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Latin American Experts Met Mid-February in San José, Costa Rica, to Identify Options to Better Assist and Protect Migrants in Times of Crisis

SAN JOSE, 17. February, 2016 - The Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC) Initiative Regional Consultation for Latin America took place on 17-18 February 2016 in San José, Costa Rica. This consultation was fully funded by the European Union and organised by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) in cooperation with the Government of Costa Rica.

Bringing together over 90 experts from 20 countries in the region as well as international organisations, civil society organisations, representatives of the private sector and academia, the event intended to spread awareness of the MICIC Initiative whilst raising the profiles of the specific issues and vulnerabilities that migrants endure during times of crisis.

This important gathering was inaugurated by Mr. Alejandro Solano Ortiz, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica, Ambassador Pelayo Castro Zuzuarregui, Head of the EU Delegation to Costa Rica, and Secretary Imelda M. Nicolas, Chairperson of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas. They expressed the need to promote the rights of migrants, and for building the capacities of States and other actors to assist and provide protection to migrants who find themselves in countries in crisis and address the long-term implications of such situations.

The Regional Consultation for Latin America highlighted noteworthy and innovative practices, including the use of consular crisis management systems and humanitarian visas to protect migrants. It was also emphasised that good preparation in calmer times, including a human-rights based approach to dealing with migrants, is essential for effectively addressing to the needs of migrants in the event of a crisis. Recommendations were made for improving the financial literacy of migrants and strengthening collaboration with diaspora groups and civil society organisations for better outreach to migrants. Additionally, while the MICIC Initiative focuses solely on natural disasters and conflicts, cases of extreme gang related violence in the region revealed the need for consideration of the protection of migrants within this context.

By June 2016, ICMPD will organise six regional consultations covering Asia, Eastern Europe, North Africa and the Middle East, East and Southern Africa, West and Central Africa, and Latin America. Results of the regional consultations will feed directly into the development of the global MICIC Guidelines, but also serve as a roadmap for the development of concrete capacity building activities.

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The International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) is an international organisation with 18 Member States and more than 350 staff members. Active in more than 90 countries worldwide, it takes a regional approach in its work to create efficient cooperation and partnerships along migration routes. Priority regions include Africa, Central and South Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. Its three-pillar approach to migration management – structurally linking research, migration 3 dialogues and capacity building – contributes to better migration policy development worldwide. The Vienna-based organisation has a mission in Brussels, a regional office in Malta and project offices in several countries. ICMPD receives funding from its Member States, the European Commission, the UN, and other multilateral institutions, as well as bilateral donors. Founded in 1993, ICMPD holds UN observer status and cooperates with more than 700 partners including EU institutions and UN agencies.

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