

**Executive Summary**  
**Round Table of National Institutions on Migration and Human Rights**  
**13-15 October 2004**  
**Zacatecas, Mexico**

**I. Context**

Today the number of people living outside their country of origin is higher than ever. According to recent statistics, in 2000, 175 million people lived outside their country of origin. Of them, about 158 millions were migrants, about 16 millions refugees and 900,000 asylum seekers.

The tendency to implement restrictive migration policies and to impose restrictions to the access of migrants to social services is evident. Migration policies and procedures have been affected by the development of national strategies against terrorism. As observed by the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, this has had a serious impact on the human rights of migrants. At the international level the issue of migration has gained increased attention and the protection of the human rights of migrants has become an issue of concern and discussion in several fora. Discussions are underway at different levels on the need of increased international cooperation on the issue of migration and on the establishment of an international migration management framework.

National Human Rights Institutions play a crucial role for the protection and promotion of the human rights of migrants. At the national level they can analyze new or existing legislation to assess its impact on the human rights of migrants and make relevant recommendations. They can also monitor the implementation of national legislation, as often it is in the name of existing laws and regulations that abuses are committed against migrants. They can also: train migration and other relevant authorities on national and international human rights norms and their concrete application to migrants; contribute to the formulation of relevant national policies; foment dialogue at the national level and raise awareness about the human rights of migrants; fight against negative stereotypes and discrimination and promote a positive image of migration through education and information campaigns; provide legal and other assistance to migrants; assist migrants in filing complaints of human rights violations; assist migrants in legal and administrative proceedings; visit detention centers where migrants are held and monitor their conditions and the respect of judicial guarantees. Through their regional and international networks, national institutions can participate in the international dialogue and debate on migration with a view to ensuring the integration of a human rights perspective. In this context, the promotion of existing international instruments, including the Migrant Workers Convention and a close cooperation with treaty bodies are particularly important.

**II. Objectives**

The objectives of the round table are:

- 1) To facilitate the exchange of experiences and expertise on the integration of migrant's rights issues into the work of national institutions.
- 2) Discuss common methodologies and strategies to promote and protect the human rights of migrants
- 3) Discuss the establishment of a system of recollection and analysis on best practices with regard to the work of national institutions in this field.

Participants will also have a chance to discuss issues of interest including:

- The level of knowledge of relevant issues in their countries
- The status of the human rights of migrants in their agendas
- The capacity to handle individual cases concerning the human rights of migrants
- The capacity to undertake public information and education campaigns
- The capacity to promote laws and reforms that are necessary to protect the human rights of migrants
- The capacity to participate in international dialogues on migration and migration management
- The creation of strategic alliances with the Government and the civil society at the national and international level.

The main objective of the round-table is to strengthen the capacity of national institutions to promote and protect the human rights of migrants.

### **III. Expected Outcome**

The round table will approve recommendations and gather good practices. Such recommendations, together with the proceedings of the round table and a compilation of good practices will be distributed to national institutions and to a wider public. The conclusions will also be distributed to relevant OHCHR's staff, treaty bodies, and special procedures.

### **IV. Participants, duration and venue**

The round-table will be organized by the National Human Rights Commission of Mexico in consultation and cooperation with the OHCHR. The round table will last three days and will be attended by 20/25 representatives of national institutions of all geographic areas, as well as a limited number of experts /representatives of OHCHR for a total of 30/35 participants. The round table will be held in Zacatecas, Mexico, from 12 to 14 October 2004.

### **V. Agenda**

The agenda of the meeting will focus on a number of specific issues, including: the international legal framework for the protection of the human rights of migrants; international and regional mechanisms for the promotion and protection of the human rights of migrants; migration laws and policies and the human rights of migrants;

interception, detention and deportation of migrants; trafficking and smuggling of migrants; the nexus between asylum and migration; migrant women and the situation of migrant domestic workers; unaccompanied migrant children and family reunification; discrimination racism and xenophobia. Under each point of the agenda discussions will be facilitated by the provision of questions that participants will be asked to answer. The OHCHR, in cooperation with the National Human Rights Commission of Mexico, will identify a rapporteur and one or more speakers for each session. Each session will start with a brief introduction by the speaker. In the draft agenda reference and background documents are indicated for each session.

## **VI. Budget**

The OHCHR will cover the travel and accommodation expenses of a number of participants (list attached) as well as of some administrative costs related to interpretation and documentation.