

From Words to Action: The Call of Latin America and the Caribbean for Dignified, Safe, and Rights-Based Migration

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1. From migrant leadership, networks, and civil society and faith-based organizations across Latin America and the Caribbean, we consider that the Second International Migration Review Forum (IMRF 2026) represents not only a space for evaluation, but a critical and forward-looking *opportunity to reorient the course of global migration governance*. We emphasize that it can no longer be focused on criminalization, exclusion, and the denial of rights, but rather on human dignity, effective protection, justice, and international shared responsibility—balancing States’ sovereign prerogatives with their international obligations to respect, protect, and fulfill the human rights of all migrants, regardless of their migration status. Otherwise, there is a real risk that the Global Compact will lose legitimacy as a global reference framework.
2. We underscore that the principle of participation of migrants must no longer remain merely declaratory, but must translate into permanent mechanisms, meaningful and effective representation, and adequate funding for their organizations—including the active role of diasporas—ensuring that their voices genuinely influence the decisions that affect them. This requires recognizing them not only as contributors, but as rights holders, technical experts with leadership, and active participants in policymaking, in line with the fundamental premise of *“Nothing about migrants without migrants.”*
3. We recognize the efforts made in the IMRF Progress Declaration process, but we express our deep concern about the growing disconnect and gap between the commitments undertaken in the Global Compact for Migration and the actual practices of States. We value the commitment shown by several governments in Latin America and the Caribbean that promote constructive and cooperation-based approaches. At the same time, **we encourage all States to continue strengthening coherence between their international commitments and realities on the ground**, ensuring that public policies effectively, inclusively, and in a rights-based manner respond to the challenges of human mobility.
4. **We are concerned that, rather than advancing toward rights-based migration governance, persistent trends remain toward the criminalization of migration**, the systematic use of detention, the lack of due process guarantees, the tightening of deportations, restrictions on access to international protection, the externalization of borders and migration procedures, pushbacks at borders, collective expulsions, returns without safeguards, excessive use of force, and the normalization of xenophobic narratives. In light of this, it is essential that the IMRF process and the Progress Declaration clearly specify how States will uphold the guiding principles of the Global Compact for Migration—people-centered, human rights-based, and responsive to specific needs, particularly regarding gender and children—by incorporating concrete implementation and monitoring mechanisms, as well as robust accountability frameworks.

5. It is essential to recognize that the lack of regular *migration pathways severely impacts human rights, with irreversible consequences such as family separation*, risks to life, among many others. In light of this, it is critical to reaffirm commitments and measures to facilitate regular pathways from countries of origin and regularization in destination countries, as demonstrated by some States such as Spain and Uruguay, which show principled leadership—driven in part by the advocacy and active participation of migrant leaders and civil society. The absence of regular pathways also undermines the orderly, safe, and dignified management of borders. We further urge States to continue advancing mechanisms for regularization, legal transit, and stay, in order to provide complementary avenues to the asylum system for the protection of migrants.
6. Civil society in Latin America and the Caribbean reaffirms that *ensuring dignified and decent work for migrants* is an indispensable condition for addressing structural challenges and guaranteeing the full enjoyment of human rights. Only through employment that provides social protection, stability, and recognition can effective access to health, education, recreation, and housing be secured—essential factors that save lives and uphold human dignity. Denying these opportunities perpetuates exclusion and vulnerability. Conversely, recognizing the contributions of migrants in the world of work strengthens our democracies, fosters social cohesion, and paves the way toward more just and inclusive societies.
7. We warn that deportations *constitute one of the most critical areas of human rights violations*. They are often carried out without due process guarantees, without full respect for international commitments and standards, without ensuring conditions of dignity, and without guaranteeing effective access to international protection. In many cases, they also result in family separation and expose returnees to contexts of violence, persecution, extreme poverty, and other serious risks. It is essential to place greater emphasis on the principles of due process and due diligence established in the Global Compact, as well as to establish mandatory minimum standards that ensure effective safeguards before, during, and after any deportation or return procedure. We reiterate the obligation of States to fully respect the principles of non-refoulement and *jus soli* (right of the soil), which protect all persons—including migrants in irregular situations—against risks such as human trafficking, torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and irreparable harm.
8. From this perspective, we underscore the need to *understand human mobility through an intersectional, diversity-sensitive, and multidimensional approach*, where forced displacement, mixed movements, deportations, and returns converge, alongside factors such as organized crime, multiple forms of violence—including gender-based violence as one of the main drivers of forced migration—socio-environmental impacts, extractivism, and land dispossession. These dynamics generate new forms of forced mobility that cannot be addressed in a fragmented manner. The growing displacement linked to socio-environmental disasters and slow-onset events requires protection pathways that are sensitive to these realities, safeguards for planned relocation, and greater coherence with climate and sustainable development commitments.

Safeguarding people on the move must go hand in hand with safeguarding the environment.

9. This reality highlights a structural disconnect between global commitments and local capacities, as territorial governments—despite being on the front lines of response—often lack sufficient resources, mandates, and support. This makes it essential to *strengthen territorial governance*, ensure direct, flexible, and accessible funding for local actors and migrant-led organizations, and link human mobility with *Buen Vivir*-oriented development planning. In this context, *we recognize the work of civil society, faith-based organizations, and the humanitarian sector*, which save lives, uphold the dignity of migrants, refugees, stateless persons, displaced people, and their families, provide assistance, advocacy, and protection, and strengthen conditions for the meaningful participation of people on the move in decision-making processes.
10. We also express our concern over the *rapid shrinking of civic space, as well as the criminalization*, surveillance, legal restrictions, and reprisals against civil society organizations, human rights defenders, faith-based organizations, migrant-led groups, journalists, trade unions, and other actors who support or defend the rights of people in human mobility. Solidarity must be promoted—not penalized.
11. We warn that *digital technologies are transforming migration governance*. Their use must be guided by principles of privacy, data protection, transparency, accountability, human oversight, and the prevention of discriminatory profiling, while also ensuring effective remedies for abuses arising from technological surveillance.
12. We call on States to make a concrete commitment: *to promote the creation, maintenance, and operation of national and regional migration networks* that effectively include grassroots organizations of migrants and refugees, as well as networks working to advance their rights.
13. This Forum represents a decisive opportunity to reaffirm that international cooperation, solidarity, and the full respect for human rights must prevail over punitive approaches, border externalization, and the political instrumentalization of human mobility. Latin America and the Caribbean expect a Progress Declaration with clear forward-looking commitments, centered on demonstrating implementation on the ground—through measurable indicators, clear timelines, regular reviews, public reporting of progress, and formal spaces for civil society participation—as well as effective accountability at local, national, regional, and global levels, with the courage required to respond to the challenges of our time.
14. Finally, in the lead-up to IMRF 2026, we recall that the *credibility of the Global Compact for Migration will depend not on new declarations, but on the coherence between the commitments undertaken and the policies implemented*, with the inclusion and participation of all stakeholders—especially migrants and their families.

Signatories:

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- Save My Identity

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