



BORDERS: WALLS OR BRIDGES?

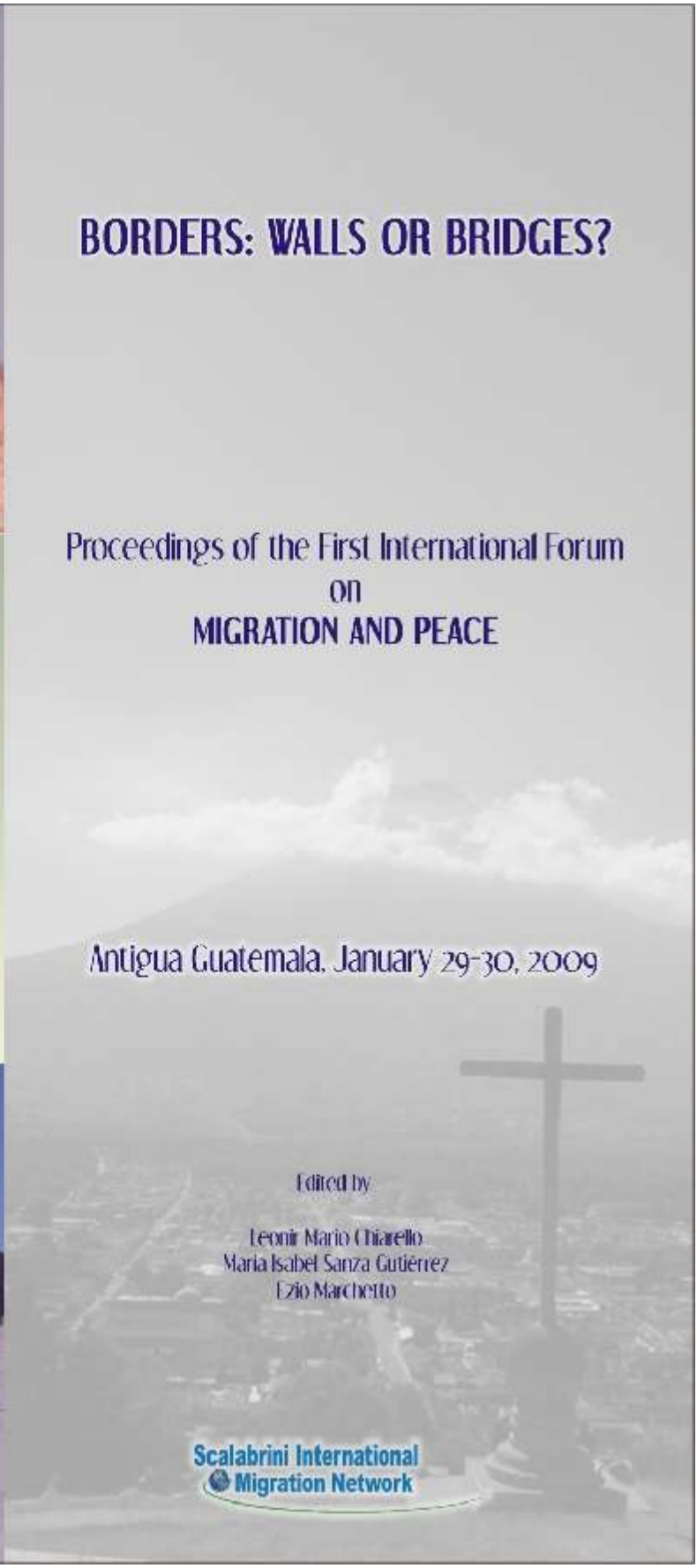
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ON
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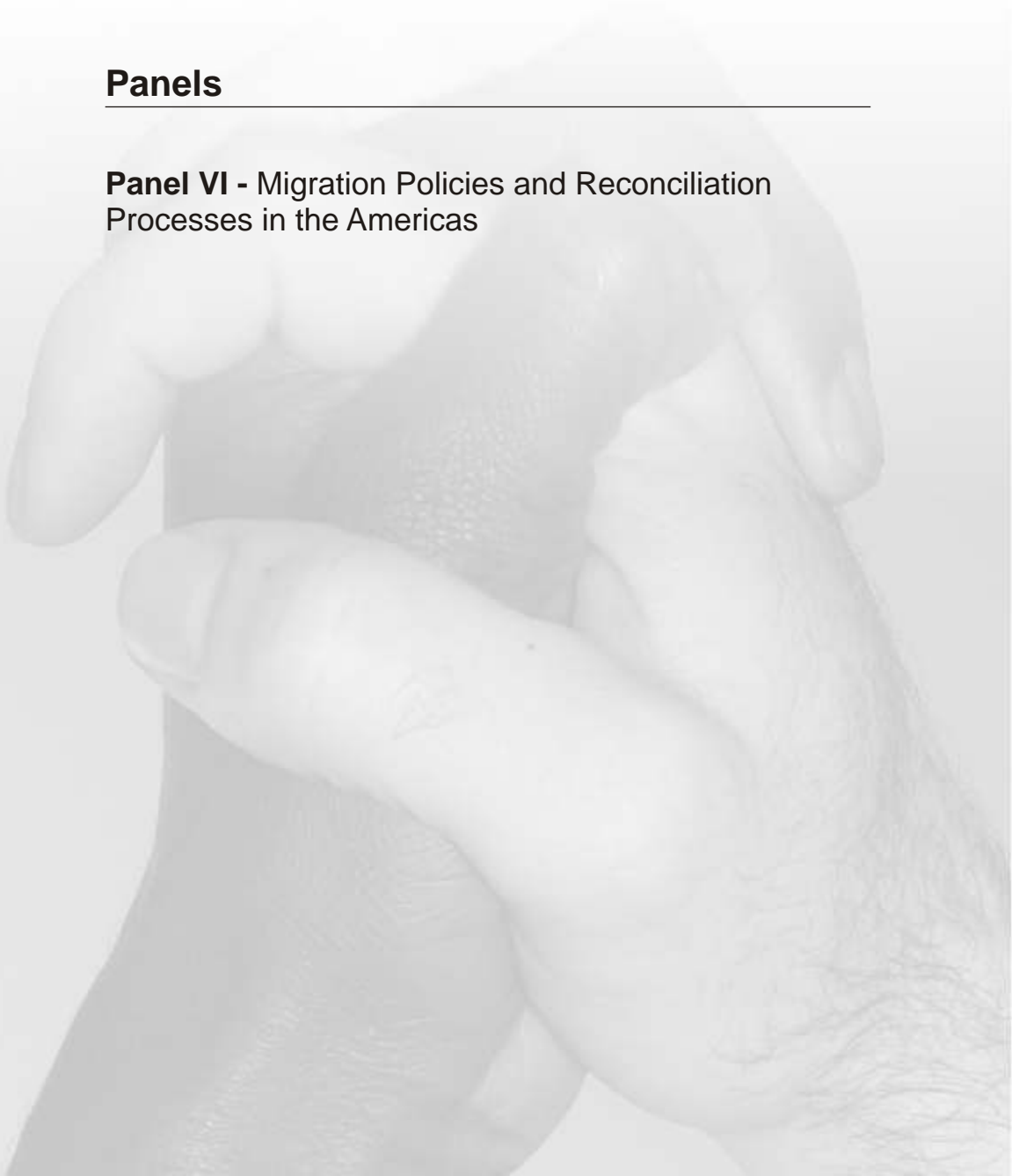
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Panels

Panel VI - Migration Policies and Reconciliation Processes in the Americas



Introduction

Mr. Ramón Cadena

Director of the International Commission of Jurists, Central America

Good afternoon. It is an honor for me and for the International Commission of Jurists to moderate this panel composed of experts in the area of migration and who, undoubtedly, will show us in a clear and accurate manner the relationship that exists between migratory policies and the process of reconciliation on the American Continent.

We will begin by analyzing national perspectives on the relationship between public policies on migration and peace processes, with the participation of the distinguished Ambassador Miguel Angel Ibarra González, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala, and Commissioner Cecilia Romero Castillo, head of the National Institute of Migration in México, representing the governments of Guatemala and México, respectively. As you well know, public policies on migration not only need comprehensive attention, but also a review that starts with the current reality of the country's socio-economic structure itself. In the case of Guatemala, the extreme poverty that continues to provoke migratory flows should be confronted by better efforts than those carried out by the government. On the other hand, changes in public policies on migration and the fight against poverty are also generated by changes in governments. We hope the changes the United States is experiencing under Mr. Barack Obama's presidency will also bring changes in immigration policies, so they can become more humane and not as they have been during the previous administration, with repression and the building of walls.

Migration public policies should also consider bilateral and regional approaches. In this sense, perhaps it would be worth analyzing further the possibility of creating a joint-training program for Guatemalan and Mexican border authorities. On the other hand, the Inter-American Human Rights Court approved an advisory opinion, which probably everyone here knows, by which it established that consular protection is a human right linked to due process. This interpretation represents a considerable advancement regarding the protection of the human rights of

migrants. This opinion issued by the Inter-American Human Rights Court, at the direct request of the Mexican government, constitutes an example of good practice: the Mexican government, concerned about the situation of Mexicans detained in the United States and condemned to the death penalty, petitioned for an opinion by the Inter-American Human Rights Court, which in turn interpreted the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, resulting in the aforementioned advisory opinion. In this fashion, it would be possible to think of new regional initiatives at the legal level and the approval of laws applicable to the entire Central American region. For the various countries facing the migratory phenomenon, I think this would present a good opportunity for mutual cooperation.

In 1987, as you know, in order to face the internal displacement and return issues of refugees, Central American governments created a regional policy through the Committee of the International Conference on Central American Refugees (CICCAR). Despite the fact that it was not a solution to all of the problems at that time, it indeed opened spaces for returning migrants in each of the countries. Currently, it is easy to search for updated and coordinated reports regarding the challenges brought about by migrations in the Central America region. To analyze this regional perspective on migratory policies and peace processes, representative Lorena Peña Mendoza, Vice President of the Central American Parliament, will participate on behalf of representative Gloria Guadalupe Oquelí de Macotto, President of the Central American Parliament, who could not attend.

Another important aspect of migratory policies and reconciliation is coordination with international organizations. In Guatemala and Central America, due to the armed conflicts we have had, we have developed important knowledge and experience, based on much learning and mutual enrichment, among government agencies, civil society, and international organizations. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), whose representative participated in the previous panel, played a fundamental role in Central America in achieving not only protection for refugees but also quite complex return processes to conflict areas. The International Committee of the Red Cross, also represented in this Forum, played an important role in the areas of training and implementation of international humanitarian law. In Guatemala, international organizations such as the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala and

the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights are sponsoring activities linked to peace, development and the human element of migration. Among these international organizations we bring your attention to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which has had, and continues to have, a fundamental role in promoting public policies and innovative projects related to international migration. To report on the activities of this international organization in the region, Mr. Günter Müssig, Director of IOM in Guatemala, will address this Forum.

The phenomenon of forced migrations, whether provoked by persecution, natural disasters or situations of extreme poverty, requires the commitment of all the principal actors. The country's authorities, specifically those who are tasked with protecting refugees, are the ones who must also protect immigrants returning to their own country, and they must also protect their own citizens abroad through consular protection. Countries also have the duty to offer international protection by establishing international agreements and coordinating work with the international organizations already mentioned. In theory, all governments and international organizations have a comprehensive perspective at the conceptual level; however, in practice we find many gaps, for instance, illegal detentions and lack of access to justice at the borders. In Guatemala, for example, there are policemen destroying the documents of Central American migrants; in México and the United States, there are persons in prison and in deportation proceedings who are treated like criminals. In summary, there is a generalized phenomenon of impunity regarding violations of the human rights of migrants. This is an issue that needs to be analyzed further, in order to propose more concrete solutions to the problem of lack of justice for migrants.

Lastly, this panel will analyze the roles of nongovernmental organizations. In México, for example, those who first came to assist Guatemalan refugees were members of NGOs or people who, individually, assisted and protected them. Governments came later. Among civil society organizations, the Catholic Church stands out. To discuss the significant work of the Church in Guatemala and the region in defending and promoting the dignity and rights of migrants and refugees, we will have Most Rev. Alvaro Ramazzini, Bishop of the Diocese of San Marcos and President of the Guatemalan Conference of Bishops' Commission for Pastoral Care of Human Mobility, an admired figure in Guatemala for his work in protecting

migrants and the disenfranchised, such as landless peasants, and for his concrete proposals in favor of a more just economic system.

Thank you very much.

Ambassador Miguel Angel Ibarra González

Guatemala Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs

Good afternoon. I am grateful for the invitation to this interesting meeting and I congratulate the organizers of this Forum and all the attendees. I understand that it has been a very interesting journey and I hope that it will end the same way, enhancing and strengthening the knowledge we can gain to benefit our fellow citizens in the countries where they now reside.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs strengthened the assistance to migrants during 2008. In the same year, in order to comply with President Alvaro Colom's government plan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs carried out a series of activities to extend assistance and protect Guatemalan migrants who live in the United States. Since the beginning of this administration, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reinforced 11 Guatemalan consulates in the United States by providing them with human and financial resources and equipment to be able to improve services to the Guatemalan population there. Such is the case with the Los Angeles, California consulate, which now has larger offices to serve the large Guatemalan community living in Southern California.

During 2008, the consulates of Guatemala in the United States organized 130 mobile consulates to serve thousands of Guatemalans in need of passport processing and consular identity cards, civil registrations, birth and marriage registrations, authentication of documents, and information on migratory matters. These mobile consulates are a great help to Guatemalans, for they can receive consular services in their own communities without incurring extra expenses or risking exposure by traveling.

The consular services of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also provided assistance to Guatemalans in crisis situations. It covered financially and logistically the repatriation of 279 bodies of Guatemalans who had died abroad. It also repatriated eleven persons who were in situations of vulnerability as a result of either an accident or serious illness. Several visits were paid to give humanitarian aid amounting to more than 330,000 quetzals to family members of Guatemalans detained in massive

raids in Iowa and Rhode Island, to provide them with food and clothes. Consular officers visited Guatemalans in detention centers to establish the reasons for their being in prison and to ensure that their human rights were respected.

The consulates also participated in the Health Bi-National Week 2008 with health-related activities, such as free medical exams and care, which benefited approximately 25,000 Guatemalans. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also organized projects and negotiations during 2008 to promote the legalization of labor migration.

In México, after negotiations between governments, migratory agreements for the border workforce and local visitors went into effect, which allow Guatemalans who either work in or regularly visit the Mexican states of Chiapas, Campeche, Quintana Roo and Tabasco, to travel safely and legally through the Guatemalan-Mexican border.

In Canada, the temporary workers program with Guatemala accounted for a record number of 2,887 Guatemalan workers in 2008, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is currently seeking an increase in the number of workers, as well as to identify new sources of seasonal employment in other provinces of Canada.

In the United States, lobbyists have been hired to promote legalization, a moratorium on deportations, and respect for the human rights of Guatemalans in that nation. In 2008, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also established a legal assistance program at the Guatemalan consulates in the United States. Now, the consulates provide free legal assistance to Guatemalans with migratory problems. Consultations with lawyers who have expertise in immigration laws guarantees that proper procedures are followed in cases of detention and deportation, and also allows Guatemalans to obtain free legal advice regarding their immigration cases.

In 2008, the Guatemalan National Council for Assistance to Migrants (CONAMIGUA) was formally established to comply with the law, although it could only be constituted after the Congress of the Republic elected the Council's Executive Director and Deputy Secretary, which took place in October.

CONAMIGUA has the duty of coordinating the country's institutions, such as Congress and the Office of the Ombudsman for human rights, to generate initiatives, plans, and programs to promote and guarantee

the respect for the human rights of migrants. Within a few weeks, CONAMIGUA already had several working meetings at which internal regulations, strategic, and operational programs were approved. These programs are divided into four main areas:

- The institutional strengthening of CONAMIGUA, which includes strengthening the work of the advisory council and giving more participation to all the Guatemalan migrant organizations.
- Supporting the protection of the human and labor rights of foreign migrants.
- Promoting the necessary changes in the transit and receiving countries to offer guarantees and human rights protection for migrants, including lobbying for and supporting immigration reform in the United States of America, and strengthening the nation of Guatemala in matters of international migration, an objective that includes seeking reforms to the CONAMIGUA law. For 2009, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has planned several projects, including the organization of 150 mobile consulates; a system of video-conferencing at the consulates so Guatemalan migrants can communicate with their relatives in Guatemala; establishing a virtual consular office so that Guatemalans may have easy access to consular services; reaching out to the Guatemalan community through the presidential program “Governing with the People”; increasing the availability of lawyers with expertise in immigration to give free advice; and having one officer promoting literacy programs and another officer in charge of the health care program.
- Opening new consular locations in North America, including North Carolina, Texas, Nebraska, and Canada.

All of these initiatives are part of a plan to broaden and reinforce our assistance to Guatemalan migrants, which is one of the objectives set out by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in its guidelines for Guatemalan foreign policy for the period 2008-2012.

Our government took office January 14th, 2008, and our migratory policy has been designed to provide protection to the Guatemalan community living abroad, regardless of immigration status, as well as to the family members left in Guatemala. Support for migrants should be comprehensive and participatory. We are looking for ways to provide step

conditions for social development in our country, so Guatemalans do not feel compelled to leave in search of better living conditions. This is an essential step that is not easy to implement, but we have started working on it, and we believe that, in the short run, we can have comprehensive development, especially in the countryside, so that our fellow citizens do not emigrate abroad.

Likewise, migrant assistance has become a paramount issue in bilateral relations with the United States, where so many Guatemalans reside. This is part of a dialogue and consultation process that is taking place on an ongoing basis at several levels. Guatemalan migratory policy is framed according to the main principles of the Peace Agreements signed by the government and the URNG in 1996, which put an end to more than three decades of internal armed conflict that caused the migration of thousands of people to neighboring countries, mainly the United States.

These Peace Agreements marked the end of hostilities. However, economic conditions and social inequalities have continued to feed the flows of Guatemalans in search of better living conditions abroad. Among the Peace Agreements, it is worth mentioning the Agreement on the Resettlement of Populations Displaced by the Armed Conflict, which the government of Guatemala is committed to support, along with Guatemalan civil society, in order to find a lasting solution to the resettlement process within a framework of social justice, democratization, and sustainable development. Likewise, for those displaced people who wish to remain abroad, it was established as part of the Agreements that we would take steps and pursue the necessary negotiations with host countries in order to guarantee them a stable immigration status.

It is only fitting to emphasize that the Peace Agreements have been kept on ice for a long time, and the commitments established in them as a nation and as a government, have not become a reality. This has contributed to a process whereby the inequalities suffered by the Guatemalan people continue to foster the need for many citizens to cross borders, under very difficult circumstances, especially to reach the United States. I also must highlight, at this point, the very important agreements reached regarding the improved treatment of temporary workers who have moved to or reside in Mexico. Among these agreements, I must point out those we worked out with the governor of Chiapas, who has strived to ensure respect for workers' human rights. We also have had talks with the governors of border states.

President Colom and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Haroldo Rodas, met. They reached important agreements, such as promoting development in towns on the border. However, there still is much to be done, and we are working on it, and making the effort, jointly with the Mexican government and the governorship of Chiapas, to improve the situation of our workers in the countryside of Southern Mexico.

The government of Guatemala, with the support of countries friendly to the Peace Agreements and the support of international organizations, facilitated the return to Guatemala of displaced peoples who voluntarily decided to return. In the case of Guatemalan migrants who decided to remain abroad, the government issued guidelines to provide them assistance and protection through embassies and consulates accredited abroad. A main government initiative is strengthening the consular network, and I must briefly digress here. When our government took office a year ago, the first thing we did was to meet with all the consuls, mainly those in the United States, in order to know what we had at the consulates. In most of them, we did not even have one person to answer the phone; instead, there were answering machines with dozens of messages, and there was no way to establish communication. We started by doing an inventory of the existing equipment and found it to be deficient. We began to strengthen the consular network with more personnel, more equipment, and we immediately hired a person for each consulate exclusively to answer the phone. I would like you to know that even when you have two or three persons answering the phones in a consulate, sometimes it is impossible to take all the calls. There is also a cash program in order to assist the repatriation of vulnerable Guatemalans, as well as those who died abroad. Under this program, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will donate up to \$2,000 per person to bring a body back, and, once in Guatemala, it will be brought all the way back to his or her community, free of charge. Utilization of this service has increased as people have become aware of its existence. The year before last, there were 145 such repatriations, and last year it doubled.

For several reasons we have increased the number of mobile consulates to get consular services closer to the Guatemalans, so they do not have to travel from their homes or places of work all the way to the main consulate. First, they would need one or two days to travel. This means money for them. Second, each time they go out, they risk being detained on the road because they do not have driver's licenses, and if they go by public

transportation, they might be stopped and, being without documents, be deported.

We are also working to assist deportees. At the airport, we have been receiving those traveling by air and transporting them to their original villages free of charge, plus giving them a stipend upon arrival. Also, the Ministry of Labor is present to inform all those who would want to access any of the vacancies the Ministry has in its database of registered companies. We also have additional services through the Center of Assistance to Migrants in the capital and in Huehuetenango.

In accordance with migratory policy, Guatemala has joined various international organizations at the bilateral level in an attempt to mitigate restrictions surrounding undocumented migrants, formulate policies designed to regulate migratory flows and protect migrants' interests. The best example of the regulation of migratory flows in Guatemala is the temporary workers program agreement with Canada, which allows for a circular, safe and orderly migration, whereby Guatemalan workers are able to provide their services in exchange for a better salary, without the deplorable collateral effects typical of irregular migration, such as family separation, labor exploitation, and human trafficking.

Likewise, given the positive results achieved by this program, we have started negotiations in search of similar opportunities with other countries, including the United States, Aruba, Costa Rica, and Panama. With the objective of coordinating inter-institutional efforts that will allow us to define a comprehensive migratory policy for Guatemala, in 2007 the Guatemalan National Council for Assistance to Migrants (CONAMIGUA), was created through Congress and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was launched in November 2008, with the objective of creating programs and projects to benefit our fellow citizens abroad and their families here in Guatemala.

The CONAMIGUA law we have is not perfect, but as a colleague at the Ministry said very well: "if it has defects, we can correct them as we go along." The important thing is that the law was created and we are working with it, and we will be able to reform it possibly in the future so it will be structured in such a way that all Guatemalans who are organized in the United States of America are able to contribute through CONAMIGUA so the government will be able to formulate policies that improve the lives of Guatemalans in the United States.

Undoubtedly, on this issue other Guatemalans in organizations in the United States of America will make important contributions to develop a coherent law in accordance with the needs of those fellow citizens living in the United States of America. Undoubtedly, organized Guatemalans there will work actively, and the ministry and CONAMIGUA will be providing them with all the necessary assistance, recognizing the needs that Guatemalans have in the United States. I believe they have better knowledge than we do here in Guatemala of how to arrive at an agreement and to work hand in hand with the Guatemalan organizations in the United States.

It is important to mention that assistance to migrants is not limited to Guatemalans living in the United States and Mexico. Although the number of Guatemalans in Europe is considerably less in absolute terms, the restrictions applied to them also have been increasing. Guatemala works with several organizations to mitigate the effects of those policies through contacts with member countries of the European Union, at the bilateral level as well as with the rest of the Central American countries. Migratory policy is one of the priorities of President Colom's administration, as we pay special attention to all avenues of assistance and protection for the Guatemalan community abroad and their families here in Guatemala.

In this regard, during his last visit to New York, our president announced the intention to hold two meetings in the United States with his fellow citizens on the issue of *Governing with the People*. This is much like what we do here in Guatemala when the cabinet travels with all its ministers to a region of the country, in order to learn their needs and offer solutions. We then make a second round, after we have considered the issues explained by the people, and each ministry is responsible for providing a specific solution with a deadline for implementation. Finally, there will be a third round in which our government reports back to the communities, with each ministry being responsible for the commitments arising from the previous visit, and reporting on whether or not the problems were resolved. Well, we will do the same in the United States, so as to establish a commitment to our fellow citizens there, with the whole government cabinet gathered, and also to establish deadlines for policies or commitments that we make to our fellow citizens in the United States. We have planned to implement two sessions of *Governing with the People* in the United States, and we are working to establish the dates and places, which we will publicize once they are finalized.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, through its diplomatic and consular network, is vigilant about the fundamental rights of Guatemalans, to ensure they receive fair and just treatment, regardless of their migratory, social, or economic status.

We are working continuously to strengthen our efforts to provide all the services and assistance necessary to ensure their well-being as well as that of their families.

Thank you.

Representative Lorena Peña Mendoza

Vice President of the Central American Parliament

Good afternoon, everyone. I would like to salute our president, Representative Gloria Oquellí, who is presiding over our parliamentary duties and was not able to attend this important event.

I would like to begin by expressing my satisfaction, as well as that of the Board of Directors, for the opportunity to participate here alongside persons who have dedicated their lives to defending the human rights of migrants.

In Central America and the Dominican Republic, as in the rest of the world, massive migration is linked to high rates of poverty, unequal income distribution, unfair labor practices, depraved behavior toward the environment, increased violence, deepening intolerance and moral alienation by our societies. This phenomenon has propelled huge numbers of people to flee from our nations, with their hopes on their backs, seeking new possibilities away from their homelands. Furthermore, in Central America, these conditions produced civil wars: confronted poverty and military dictatorships. The region bled until it managed to achieve an opening towards democratic processes through negotiated solutions to their conflicts.

It has been more than fifteen years since the processes of *Esquipulas I* and *II*, as you well know, and their own framework of agreements. The civil wars have ended. Democratic systems have been established, imperfectly in some cases, and we no longer have military dictatorships. However, segregation and over-exploitation of people and the environment have not ceased, and, as a result, violence has intensified in our lands and so has migration, resulting in uprooting, interfamily domestic violence, and sexual harassment of women, among other things. All of this is very well known to all of us; I just happen to mention it again to underscore the importance of implementing specific policies to defend the rights of migrants. However, it is equally important to work to transform our societies so that our people will find a future in their own places of origin. As long as such inequality and poverty continue to exist in Central America, there will always be migrants. And we should fight the effects, but also the

causes.

In the Central American Parliament we are aware of this reality. We know that the agenda from the *Esquipulas Agreements* is unfinished, as it only rectified the political issue, leaving all the economic and social aspects unresolved. Today, we watch with concern the difficult situation prevailing in Central America because, although political democracy and social justice are sides of the same coin, when there is only political democracy but not social justice, economic development or human development, then we generate more migration, more violence, more crime and, in the long run, we endanger democracy. That is the reason why we, at the Central American Parliament, have proposed to the different social and political forces within our governments that they convene an *Esquipulas III*, a people's *Esquipulas*, along with all of civil society in Central America, to deal with the economic and social issues that were not addressed in the region's previous peace processes. We believe that in a new *Esquipulas III* agreement, all the issues related to the rights of migrants should be one of the central points.

We must assume the custody and defense of migrants' rights as a state responsibility. We, ourselves, must begin a change in attitude and treat our Central American migrants, who pass through our countries, and all of those who cross our region, with the human dignity they deserve. We cannot expect from those outside our region what we are not providing in our countries. Likewise, we must demand that third countries respect our fellow citizens. It is not acceptable in the 21st century to have a wall built to hold back our brothers and sisters en route to the United States or to have organizations that are dedicated to hunt down and kill migrants with impunity at border crossings. It is not acceptable for the European Union to establish a law, euphemistically called *Directive of Return*, that forces the return of family units, for whatever reason, who are already established in that region.

In Central America, many free trade agreements have been signed with various countries. We have acquired the ability to move our goods and merchandise, without major problems, throughout the region. Merchandise does not encounter problems at the borders. However, human beings find those same doors closed. They are not taken care of at hospitals just because they are not nationals or because they are undocumented foreigners; they do not have access to healthcare, and they are denied the dignity of employment. That is why we propose for this new *Esquipulas III* that

immigration and emigration be categorized as a human right, as a human reality, which cannot be limited.

Another major problem is human trafficking, which has become one of the most serious and urgent challenges in international migration and also in our region. These practices take place in all the regions of the world and have reached enormous proportions, with very high human costs to migrants and lucrative earnings for traffickers. The network of organized crime fosters the violations of migrants' human rights, especially minors and women, as they are placed in defenseless situations, even exposing them to sexual and labor exploitation. Sexual exploitation is a grave crime that should be punished. It is a form of modern-day slavery, for it implies extreme forms of violation of the fundamental human rights of people.

The idea of allowing countries not to regulate anything, or leaving everything to be solved by the laws of supply and demand, is very much in crisis; it is a bankrupt idea. The crisis continues, especially for the banking industry; however, if bankers are not criticizing the fact that the government is bailing them out, we also should have the courage to ask the state to intervene to save the poorest among us. The media informed us this week that millions of jobs have been lost in the developed world. That means, if there are no formal jobs for the natural citizens of the First World, then what is left for the undocumented immigrants?

The economic and social crisis forces us to see in the most urgent manner the real situation of our migrant brothers and sisters, but it also forces us to decide to change the reality of our countries. To be an undocumented immigrant means going from an unfair uncertainty about your future in your own country, to experiencing fully the injustices and discrimination in your country of destination. We deplore how the United States and European Union make resolutions that affect Latin American and Caribbean migrants, while the raids and deportations are actions that violate their fundamental rights. We can no longer just be spectators of the ruthless raids and massive deportations of Latin American and Caribbean people in the United States and Europe. Every day we are witnesses to the tragedy of migrant families whose loved ones are killed in the deserts, at sea, or at the hands of unscrupulous persons. We are also witnesses to the pain and suffering of those who remain. We see the children, and then see the grandparents take on responsibilities that should no longer be theirs in order to take care of the households. We see the daily sacrifices of these people

who, in the final analysis, are the foundation of our economies. And this constitutes another paradox that forces us to reflect on the commitment we have before us, all of us who consider ourselves responsible for the social transformation that must occur for these persons. In many countries in Central America, the most important contribution to the Gross Domestic Product is the remittances from the migrants, followed by the contributions of workers in the informal economy. To say it plainly: It is not globalization that is supporting us, but the poor masses.

However, there is no deliberate policy to take care of these people who are keeping our economies afloat. This should be the end of an era and the beginning of a new period where we promote societies that are more just, societies more in solidarity with our fellow men, in which we all agree that any injustices committed must be punished and sanctioned.

The Central American Parliament, which today I am proud to represent, has on several occasions manifested itself in favor of all of the above, and has made resolutions to promote the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. Therefore, at this First International Forum on Migration and Peace, we also want to present the following proposals:

First: To join efforts in asking our Heads of State and governments to pay attention to the migratory issue, to strengthen a common front for the protection of migrants.

Second: To propose, along with the social organizations that take care of these issues, strategies that decrease migratory flows, that are especially focused on sustainable human development and both social cohesion and social justice, because social cohesion is not the same as social justice.

Third: To urge the region's governments to develop programs geared to the reintegration of deportees.

Fourth: We propose to create integrated consular networks of the region's countries abroad to serve and assist migrants, contributing to the formulation and coordination of regional policies and strategies for the protection of migrants.

Fifth: We propose, at the same time, to support migrants by reviewing changes to existing mechanisms that would decrease the cost of sending remittances, and to follow-up initiatives on migratory laws in the

region, in order to establish as a priority the defense of human rights for the migrant workforce.

As the Central American Parliament, we do not have full legislative power, but we have comptroller's power and the ability to promote public policies in our various countries; for this reason we are very interested in contributing to the efforts that might be derived from this First International Forum on Peace and Migration.

Finally, we want to call upon the European Union and the United States to stop the massive deportations, and abolish the Return Directive and other similar laws, so as to foster family and employment stability for our migrants. They should reciprocate in good faith, with our migrants, and share the profits they have gained from the multinational corporations.

Thank you very much.

Commissioner Cecilia Romero Castillo

Head of the National Migration Institute of México

Thank you very much, good afternoon. It is an honor for me to be at this Forum. I regret that, at the end of my presentation, I will have to head to the airport, not for the marvelous city of Antigua, and I would say, above all, for not being able to participate in the afternoon sessions, where surely some very interesting conclusions will be drawn from this wonderful work that has been developing here.

I would like to begin by evoking the Blessed Scalabrini, for after his path, testimony, and apostleship with migrants this fantastic work has been taking shape in favor of all who leave their places of origin in search of new horizons. We need to understand that migration is about men and women who walk, move, travel, discover, suffer, and carry out, exactly like every other living being in the universe. Yet, this universe is a global village where merchandise, goods, and money travels freely, but not so for human beings.

President Felipe Calderón and the Mexican government, continuing a hospitable and humanitarian tradition, have worked since the first day of his administration to fuse migration policy with humanism, with three important elements: respect for the law, respect for human rights and, above all, respect for the individuals themselves, regardless of their condition.

This panel is concerned with public policies, and the processes of peace and reconciliation, and migration work. It should, therefore, examine how Mexico was set in the 1980s when more than 45,000 Guatemalans and 10,000 Salvadorians arrived due to conflicts in their own countries.

Back then, the Mexican government, which already had an important tradition of giving asylum and refuge to foreigners, had to take exceptional measures because of the considerable number of people who had arrived. It was at that time when we established a direct communication and a formal relationship with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and we made all of the important legislative changes to incorporate the refugee aspect into our internal legislation. Later, the Mexican government sought permanent solutions for Central American refugees, supporting both the refugees who decided to return to their

countries and those who decided to regularize their stay in the country.

Now, there are other forces at work, and not only war or armed conflicts, but others, which are affecting migration and the search for protection abroad, as well as, natural disasters, and especially in our region, the problem of poverty.

Currently, democracy and peace are practically the norm, not the exception, in our countries, but we have to broaden the perspective of these peace processes. Now we have to talk about social peace, we have to talk about human rights, integration, stability, and development, remembering Giovanni Batista Montini, Pope Paul VI, who in the *Populorum Progressio* told us that “development is the new name for peace.”

If we talk about migration and peace, we should consider these two concepts as complementary, not exclusive. We have to understand that today the name for peace is development, and in this specific case, echoing the subtitle of this Forum, the fight for borders to be bridges and not barriers, as the former President of Ecuador suggested a moment ago. We need to make our borders spaces of coexistence. Borders were established by governments; they were invented by those who wanted to conquer different territories. Borders, like in the specific case of the southern border of Mexico, are spaces often shared by one and the same people. I have said this many times and I proved it by coming to Antigua, as the Guatemalans proved it by going to Chiapas. They speak the same language, they are related to each other, they dress the same, they eat the same food, and they use the same idioms. Recently they started distancing a little and acquiring different personalities, but the border crossing has been the same for many centuries, for many generations... The border was traced only after the onset of political and diplomatic negotiations.

This border cannot be a barrier, it should be a bridge, and we should respect the preexisting cross-border life, and even support the weakening of this border, to make borders, I insist, as places of coexistence, places of exchange, of harmony. And so as not to leave it in mere romanticism, we need a concerted effort by society, governments, organizations and institutions, to fight corruption head-on, which is always aggravated whenever those we can corrupt are weaker than we are.

We also need to act, in a very special and definite way, against intolerance, which I have had the opportunity, and unfortunately the

Migration Institute. We must also fight xenophobia, against the hatred of others because they are different, and against hatred of others because they are poorer than us, because they have more needs than us, and, because they have no papers.

What can we say about the refugee situation in Mexico today? There is no doubt that the movement of refugees and the number of requests from refugees has been reduced. From 2002 to the present, we have recognized little more than 500 refugees, but we also count on the daily work of the Mexican Commission for Refugee Help, charged with the important permanent task of family reunification, integration, support for education and, eventually, when there are urgent needs, financial assistance. Currently, the Mexican Commission for Refugee Help has completed, with the important support of ACNUR, an asylum law initiative project to deal with the matter of asylum in internal legislation with a specific law. We are waiting for the next period of the Union Congress sessions to do the necessary work so that this bill is presented before Congress, and passed this same year, before the legislative elections next July.

On another front, the Mexican government, through the National Migration Institute, kicked off the legalization program in November 2008. Through this legalization program we are offering all foreigners living in Mexico, especially in the southern border, including inhabitants of this region of our continent, the possibility of having an identity. With this ambitious program, we offer the possibility of legal residence in Mexico for people who came and are living in Mexico undocumented. This program intends to give legal status to persons already living in Mexico, who have a stable job, and of course they will need to be law-abiding and honest to qualify for the program, who have family, social ties, and roots in the community, but are currently unable to take their children to school, or to have access to medical services, and who do not enjoy any legal certainty. The legalization program offers them legal certainty, incorporates them into legality, and therefore gives them a more definite possibility to assert their rights and fulfill their duties.

This program, with all due reservations, is part of the congruency work that the Mexican government wants to carry out, because it is precisely what our government is asking and demanding for our people living in the United States. We have already decriminalized undocumented immigration; in other words, never again will an immigrant without papers

be detained, tried, incarcerated, or extorted for not having documents. Traditionally, there were no charges filed by the authorities against undocumented immigrants, but they were easy prey for those who sought to exploit them. This is an important factor, certainly a first, but the first of a series of modifications that we are carrying out.

Another important issue, which has not been approved by Congress yet, but was brought up and approved by the Senate, hoping that it soon will be approved by the House of Representatives, is that prosecuting the trafficking of the undocumented, a serious problem in our region, will no longer require a federal complaint against the trafficker, but the appropriate local authorities will be responsible for prosecuting the trafficking of undocumented persons.

Talking about the southern border, we have created an important program for border immigrant workers, mentioned earlier by the vice-minister of Guatemala in his presentation, to allow them to work not just in coffee production, as they do now, but also in construction, services, and business. We have given out more than 4,500 border-worker applications since March of last year. We also have an immigration form for local visitors to respect, specifically, this border life. Both these programs are part of a broader and much more ambitious project by President Calderón, the Comprehensive Program for the Southern Border, concerned with social development, education, health, and also of course with security. For their part, the government of the State of Chiapas, with whom we have worked intensively, recently created the Department for the Development of the Southern Mexican Border, to provide our border the necessary identity and respect.

Among other things, we also have instituted supplementary forms and humanitarian visas for those people who do not meet the requirements to be recognized as refugees but, even so, need international protection for other various reasons.

It is very important for Mexico to take care of immigrant children. We have trained and graduated 170 child protection officers; they are immigration agents specially trained to work with immigrant kids, particularly those traveling alone.

There is no doubt that international actions are necessary and indispensable for the success of the migrant protection actions. I refer especially to human trafficking. In this regard, we are working to strengthen

our Migrant Protection Groups and the Human Distribution Program which is being implemented as a priority.

I would like to end by referring to the recent World Family Encounter, which took place in Mexico. In this Encounter, Most Rev. Agostino Marchetto talked about the importance of education in fighting xenophobia, discrimination, and hatred of the weak, something that is accomplished fundamentally and primarily at the heart of the family. Those who, when they grow up, exploit and abuse the immigrants, also come from a family, in the same way that our immigrants come from a family. We have the matter of family reunification, which should be a core principle for any public policy and any reform legislation.

Furthermore, with the objective of harmonizing internal legislation with international treaties that we have signed and with those we have committed to, we at the National Migration Institute of Mexico, together with the government offices who have migration jurisdiction, are carrying out a migration law project which has as a fundamental pillar respect for the family and the aim of family reintegration. The asylum law project that I told you about contemplated family reunification as a principle and family reunification will be a core principle in the migration law project. Again we are talking of congruency, because something that the Mexican government is fighting for, is for Mexicans living in the United States not to be deported, leaving the other half of their lives, their wives, their children, their parents, in that country.

We are implementing our migration law project, as well as our other programs, public policies, and budget agreements, with the essential collaboration of other departments from the three branches of government and, of course, the international and national organizations who work for human rights and migration, and who have as a goal the humanization of migration. We cannot see it as a problem, but rather, as we said many times, as a phenomenon that we have to manage so that migration will not remain the only possibility for a life and a future, but an option to be chosen by those who want it. We are working on that. We are committed to that, and because of that we also expect good results and conclusions from this seminar that, of course, we will seek a way to put it into practice in our public policies and in our national legislation.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Günter Müssig

Head of Mission

International Organization for Migration (IOM), Guatemala

Good afternoon and thank you for the invitation to participate in this Forum about the matter of the relations between migration policies, peace and reconciliation processes in the Americas. First of all I would like to present in general terms IOM's comprehensive model for migration procedures. Briefly, the primary migration spheres for the IOM on a global level are: Migration and Development, Facilitated Migration, Migration Regulation, and Forced Migration.

In Migration and Development, it is necessary to focus on the return of qualified nationals and the matter of money transfers, important issues on which we have been working for five or six years now, with yearly national surveys. Another issue linked to migration and development is micro-credit concession mechanisms. This is important in many ways, not only for reducing migration but also for return and reinsertion, as well as the matter under discussion, which is reconciliation. Another important point is “brain flight and acquisition,” because migration automatically leads to the flight of human capital, also known as brain drain.

Regarding the second item, Facilitated Migration, first of all I want to consider the workers and the professionals. The Program for Temporary Workers in Canada operates primarily from Guatemala. Another aspect is the facilitation of family reunification. Finally, there is the scope of contracting and work allocation, which includes providing documentation, language instruction and cultural orientation before departure.

The third item, Migration Regulation, refers to entry visa systems, assisted returns, reintegration and fight against human trafficking.

The Forced Migration area includes asylum and refuge, the resettlement problem, and the problem of internally displaced people.

Among the migration authorization activities, there is a series of issues to consider: technical cooperation; immigrant rights; research data; migration and health; migration and race; integration and reintegration.

Guatemala's Political Migration History

The signing of the peace agreement in 1996 led to the political conditions for the government and civil society to pay attention to the migration phenomenon, and, in particular, the following fundamental aspects:

- First is the constant and irregular migration of Guatemalans to the United States, which is still an important phenomenon.
- Second is the increase in migration flows of migrants from third countries, specifically of Central Americans traveling through Guatemala to Mexico and the United States. Guatemala is the latest country to join NAFTA and, in a certain way, serves as a trampoline for all migration, not just from the region, but for extra-regional migration as well.
- Third is an issue of growing concern, the mass deportation of Guatemalans from Mexico and the United States of America.

In light of these issues, in February 2001, IOM developed an Action Plan for the Government of Guatemala, though the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for the Management of Internal and International Migrations, which has served as a basis for approaching migration policy. This governing plan in Guatemala has four programmatic aspects: (i) nationals abroad; (ii) returning nationals; (iii) relatives of nationals abroad; and (iv) local development for migration prevention.

The extent of help for nationals abroad includes legal advice regarding legalization of immigration status, as is the case in Mexico, protection of the human rights of migrants, and the banking transfer of remittances, which IOM has implemented mostly in Canada. The latter is a mechanism used to considerably reduce the costs of sending remittances by means of a master account in Guatemala, from which funds are distributed at a cost of between U.S. \$0.50 and U.S. \$1.50 per person, depending of the number of participants. Another important programmatic aspect is migration prevention through technical assistance with productive projects.

Regarding the return of people, we have two lines of action. One refers to short term solutions, and the other, to lasting solutions. Meeting people at the airport and delivering their ticket to travel to their place of origin is an example of a short-term solution. Among the lasting solutions

we should mention those implemented through the Ministry of Labor: the promotion of new work posts and the work reintegration of the returned migrants, taking into consideration that people deported from the United States have acquired enhanced abilities in many areas. These people came out of a developed country; they have endured and demonstrated their capacity to survive in a developed country; they have great potential that should be tapped and integrated into the local society.

Regarding the labor reinsertion for Guatemalans who returned from the United States, there is also a pre-project that consists of the identification of the work profile of the returned: assistance for the transfer of migrants from the airport to their communities; the execution of inducement and training costs according to the work/social profile of the returned to prepare them for their productive work reinsertion; and returned-migrant support to design and execute projects that will produce reasonable income, and in other cases, to refer returned migrants to work centers to obtain employment. In 2008, Guatemala received 28,051 deportees.

The Participation of IOM in the Peace Process

The participation of IOM in the peace process happened in three stages: before, during and after the signing of the peace agreement, in the transition from its emergence to its development.

Before the signing of the peace agreement, as mentioned by Ramón Cadena, IOM participated actively in the return process, which resulted in the return of about 46,000 people. Also, IOM worked with the National Peace Fund, through the mechanism of FORELAP, in providing access to land and developing productive projects. One of the paradigmatic examples was the massive return of January 20th, 1993, called “the victory of January 20th,” when 2,421 people returned. For that return, IOM had to do preparation work in the return area, building roads, reconditioning the city hospital, and building a provisional health and infrastructure site for the school in the area where returned people were received. Also, legal residents of the cooperative of Ixcán Grande were compensated for their improvements and their harvest, and they received land to which they could relocate.

During the peace process, we worked in the demobilization and reintegration of former combatants in Guatemala and other related programs.

Regarding the policies and actions implemented in Guatemala, as presented by the Vice-Minister, I would like to refer to the topic of farm workers in Canada, a program initiated by the IOM in 2003. Since that date, we have sponsored over 8,000 Guatemalan workers to work temporarily in Canada. This year we expect to surpass the number of 3,300 workers sent in 2008.

IOM also has experience in Colombia at the regional level, the Peace Strengthening program. This program has the financial support of USAID and has three components: support for the Colombian state, support for civil society initiatives and a citizen coexistence center. Among the main activities of this program there are 19 institutional strengthening projects. With these projects we have prepared, through Colombian radio, peace advocates and promoters in forty cities and twenty-five departments, and there are five projects with the purpose of decentralizing and updating action information systems against anti-personnel mines. Another project is the "Soccer for Colombian Peace." The next projects will be devoted to supporting civil society initiatives. The goal is to promote the reconciliation and assistance of victims with fifty-four projects of forty-nine NGOs that work together with us. There are also projects like "Restoration Justice and Peace in Colombia for Reconciliation" and "Nurturing Peace in the Family," implemented by the Colombian Association of Flower Exporters, which have two strategies: sensitizing and training. Finally, there is the Citizen Coexistence Center project that is part of the National Coexistence Center Program. For that we have built and launched nine centers. Also, we worked on a Manual for Coexistence and we inaugurated the *Saberes Indígenas* (Indigenous Knowledge) in Valledupar Center. Finally, after the beginning of the democratization period in Chile, IOM had the experience of helping in the return of Chilean citizens and the reinsertion of returned people, primarily returning from Europe, and in that way we contributed to reconciliation.

Thank you.

Most Rev. Alvaro Leonel Ramazzini

*President of the Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants
Guatemala Conference of Catholic Bishops*

Dear friends, my self-esteem went through the roof from everything that Ramón Cadena said about me, but now I am going to try to bring it down to earth. When we speak about migration policies and reconciliation, I would like to focus on the second term, “reconciliation,” because the word “reconciliation” brings to mind the idea of division, of a clash, separation, confrontation. By itself the word means to reunite, to conciliate again, to get close or integrate; and I believe that the history of many Latin American countries is the history of countries divided by ideologies and armed conflicts. Guatemala and El Salvador are clear examples of this reality.

The armed conflict in Guatemala produced, as we the bishops have said many times, a polarization of society, an exacerbated polarization, but it had already existed in this country: racism and discrimination against indigenous people, and even sometimes between the indigenous people themselves. Incidentally, let us not forget that January 31st marks another anniversary of the burning of the Spanish Embassy, one of the results of this armed confrontation. There was also a division in Guatemala produced by the social discrimination between rich and poor. This division was particularly exacerbated at certain moments in history by a class struggle, which instead of uniting, divided people even more, and now, unfortunately, it has become stronger than before in certain sectors. In some of them, there was a division also produced by religion, and it was Christian religion, which is contradictory, if we believe that the essence of Christianity is to love God and to love thy neighbor, and to love means to unite, not to divide. I say this thinking about serious churches, historical Protestants, and, in general, I say it also thinking about members of the Catholic Church who forget that ecumenism really is the effort of uniting and reconciling.

In this context of reconciliation, and from my experience about the subject, I believe migration policies must deal with a dual task. The first task would be integrating the nation. The peace agreements established that Guatemala is a multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-lingual society, but that is far from being an accomplished reality. We have the Agreement on the Identity Rights of Indigenous People. We have the Agreement on

Socioeconomic Rights and the Agrarian Situation. However, and in spite of all that, their fulfillment is far from ideal, even if we say that they continue to be a fundamental tool to accomplish changes in favor of reconciliation. We do not forget that these peace agreements did not touch on some aspects that should have been addressed and incorporated. But given the negotiation process itself, some things just stayed the same. In spite of it all, there they are, the invaluable Peace Agreements.

On the other hand, if we connect reconciliation to migration policies, we are also looking at the task of integrating foreigners into the country, and this assumes that the people have the real possibility of being integrated into those other countries where they need to go. At this Forum, we have talked much about migration to the north, to México and the United States, which are the countries that receive the greatest numbers of Central American migrants, including, obviously, Guatemalans. This brings me to ponder over some concerns that I want to share with you.

First, if we talk about reconciliation in the context I mentioned, of integration as a nation, we would need to ask ourselves how and up to what point. If we have said that migration should promote democracy and development, I ask: What kind of development are we promoting in this country to unite us instead of divide us? What kind of development projects are we promoting for the entire population to feel integrated and not excluded? But we would also have to ask, if we talk about integration of foreigners in our own country, what is the attitude of our government and ourselves, the Guatemalans, towards the migrants who come from abroad? What is our immigration policy, if we talk about reconciliation, toward the Colombians seeking refuge in this country? It is a policy of acceptance to tell them: "Come, because you are going through what we went through here." It is a policy of saying "Although we are poor, an impoverished country, we want to share our poverty with you." I never forget when, for the first time after being ordained as bishop, I went to visit the Guatemalan refugees in San *Cristóbal de Las Casas*, with Bishop Samuel Ruiz. He commented that when the Guatemalan refugees arrived, he told the families in his dioceses: "Well, take them in, receive them." One person said: "Yes bishop, we are willing to split our tortilla, if we have only one, with our Guatemalan brethren who come: half for them, half for us." That impressed me, because it truly showed the ability to forget about oneself in order to think of others. How have we treated the Ecuadorians who come to our country? Have we truly taken them in and integrated them? How have we

(this is no longer talked about, as in years past, when it was talked about much more) treated the migrants captured on the high seas, in so-called “international waters” by the U. S. Coast Guard, and brought to our shore and left there in Puerto Quetzal?

I ask these questions when we speak about reconciliation, considering the two aspects that I mentioned before. In this sense, we have the right to strongly criticize the attitudes of the governments of Mexico and the United States about the way they treat our migrants. Hence the importance of your hearing from these people how they were treated when they were captured in the raid at Postville, Iowa; the way they were abused, and the way migrants continue to be criminalized. But that is a problem that we have ourselves here in Guatemala. Therefore, if we talk about the relationship between migration policies and reconciliation, I do find some obstacles that we should seriously reckon with and figure out how to overcome and eliminate. And the first great obstacle, in my opinion, is to change our mentality, to see migrants as people; and in our case, as Christians, a brother or a sister. This change in mentality has to do also with a change in language. We cannot continue to talk about “illegals.” We could, at most, talk about people who do not have their documentation up to certain requirements, but this is even more tragic when inside our own church, be it of a Christian denomination or be it the Catholic Church, we ourselves do not recognize the Other as our brother or sister. There is a saying in a very important document in the tradition of the 2nd century of the Church, the letter of Diogneto, which affirms: “No one is a stranger inside the Church.” If we do not change this mentality we will not have the possibility of reconciliation. That is very clear to me.

Second, another very important step to me is that we have to strive to take a leap, a leap that consists in stepping from the legal into the ethical; because today, all migration problems are looked at from a legal point of view: “it is the law and the law must be obeyed.” But sir, what if the law is unjust? Who makes the laws? What are the values on which we base our laws? Is it the value of justice? Is it the value of respect for human dignity? Is it the value of equality? To accomplish a true reconciliation, we need to treat people as though they were more important than money, capital, nationality, or our own culture, even if there is a relationship between the person and the culture. We have to be aware that the person is even more important than religion itself. In the end, if we look at the great world religions in their essence, they will always proclaim the equality of all

human beings. Because in the end, God is Love, and love unites; it does not separate, it does not divide, and it does not oppose.

In this sense, the next great step is to reach a very specific and practical application of fundamental principles. What are those fundamental principles? I would like to name some, although there are others. To begin with, we have the fundamental principle that every human being in this world has the right to participate and enjoy in all the created goods that God has made. I mean, this is a clear principle in the social doctrine of the Church regarding the universal destiny of goods. When we read the current studies about the results of globalization, we are dumbfounded to see that the difference between the people who die of hunger and the people who have abundant food is increasing. More people die of hunger today than a few years ago, when food production was the same or maybe less. In that sense, it is very important to think of the message of Pope Benedict XVI, *Journey for Peace*, on January 1st, when he analyzed nutritional insecurity and the noncompliance with the right to nutrition in many countries of the world. Every human being has a right to what God has created for his well-being.

Third, we have to apply the fundamental principle that there is a dominance of “Being” over “Having,” and that people are valuable for what they are, not for what they have, because if economic policies are defined along the lines of “having,” undoubtedly “being” will be pushed aside. When I was a student I enjoyed reading Erich Fromm's book *To Have or to Be?*, when he makes the analogy of how even in the affective relationship between a man and a woman, attitudes differ when love is considered as “Having” or as “Being.” It is very interesting to see the analysis by this psychotherapist. The point is to accomplish the predominance of “Being” over “Having”: for a true respect of the right to free mobility, for a respect of the right to justice, and for all of this to be infused with truth, full of a great spirit of solidarity. This has to do with a problem that goes beyond technical problems, beyond public policy problems, beyond strategies. All of this has to do with a fundamental matter: to form the consciences in ethical values, and in the case of those who profess to be believers, to form the conscience in the practice of religious values.

I would like to finish by pointing out some of the things that I have heard, and you have also heard as well, in an effort to build and not to destroy, and I am sorry that the representatives from the Central American Parliament (PARLACEN) and the Mexican government have left, because I feel it is a bit wrong to talk about what they said, without their being present.

But, considering that the Forum is a public space, and that I am not offending, I do not want to miss the opportunity to share this:

First, what does the Central American Parliament really do about the matters that they have brought up? I ask this because if they do a lot, they certainly do not tell us about it, and I would like to see results from PARLACEN, given their ample budget. I understand that at PARLACEN there are very enthusiastic and conscious people who want changes, but we would need to see what is going on at the structural level, like in the United Nations. Pope John Paul II, some years ago, strongly criticized the United Nations, saying that they were not capable of reacting to avert a war in Iraq. Many times it is not about this or that person, but about structure. So, it is definitely worth looking into this in terms of a matter so important like migration.

Second, since I live in the border region with Chiapas, I recognize that the Mexican government allows those of us who live there to have a credential that authorizes us to move freely in Chiapas, Tabasco, Campeche, and Yucatan. This is a great novelty. I mean, in this sense, there is progress. But it is also true that the humiliation of migrants continues, and that on the way from the border towards the Federal District one can still see those cages, like the ones I saw five months ago, where they put migrants, men and women, and there they have them detained. I believe this is a matter on which we need to insist, and we are insisting because now there is a close relationship, not so much with us here in Guatemala, but on the Mexican side, with the Mexican authorities, to analyze this situation. In addition to all that, there are the constant violations and abuses against our migrants by the Mexican immigration authorities. This is a bit like Ramón Cadena was saying earlier, that we need to try and see how to get down to the core of the matter of impunity for the violations of the human rights of migrants.

For years we have insisted that our country needs to reform the Guatemalan migration law. There is a need to do so. This is the responsibility of the Representatives, from whom we do not see any interest in reforming laws for the good of the country. Our Human Mobility Commission studied the current migration law and we consider that it truly needs an urgent reform. If we want to talk about reconciliation, we have to reform the laws. Then, we cannot overlook the matter of the relationship between migrations and socioeconomic exclusion, inequality, and a reality of injustice. In view of this reality we need to see what we are going to do about solving the problem of migration out and also of migration in. Ramón

said it truthfully: on the way to the border there are corrupt police officers who not only destroy migrant documents but also demand money. I understand that this is hard for the police authorities to prevent, but we have to say it because it is a reality. There is much arrogance by the authorities regarding Central Americans themselves; and do not forget that Guatemala signed the CA-4 pact, so that Nicaraguans, Salvadorians, and Hondurans could freely transit throughout Guatemalan territory. In practice, this is not being fulfilled. They are extorted, manipulated, and threatened. In this sense, the mobile consulates are an excellent strategy to prevent this problem, as the Vice-Minister explained earlier. I was just in New York and I noticed the work of the Consulate in New York and in other parts of the United States with these mobile consulates, which are really helping our fellow countrymen. Still, we are concerned that these consular officers will be changed, providing no continuity of service: there you have a matter of a state policy that is not maintained and does not endure.

Another important Guatemalan matter is the reintegration of deportees into the workforce, not forgetting that many of those who return from the United States just want to go back because they do not feel like they fit here anymore.

Finally, I would like to talk about the matter of the workforce insertion of Guatemalan workers in some cities in Canada, as mentioned by Mr. Günter Mussig. We know that there are places where migrant workers are well treated, but there are other places where they are being exploited. I do not know if IOM has a control mechanism, because there is also the matter of Canadian sovereignty, to evaluate the conditions under which these migrants actually work and live.

Thank you so much for your attention.

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FONDAZIONE CASSAMARCA
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