



## INTERNATIONAL DONORS' CONFERENCE IN SOLIDARITY WITH VENEZUELAN REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

### Concept Note

#### Issue

Amid the ongoing global pandemic, the Venezuelan refugee and migrant situation continues to result in unprecedented needs across Latin America and the Caribbean. Over 5.6 million Venezuelans have left or fled their homes since 2015, with over 4.6 million remaining in the region.<sup>1</sup> This is the second largest displacement crisis in the world and needs are growing. This mass exodus is a result of insecurity and lack of access to food, medicine, and essential services in Venezuela.

Venezuelan refugees and migrants have immediate and longer-term needs, including health, protection, food security, COVID-19 vaccinations, documentation, education, access to employment and integration. More than 50% of Venezuelan refugees and migrants only eat one or two meals per day; 25% of children are separated from their families during migration; and 80% have lost their source of income since the onset of the pandemic. Without documentation and access to legal status, many lack access to basic rights and, therefore, are also vulnerable to human trafficking, exploitation, violence and abuse, xenophobia, as well as forced recruitment into armed groups in some contexts. Women and girls experience particular challenges, such as gender-based violence and lack of access to sexual and reproductive health services.

Countries and communities in the region continue to host Venezuelans, as they concurrently face health, social, and economic challenges. The pandemic is expected to continue to pose social and economic pressures on individuals, communities and countries across the region. Notwithstanding the challenges, refugees and migrants bring skills, knowledge, innovation, and networks that enrich their host nations, which helps contribute to their integration into societies. However, host countries and communities require support to meet humanitarian and development needs.

#### Needs

The response to the needs stemming from the refugee and migrant situation, combined with the significant needs within Venezuela, remains gravely underfunded. The 2020 Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP) only received about half of the total funding requirements.<sup>2</sup> The 2021 RMRP appeals for US\$1.44 billion to provide humanitarian and development support, through its 159 partners, to 3.3 million refugees and migrants from Venezuela and host communities facing the greatest needs, in 17 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. This is in addition to the appeal for US\$762 million to address humanitarian needs inside Venezuela.

#### Efforts to date

Countries and communities in the region continue to demonstrate leadership in responding to the refugee and migrant situation, including through efforts to regularize the status of Venezuelans to facilitate access to health, social services, education, employment, and integration. These efforts have been supported by various actors and initiatives, including the Quito Process, multilateral

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://r4v.info> for more details on the particular areas of engagement and people reached.

<sup>2</sup> <https://r4v.info/en/situations/platform>



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development banks (the European Investment Bank (EIB), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the World Bank (WB)) and the Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (R4V), co-led by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which includes 159 partners, comprised of UN agencies, civil society, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), faith-based organizations, and the Red Cross Movement. The 2021 RMRP, developed by the R4V partners, will continue to support the response to humanitarian and development needs, including those related to COVID-19, in line with regional priorities and complementary to other efforts.

In 2019, the European Union (EU), with the support of UNHCR and IOM, organized a Solidarity Conference to raise awareness of the Venezuelan refugee and migrant situation. Subsequently, in May 2020, the EU and Spain co-hosted the International Donors' Conference in Solidarity with Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants, co-convened by Canada, Norway, UNHCR and IOM. This Conference resulted in US\$2.79 billion in pledges— including US\$653 million in grants— a tangible demonstration of the solidarity of the international community to address the urgent needs, exacerbated by COVID-19. Benefitting from this support, R4V partners were able to provide vital assistance to more than 3.18 million refugees and migrants from Venezuela, as well as host communities in 2020. Some 1.9 million people received food assistance; 1.2 million in health assistance; 907,000 received protection, and 657,000 received cash-based assistance.

### Canada's role

Canada will host the next International Donors' Conference in Solidarity with Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants on June 17, 2021 in collaboration with UNHCR and IOM, co-leads of the R4V Platform. In the lead-up to the conference, Canada is collaborating with various partners, including host countries, donors, multilateral development banks, and the R4V, to enhance international visibility; help ensure existing commitments are honoured; and mobilize additional resources. This includes an event with the IDB on economic integration with private sector support, thematic roundtables organized by the R4V sector leads, and jointly with the EU, a side event with civil society. All events and relevant information will be published on the [conference webpage](#).

### 2021 Conference

The 2021 conference will include the participation of donors, host countries, international organizations, international financial institutions (IFIs), the private sector, and civil society. It will also bring forward voices of those impacted by the crisis. The four objectives are:

- i) **Highlight progress achieved to date;**
- ii) **Raise awareness of key opportunities, areas of priority, and challenges, including the impacts of the crisis on women and girls;**
- iii) **Mobilize additional resources;**
- iv) **Identify future actions to maintain focus on the crisis and help ensure that commitments are honoured.**