.

Likewise, the different efforts of national and local governments, international and cooperation organizations, and civil society to bring the issue of migration

into the public debate imply a coordinated task so that public conversation can take place within the limits of accurate information and non-discrimination.

For this reason, the coordination of communication strategies of different actors is a constant effort that requires a space mainly devoted to the action plans that are being developed.

### Coordinate care/service plans to reduce poverty

Venezuelan migration has become a factor that affects Colombia's poverty indicators. Although the number of homes in poverty decreased between 2018 and 2019, in the same period this figure increased in homes with at least one migrant. The COVID-19 pandemic made these conditions even worse and it can be said that progress in the task of welcoming and integrating the country's migrant population has been set back by more than a year because of this situation.

Although the effects of the pandemic on poverty indicators were not public at the time of writing this document, it is clear that one of the serious consequences for the country is that the quality of life of a large part of the population has been reduced, and to a greater extent that of migrants, given their vulnerable condition and their weak support networks in the country.

To follow the parameters of care and support to the population living in poverty, which have been successful in recent years in the country, is a way to coordinate the efforts of support to migrants, taking into account that investment in migrants is an integral investment that benefits the entire Colombian population.

In this sense, prioritizing an increase in health insurance rates for migrants to improve sexual and reproductive health plans is one of the pivots that are a basis for improving their quality of life. Likewise, improving efforts to guarantee migrant girls, boys and adolescents access to the Colombian education system becomes imperative to prevent development gaps at an early age. All of the above includes special attention plans for children and women.

Similarly, a lesson learned from the pandemic has been the need to strengthen plans to promote housing for migrants and host communities, which ends up being fundamental to their stability and that will allow them to integrate in other aspects of their lives.

### Implementing economic inclusion and income generation strategies

A phrase that is frequently repeated when talking about migration is that, in the medium term, this phenomenon is an engine for development in the host nations. The economic difficulties that the COVID-19 pandemic brought to Colombia are the ideal scenario to prove that this phrase is true.

2020 was projected as the year when the strategy of economic inclusion and income generation would begin to be implemented. World conditions caused these efforts to be postponed for a few months but it makes their implementation more urgent.

Therefore, progress in the coordination of all mechanisms to reduce obstacles for the economic integration will have a special impetus. Measures to facilitate the procedures for the validation of degrees, access to credit, entrepreneurship programs and access to professional training are a priority for the Government.

The interaction with the private sector must be deepened. Trade unions and economic leaders have expressed their commitment to migration as an engine for the country's development, and it is time to promote integration with all the efforts that are being made to make these pronouncements a reality. One example is the Special Economic and Social Area Law (Zese Law), which after its enactment has had interesting results in the benefited regions, but under the new post-pandemic economic conditions, deserves a review to ensure that it continues to have the expected impact.

### Improving security for immigrants and host communities

In recent years, there has been a gradual growth in the presence of migrants as victims of acts of violence, as well as in the number of people captured for crimes

or behavior contrary to cohabitation. This situation is beginning to be evidenced mainly by the co-optation of migrants in conditions of high vulnerability by criminal groups established in the country.

This situation raises the challenge of improving information for migrants so they will understand better the dynamics they are facing in the process of integrating into the country, as well as strengthening communication channels so that they are better aware of the risks and other existing opportunities.

All of this is coordinated with the efforts of the Public Force against the organized criminal gangs in the country, based on the premise that these processes are not alien to those existing in the country.

— O —

This experience has demonstrated the flexibility of Colombian institutions to respond to new challenges, the ability and interest of different sectors to work together, the willingness to work on policies with a human rights approach, the strength of public servants who are in the forefront supporting migrants, and of course, the generosity of the Colombian people who every day with solidarity, and despite all the difficulties, have decided to welcome and integrate their brothers and sisters from Venezuela.

The coordination and systematization with which the different Colombian authorities, international allies, and civil society, regardless of the changes of governments, face each one of these challenges are the key so that a phenomenon with few precedents in our country will become a reference for the world and for the history of Colombia, an example of how societal integration is the path to greater prosperity for the nation. That is the decision that Colombia made and that we present in this document.

Migration from Venezuela is an opportunity for Colombia's future, thanks to a willingness to move forward and the efforts of each person involved in this process who seek a better future for all those who share this country that millions of people from Venezuela now call home.









# ANNEX – REGULATIONS MIGRATORY PHENOMENON

Photo credits: Muse Mohammed for IOM (pp. 238-239)  
©ACNUR, Reynesson Damasceno (pp. 264-265)

Sector	Type of regulations	Year	Number
Huma Rights Ombudsman's Office	Resolution	2017	176 of 2017
Commerce	Circular Letter of the Financial Superintendence	2017	98 of 2017
	Circular Letter of the Financial Superintendence	2017	68 of 2017 and 60 of 2018
	Law	2019	2010 of 2019
	Decree	2019	2112 of November 24, 2019
	Memorandum	2019	Procedure 334
Education	Circular Ministry of Education	2015	45 of 2015
	Circular Ministry of Education	2016	07 of 2016
	Circular Ministry of Education	2016	17 of 2016
	Joint Circular Ministry of Education and Migración Colombia	2017	01 of 2017
	Resolution of the Colombian Institute for the Evaluation of Education [ICFES]	2018	284 of 2018
	Joint Circular Ministry of Education and Migración Colombia	2018	16 of 2018
	Resolution of the Colombian Institute for the Evaluation of Education [ICFES]	2019	624 of 2019
	Resolution of the Colombian Institute for the Evaluation of Education [ICFES]	2020	298
	Draft Decree of the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Foreign Affairs	2020	Not yet assigned
Energy	Resolution	2017	0266 of March 31, 2017
National Government	CONPES	2018	3950



	Objective
	Incorporation and Institution of the Border Affairs Committee [CAF].
	"Authentication of the Special Permit of Permanence [PEP] of Venezuelan nationals at the time of their hiring."
	Validity of the Special Permit of Permanence [PEP] for the opening and/or contracting of financial products and services.
	By means of which are adopted guidelines for the promotion of economic growth, employment, investment, the strengthening of public finances and the improvement, equity and efficiency of the tax system, in accordance with the objectives promoted under Law 1943 of 2018 and other provisions are issued.
	By which article 268 of the Law 1955 of 2019 is regulated and Section 2 is added to Chapter 23 of Title 1 of Part 2 of Book 1, Decree 1625 of 2016, the Only Regulation on Tax Matters.
	By which the Executive Presidents are informed about Resolution 5797 of July 2017, Decree 1288 of 2018, Resolution 6370 of 2018, Resolution 872 of 2019. Thus establishing as identification documents for Venezuelan citizens in Colombia: Passport, Foreign Identification Card, valid PEP and expired passport with entry stamp and whose time of expiration does not exceed 2 years.
	Care in the educational system to the school-age population mobilized from the Republic of Venezuela.
	Guidance for the care of the school-age population from Venezuela.
	Guidance for the care of the school-age population from Venezuela.
	Provisions for the care in the educational system of foreign minors coming from Venezuela.
	"Registration and application process for the ICFES Saber 11 State Exam, the high school validation exam and the presaber test for Venezuelan nationals."
	Instructions for the care of girls, boys and adolescents from Venezuela in Colombian educational establishments.
	"Presentation of the Saber 11 Exam for Venezuelan nationals registered for the Saber 11 exam with the NES [Number Generated by the Ministry of Education]."
	By which special identification rules are established for the high school validation exam for Venezuelan foreigners and Resolution 675 of 2019 is modified.
	Single Regulations of the Education Sector, Single Regulations of the Labor Sector, regarding the creation of a Special Permit of Permanence for the education sector [PEP-E] and the Special Permit of Permanence for the training and recognition of prior learning [PEP-FR], respectively.
	By which It is established the methodology to be applied in determining the maximum volumes of liquid fuels excluded from VAT and exempted from tariffs and national tax on gasoline and ACPM within each municipality recognized as a border zone and its distribution to the service stations authorized by the Ministry of Mines and Energy.
	Conpes 3950 Document " <i>Strategy for the attention of migration from Venezuela</i> ".

Sector	Type of regulations	Year	Number	
Colombian Institute of Family Welfare [ICBF]	Memorandum	2016	I-2016-112101-0101	
	Memorandum	2017	S-2017-217341-010	
	Memorandum	2017	S-2017-347016-01	
	Memorandum	2017	S-2017-724706-01	
	Memorandum	2018	S2018-078189-0101	
	Memorandum	2018	S-2018-364- 221-01	
	Memorandum	2018	S-2018-776210-0100	
	Memorandum	2019	S-2019-323787-010	
Refuge	Decree	2015	1067	

	Objective
	Addressed to the Early Childhood Directorate, with the aim of providing a concept regarding the care of Venezuelan children in vulnerable conditions in the early childhood services of the ICBF.
	Guidance for including foreign children in Early Childhood programs, making clear the procedures established in the operational manuals for targeting, prioritizing and entering into the Cuéntame information system.
	"Guidance on the care of Venezuelan girls, boys and adolescents addressed to regional directors, technical assistance coordinators and family advocates. The memorandum sets out the legal framework for the protection of foreign children and adolescents, actions to guarantee the right to nationality and identity, the right to consular assistance for adolescents entering the System of Criminal Responsibility for Adolescents [SRPA] and mentions special cases such as the risk of statelessness."
	"Provide guidance on applications for refugee status, including the legal framework for refugee status under international treaties, the legal framework supporting the participation of ICBF and family services divisions in the refugee status recognition process, the procedure for applying for refugee status, and the main issues to be taken into account such as non-discrimination, best interests of the child, and non-victimization."
	Follow-up on the management of children without identification, linked to early childhood programs; guidance is provided to Directors, Regional Directors and early childhood teams so that they take into account what action should be taken with the EAS and UDS (Service Units) where migrant users who do not have an identity card are included, and how to accompany the families of these users.
	Guidance on the care route for migrant adolescents linked to the System of Criminal Responsibility for Adolescents, with emphasis on the guidelines regarding the right to consular assistance.
	" Addressed to Regional Directors, Technical Assistance Coordinators, Family Defenders, Family Police Stations and Police Inspectors, it provides guidelines for the care of girls, boys and adolescents from Venezuela, with special consideration for those who are unaccompanied. Among other things, the memorandum sets forth the legal justification for the care of Venezuelan children and adolescents in Colombian territory on the part of administrative authorities, and the special consideration to be given to unaccompanied children and adolescents and the respective actions to be taken to achieve family reunification, and the procedure for a possible repatriation "
	The Directorate of Children and Adolescents [DNA] issued memorandum S-2019-323787-010[1] addressed to Regional Directors, Technical Assistance Directors and Supervisors of Contribution Contracts and through which guidance is given on how to include foreign children and adolescents in the DNA care offer. It establishes the criteria for targeting, technical guidelines and operational manuals for DNA programs and strategies, with the aim of reaching the most vulnerable population: Girls, Boys and Adolescents [NNA] who migrate unaccompanied, with high permanence or habitability in the streets, with high risk of recruitment, use and utilization, who are under an active Administrative Process of Re-establishment of Rights, with a diagnosis of malnutrition or risk of it and in general, any child and adolescent who is in a situation of vulnerability or risk of violation of their rights due to dynamics of territorial context or referral from the National Family Welfare System [SNBF].
	By means of which the Single Regulatory Decree of the Administrative Sector of Foreign Affairs is issued (SECTION 3. OF THE APPLICATION FOR RECOGNITION OF THE CONDITION OF REFUGEE).

Sector	Type of regulations	Year	Number	
Regularization	Resolution	2019	0872 of March 5, 2019	
	Resolution	2016	1044 of July 14, 2016	
	Resolution	2017	5797 of July 25, 2017	
	Resolution	2017	1272 of July 28, 2017	
	Resolution	2017	1248 of July 25, 2017	
	Resolution	2018	3317 of 2018	
	Resolution	2018	6370 of August 1st, 2018	
	Resolution	2018	2033 of 2018	
	Resolution	2018	0224 of January 24, 2018	
	Resolution	2018	10677 of December 18, 2018	
	Resolution	2018	3346 of December 21, 2018	
	Resolution	2018	0740 of February 5, 2018	
	Decree	2018	1288 of July 25, 2018	
	Resolution	2018	0361 of February 5, 2018	
	Resolution	2018	3107 of 2018	
	Decree	2018	542 of March 21, 2018	
	Resolution	2019	2540 of 2019	

	Objective
	By which provisions are determined for the entry, transit and departure of the Colombian territory, for the Venezuelan nationals who carry the expired passport.
	Through which the Migration Control Post of Puerto Santander in Norte de Santander is created.
	Whereby the Special Permit of Permanence is created.
	"Whereby the Special Permit of Permanence [PEP] is implemented created by Resolution 5797 of July 25, 2017 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and is established the procedure for its issuance to Venezuelan nationals."
	By which the cost of the issuance of the Border Mobility Card [TMF] for Venezuelan citizens is established, and a fee benefit is granted to the officials of Migración Colombia in the Automatic Migration service.
	"Whereby a new term to access the Special Permit of Permanence [PEP] established is implemented under Resolution number 10677 of December 18, 2018 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs."
	Whereby the issuance of the Special Permit of Permanence [PEP] created under Resolution 5797 of 2017 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is regulated, to be granted to persons registered in the Administrative Registry of Venezuelan Migrants, in accordance with the provisions of Resolution 1288 of July 25, 2018.
	" whereby the issuance of the Special Permit of Permanence [PEP] created under Resolution number 5797 of 2017 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is implemented, to be granted to persons registered in the Administrative Registry of Venezuelan Migrants, pursuant to the provisions of Resolution number 6370 of August 1, 2018".
	"Resolution number 0224 of 2018, which sets forth the rates and prices for the services provided by the Special Administrative Unit for Migration in Colombia, and the value of the costs associated with the issuance of the TMF [Border Mobility Card] and public information on foreigners, for the period of 2018, and certain provisions are abolished."
	Whereby a new term is established to access the Special Permission of Permanence [PEP], created under Resolution 5797 of July 25, 2017 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and other provisions on the matter are determined.
	Whereby the Temporary Transit Entry and Permanence Permit [PIP-TT] is added to Resolution 1220 of 2016.
	Whereby a term is established to access the special permit of permanence, created under Resolution 5797 of July 2017 and other provisions on the matter.
	Whereby measures are adopted to guarantee the access of persons registered in the Administrative Registry of Venezuelan Migrants to the institutional offer and other measures on the return of Colombians.
	Whereby a term is implemented to access the Special Permission of Permanence, established in Resolution 0740 of 2018 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
	Whereby a new term is implemented so that the persons registered in the Administrative Registry of Venezuelan Migrants [RAMV], may have access to the Special Permit of Permanence [PEP], established under Resolution 10064 of December 3, 2018, issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
	Whereby article 140 of Law 1873 of 2017 is partially developed and measures are adopted for the creation of an administrative registry of Venezuelan migrants in Colombia to serve as an input for the design of a Comprehensive Policy of Humanitarian Assistance.
	Whereby the issuance of the Special Permit of Permanence [PEP] created under Resolution 5797 of 2017 is regulated, under the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Government of the Republic of Colombia and the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, dated May 13, 2019.

Sector	Type of regulations	Year	Number
Regularization	Resolution	2019	1465 of 2019
	Resolution	2019	1567 of 2019
	Resolution	2019	3548 of 2019
	Resolution	2019	2278 of 2019
	Resolution	2019	6667 of 2019
	Resolution	2019	3167 of 2019
	Resolution	2019	2634 of May, 2019
	Resolution	2019	3870 of 2019
	Resolution	2020	0240 of 2020
	Resolution	2020	238 of 2020
	Resolution	2020	0238 of 2020
	Circular	2020	Single Circular of vital statistics and identification version 5.
	Resolution	2020	1667
	Resolution	2020	1537
Foreign Affairs	Law	2012	1565 of 2012 and its regulatory decrees

	Objective
	Whereby the issuance of the Special Permit of Permanence [PEP] is implemented, created under Resolution 5797 of 2017, to be granted to Venezuelan nationals who are members of the Armed Forces and Police of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, pursuant to Resolution 2540 of May 21, 2019 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
	By which the procedure aimed at renewing the Special Permit of Permanence [PEP] is implemented, created under Resolution number 5797 dated July 25, 2017, granted between August 3, 2017 and October 31, 2017.
	Through which a Special Complementary Permit of Permanence [PECP] is created.
	Whereby the Special Complementary Permit of Permanence [PECP] is implemented, created under Resolution 3548 of July 3, 2019 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the procedure for its issuance to Venezuelan nationals is established.
	(Official Gazette 51.173), "establishing the procedure to renew the Special Permit of Permanence [PEP] created under Resolution 5797 dated July 25, 2017, granted between February 7, 2018 and June 7, 2018".
	Whereby the criteria for the entry, permanence and exit of nationals and foreigners from the Colombian territory are established; in addition, the mechanisms and regulations applicable in the process of migratory control.
	Whereby the procedure to renew the Special Permit of Permanence [PEP] is implemented, created under Resolution 5797 dated July 25, 2017, granted between August 3, 2017 and October 31, 2017.
	Whereby the procedure to renew the Special Permit of Permanence [PEP] is implemented, created under Resolution 5797 dated July 25, 2017, granted between February 7, 2018 and June 7, 2018.
	Whereby a new term is established to access the Special Permit of Permanence [PEP], created under Resolution 5797 of July 25, 2017 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and other provisions on the matter are issued.
	Whereby a new term is implemented to access the Special Permit of Permanence [PEP], established by Resolution 0240 of January 23, 2020 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
	Whereby a new term to access the Special Permit of Permanence [PEP] is implemented, established under Resolution 0240 of January 23, 2020 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
	This document is a compilation of the registration and identification guidelines contained in previous circulars.
	Whereby the procedure to renew the Specific Permit of Permanence [PEP] granted to persons registered in the Administrative Registry of Venezuelan Migrants is established.
	Whereby the procedure to renew the Special Permit of Permanence [PEP], created under Resolution 5797 dated July 25, 2017, requested and granted between August 1, 2018 and December 21, 2018, to Venezuelan citizens registered in the Administrative Registry of Venezuelan Migrants (RAMV) is implemented.
	The law provides support to Colombian citizens who voluntarily wish to return to the country. Co-nationals who return to the country coming from Venezuela may take advantage of the incentives and benefits established by the law. It establishes 4 types of return. <b>Productive return:</b> allows the development and advise of productive project undertakings. <b>Return to work:</b> allows access to occupational guidance and training to improve labor skills. <b>Solidarity return:</b> is the return made by the Colombian victim of the internal armed conflict and those considered as poor of solemnity. <b>Humanitarian or return for a special cause:</b> return made by the Colombian due to some force majeure situation or special causes.

Sector	Type of regulations	Year	Number
Foreign Affaris	Decree	2014	1030
	Decree	2015	Decree 1814 of 2015 and Decree 1772 of 2015
	Decree	2015	1067 of 2015
	Circular	2017	Circular 025 of February 20, 2017
Ministry of Justice and Law	Circular	2015	059 of March 26, 2015
	Circular	2016	121 of 2016
	Circular	2016	216 of 2016
	Decree	2017	356 of March 3, 2017
	Circular	2017	168 of December 22, 2017
	Circular	2017	064 of May 18, 2017
	Circular	2017	052 of 2017
	Circular	2017	145 of November 17, 2017
	Circular	2018	072 of December 14, 2018
	Circular	2018	071 of December 14, 2018
	Circular	2018	087 of May 17, 2018
	Resolution	2019	8470 of 2019
	Circular	2019	Single Circular of vital statistics and identification version 4.



	Objective
	By which the Intersectoral Commission for Border Development and Integration is created, and other provisions are determined.
	"Whereby exceptional provisions are established to guarantee the family reunification of Colombian nationals deported, expelled or repatriated as a consequence of the declaration of the State of Exception in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. (Repealed)"
	Whereby the Single Regulatory Decree of the Administrative Sector of Foreign Affairs is issued.
	It extended the exceptional measures to guarantee the birth registration of minors, children of Colombians returning to the country from Venezuela or those who still remain in the neighboring country.
	Guidelines to establish the registration in the civil registry office of children of Colombians born in Colombia for the purpose of evidencing nationality.
	To help with the untimely registration of Venezuelan minors, children of Colombian parents, in order to facilitate the obtaining of nationality by adoption, in view of the difficulties that are arising in the neighboring country.
	To help with the untimely registration of Venezuelan minors, children of Colombian parents, in order to facilitate the obtaining of nationality by adoption, in view of the difficulties that are arising in the neighboring country.
	Procedure for the untimely registration in the civil registry office
	It establishes the registration of births of children of foreigners born in Colombia for the purpose of evidencing nationality.
	For the untimely registration in the civil registry office of children of Colombians born in Venezuela.
	Regulate the issue of untimely birth registration, according to Decree 356 of 2017.
	Scope and extension of validity term circular no. 064 of May 18, 2017 - guidelines for the untimely registration in the civil registry office, of children of Colombians born in Venezuela.
	We hereby inform that until December 21, 2018 the National Unit for Disaster Risk Management [UNGRD] will receive the requests for the correction of data from the Administrative Registry of Venezuelan Migrants [RAMV] in accordance with the closing established by Migración Colombia, through Resolution No. 10064 of 2018, for the issuance of the Special Permits of Permanence [PEP] of the Venezuelan migrants registered in the RAMV.
	Currently, it is NOT appropriate to register Venezuelan migrants who were not registered in the RAMV platform, because the deadline established in the Decree has already been met. And to date, the National Government has not issued any additional regulation that modifies the conditions initially set out in Decree 542 of 2018, therefore this Unit must accept and comply with the relevant provisions of the regulations.
	Scope and extension of the validity term of Circular No. 145 of November 17, 2017- Guidelines for the untimely registration in the civil registry office, of children of Colombians born in Venezuela.
	Whereby an administrative measure of temporary and exceptional character is adopted, to include ex officio the note 'Valid to demonstrate nationality' in the Birth Certificates of girls and boys born in Colombia, who are in risk of statelessness, children of Venezuelan parents who do not fulfill the requirement of domicile.
	This document unifies the procedure of the circulars. Page 30 et. seq.

Sector	Type of regulations	Year	Number
Co-national Return	Law	2012	1565 of 2012 and its regulatory Decrees
	Decree	2015	Decree 1814 of 2015 and Decree 1772 of 2015
Health	Decree	2015	1770 and 1978 of 2015
	Decree	2015	1768 of 2015
	Decree	2015	1978 of 2015
	Decree	2016	780 and 1495 of 2016
	Resolution	2016	5246 of 2016
	Ministry of Health Circular	2016	040 of 2016
	Resolution	2017	3015 of 2017
	"Resolution"	2017	3673 of 2017
	Resolution	2017	5305 of 2017
	Decree	2017	2228 of 2017
	Decree	2017	866 of 2017
Ministry of Health Circular	2017	018 of 2017	

	Objective
	<p>The law provides support to Colombian citizens who voluntarily wish to return to the country. Co-nationals who return to the country coming from Venezuela may take advantage of the incentives and benefits established by the law. It establishes 4 types of return. <b>Productive return:</b> allows the development and advise of productive project undertakings. <b>Return to work:</b> allows access to occupational guidance and training to improve labor skills. <b>Solidarity return:</b> is the return made by the Colombian victim of the internal armed conflict and those considered as poor of solemnity. <b>Humanitarian or return for a special cause:</b> return made by the Colombian due to some force majeure situation or special causes.</p>
	<p>Whereby exceptional provisions are established to guarantee the family reunification of Colombian nationals deported, expelled or repatriated as a consequence of the declaration of the State of Exception in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.</p>
	<p>With these regulations, the Government of Colombia declared a State of Economic, Social and Ecological Emergency in part of the National Territory. In development of such declaration, Decree 1978 of 2015 was issued, by means of which the exceptional qualification of Health Promotion Companies of the Subsidized Regimen [EPS] was established in the border municipalities, as a measure to guarantee the insurance of the subsidized regime of this population, as well as its health care.</p>
	<p>Whereby the conditions for affiliation to the General System of Social Security in Health is established for Colombian migrants who have been repatriated, have voluntarily returned to the country, or have been deported or expelled from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.</p>
	<p>Whereby measures to guarantee the assurance to the subsidized regime were adopted, of Colombian migrants who have been repatriated and have returned voluntarily to the country, or have been deported or expelled from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.</p>
	<p>In Decree 1495, which amends articles 2.9.2.5.2, 2.9.2.5.3 and 2.9.2.5.8 of Chapter 5, Title 2, Part 9 of Book 2 of Decree 780 of 2016, the Single Regulation of the Health and Social Protection Sector. The Decrees defined a mechanism to guarantee health insurance for Colombian migrants who were repatriated, voluntarily returned to the country, or who were deported or expelled from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela during the year 2015, by defining them as a special and priority population and their subsequent affiliation to the Subsidized Regime of the Health Social Security General System, through census lists.</p>
	<p>Whereby those responsible for the generation, consolidation and reporting of the census lists of the special populations are established and the terms, data structure, flow and validation of the information are defined.</p>
	<p>Intensified epidemiological surveillance for diphtheria in departments bordering the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.</p>
	<p>Through which the Special Permit of Permanence [PEP] is included in the information systems of the Social Protection System as a valid identification document.</p>
	<p>Whereby resources are allocated to pay for emergency care provided in Colombian territory to nationals of bordering countries.</p>
	<p>Whereby resources are allocated to pay for emergency care provided in Colombian territory to nationals of bordering countries.</p>
	<p>Whereby article 2.1.5.1 of the Decree 780 of 2016 is modified, Single Regulation of the Health and Social Protection Sector in relation to the affiliated to the Subsidized Regime.</p>
	<p>To ensure the co-financing of emergency care for Venezuelans in the public network that is ready to provide these services, as well as the health sector has adapted and improved its systems for recording and reporting such care.</p>
	<p>Guidelines for the control of yellow fever and requirement of international certification or national vaccination card.</p>

Sector	Type of regulations	Year	Number
Health	Ministry of Health Circular	2017	029 of 2017
	Circular	2017	012 of 2017
	Circular	2017	025 of 2017
	Resolution	2018	3954 of 2018
	Ministry of Health Circular	2018	0004 of 2018
	Ministry of Health Circular	2018	020 of 2018
	Ministry of Health Circular	2018	006 of 2018
	Resolution	2019	5869 of 2018
	Resolution	2019	1175 of 2019
	Resolution	2019	1176 of 2019
	Resolution	2019	3343 of 2019
	Response Plan	2019	January of 2019
	Decree	2020	064 of 2020
	Labor/Work	Circular	2017
Ministry of Labor Resolution		2018	4386 of 2018
Decree		2020	117 of January 28, 2020
Resolution		2020	0289of January 30, 2020
Draft Decree		2020	
Circular			1 - 6060
Visas	Resolution	2017	6045 of August 2nd, 2017

	Objective
	"It modifies Circular 012 and stipulates the forwarding of data to the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Individual Registry for the Provision of Health Services [RIPS], of the care provided to foreign persons in the Health Services Providing Institutions."
	It specifies the Individual Registry for the Provision of Health Services [RIPS] that supports binational studies related to the demand for health services and the availability and sufficiency of supply as well as to know the behavior of fees in the border departments.
	Strengthening of public health actions to respond to the situation of migration of population from Venezuela. By means of which Governors, Mayors and Health Secretaries were requested to undertake actions on six work fronts to ensure the safety of the migrant population coming from Venezuela and to determine the levels of health care.
	Whereby resources are allocated in order to pay for emergency care provided in Colombian territory to nationals of bordering countries.
	Instructions for the execution of public health actions within the framework of the Law on Electoral Guarantees, effective 2018.
	It specifies the use of transfer resources made by this Ministry from FOSYGA [Security and Guarantee Fund] resources (currently administered by ADRES) of previous periods, which may be used to pay debts for health services and technologies not covered by the Subsidized Capitation Payment [UPC] of the Subsidized Regime.
	It dictates permanent instructions of prevention, attention, surveillance and control to avoid the appearance of Measles and Rubella cases in the country and for actions of Port Health.
	Whereby resources to pay for emergency care provided in Colombian territory to nationals of bordering countries are allocated.
	Whereby resources to pay for emergency care provided in Colombian territory to nationals of bordering countries are allocated.
	Whereby resources to pay for emergency care provided in Colombian territory to nationals of bordering countries are allocated.
	Whereby resources to pay for emergency care provided in Colombian territory to nationals of bordering countries are allocated.
	Response Plan from the health sector to the migration phenomenon.
	Whereby articles 2.1.3.11, 2.1.3.13, 2.1.5.1, 2.1.7.7, 2.1.7.8 and 2.1.3.17 are amended, and articles 2.1.5.4 and 2.1.5.5 of Decree 780 of 2016 are added, in relation to members of the subsidized regime, ex officio membership and other provisions.
	Whereby the framework for the attention to the Venezuelan population in the context of the management and placement services developed by the authorized providers of the public employment service is stipulated.
	Whereby the Single Registry of Foreign Workers in Colombia [RUTEC] is created and implemented.
	Whereby Section 3 is added to Chapter 8, Title 6, Part 2, Book 2 of Decree 1072/2015, Single Regulatory Decree of the Labor Sector, regarding the creation of a Special Permit of Permanence for Fostering of Formalization [PEP-FF].
	Whereby it is implemented the issuance of the Special Permit of Permanence for Fostering of Formalization [PEP-FF] created by means of the Decree 117 of January 28 of the Ministry of Labor.
	Single Regulatory of the Education Sector, regarding the creation of a Special Permit of Permanence for the Education Sector [PEP-E].
	Guidelines for the provision of training services, certification of labor skills, employment management and entrepreneurship services to Venezuelan citizens and other foreigners.
	Whereby visa provisions are enacted and Resolution 551 2 of September 4, 2015 is repealed.

Sector	Type of regulations	Year	Number
Migratory Working Groups	Decree of the Regional Government of Nariño	2018	364 of 2018
	Decree of the Mayor's Office of Pasto	2018	0497 of 2018
	Decree of the Mayor's Office of Ipiales	2019	073 of 2019
	Decree of the District Management of Cali	2018	078 of 2018
	Decree of the District Management of Cali	2019	0658 of 2019
	Decree of the Mayor's Office of Bucaramanga	2020	052 of 2020
Statelessness / Congress of the Republic	Law	2019	1997 of 2019
	Law	2012	588
Return of Venezuelans	Resolution	2020	1265 of May 28, 2020
Prosecutor's Office	Directive	2019	005 of April 8, 2019
	Directive	2020	012 of March 31, 2020
	Directive	2020	017 of April 30, 2020
National Training Service [SENA]	Circular	2019	115 of July of 2019
<b>Other key documents</b>			
Territorial Development Plans	Document	2019	
Income Generation	Document	2019	
Academic Society	Document	2018	
Covid-19	Decree of the Ministry of Justice and Law	2020	491 of 2020
	Resolution of Migración Colombia	2020	Resolution No. 1006 of 2020
	Guidelines of the Ministry of Health	2020	
	Resolution de Migración Colombia	2020	Resolution No. 1265 of 2020
	Decree of the Ministry of the Interior	2020	Decree number 403 of 2020

	Objective
	Whereby the migration working group of the department is created and regulated.
	Whereby the working group to coordinate and serve the Venezuelan migrant population is created.
	Whereby the working group to coordinate and serve the migrant population is created.
	Creation of a Committee to take care of the migrant population of the Mayor's Office of Santiago de Cali.
	Creation of a Committee to take care of the migrant population of the Mayor's Office of Santiago de Cali.
	Whereby the Coordinating Commission for Migratory Affairs is created.
	"Whereby a special and exceptional regime is established to acquire Colombian nationality by birth, for sons and daughters of Venezuelans in a situation of regular or irregular migration, or for asylum seekers born in Colombian territory, in order to prevent statelessness."
	Whereby the "Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons", adopted in New York on 28 September 1954, and the "Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness", adopted in New York on 30 August 1961, are approved.
	Whereby institutional actions for the voluntary return of migrants are established.
	Measures to prevent manifestations of xenophobia in the electoral campaign.
	Strategic aspects to be included in the Territorial Development Plans.
	Compliance with protocol directives for the transfer of the migrant population who are in the national territory.
	Guidelines for the provision of training services, certification of labor skills, employment management and entrepreneurship services to Venezuelan citizens and other foreigners.
Other key documents	
	Territorial Planning Kit - Guidelines for Migration Management
	Income generating strategy for the migrant population from Venezuela and the host communities
	Challenges of public migration policy in Colombia: a perspective from knowledge management
	Whereby urgent measures are adopted to guarantee the care and provision of services by public authorities and individuals who perform public functions and measures are taken for the labor protection and service provision contractors of public entities, within the framework of the State of Economic, Social and Environmental Emergency.
	Whereby urgent and transitory measures are adopted to guarantee the provision of the service, and terms that are in processes and procedures carried out by the Special Administrative Unit for Migration are suspended.
	Guidelines for the prevention, detection and management of covid-19 cases for the migrant population in Colombia
	Whereby the institutional actions for the voluntary return of Venezuelan migrants to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela are established
	Whereby measures for the conservation of public order are adopted

Sector	Type of regulations	Year	Number
Human Rights Ombudsman's Office	Defense Report	Jan. of 2017	January of 2017
	Defense Report	2018	
	Defense Report	Abril of 2020	
Indigenous	La Delfina Minga (minga is an indigenous assembly T.N.)	2019	
Human Rights Ombudsman's Office	Bulletins 1-5	June 2019 - June 2020	
Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration	United Nations General Assembly	June 30, 2018	





	Objective
	Defense Report on border areas
	Defense Report: Situation of the Rights of Girls, Boys and Adolescents, National or Foreign in Border Departments and Municipalities, Actions and Institutional Commissions
	Defense Report on Gender Analysis and Human Mobility at the Border
	"Refugee and migrant children and adolescents"
	Text of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration



This book was printed  
in December 2020

