



South American  
Conference on Migration

**19<sup>TH</sup> SOUTH AMERICAN CONFERENCE ON MIGRATION  
BUENOS AIRES DECLARATION**

**“Migration and Access to Rights: Regional Challenges in the  
Face of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Experiences, Lessons Learnt,  
and a Look into the Future”**

**Buenos Aires, Argentina – August 25/26, 2021**

1. In the city of Buenos Aires, Argentine Republic, on August 25 and 26, 2021, the 19<sup>th</sup> South American Conference on Migration (SACM) is convened by videoconference, under the Presidency Pro Tempore of the Argentine Republic, with the participation of the Delegations of the Governments of the Argentine Republic, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Republic of Chile, the Republic of Colombia, the Republic of Ecuador, the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, the Republic of Paraguay, the Republic of Peru, the Republic of Suriname, the Eastern Republic of Uruguay, and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, as well as Observers and special guests, and with the support of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), in its capacity as Technical Secretariat (TS) of the South American Conference on Migration.
2. Under the theme “Migration and Access to Rights: Regional Challenges in the Face of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Experiences and Lessons Learnt. A Look into the Future”, the 19<sup>th</sup> SACM mainly aimed at promoting the coordination and cooperation among member States to face the challenges posed by migration management in times of restrictions on mobility as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. The SACM acknowledged the participation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of the Argentine Republic, Engineer Felipe Solá, who supported the regional institutional dialogue mechanism represented by the SACM; it welcomed its revitalisation; and it stressed that, over its twenty-one years of existence, the SACM was consistent with its message of respect for



the human rights of migrants and that, at present, more than ever, given the new challenges faced by the region as a consequence of the pandemic, it is essential to further strengthen this space.

4. The Presidency Pro Tempore of Argentina presented the following outcomes achieved during its mandate:
  - a. The repositioning of the SACM as a traditional, intergovernmental, consultative, consensus and migration-policy coordinating space in the South American region, having, among its central themes, the promotion and defence of the human rights of migrants, as well as the role of States in migration governance.
  - b. The implementation of a new working method based on the concept of thematic Networks, with the aim of updating the SACM agenda, facilitating the orderly follow-up of the topics dealt with, validating and giving continuity to them in the successive Presidencies Pro Tempore. In line with this, the thematic Networks created during this PPT of Argentina, are as follows:
    - i. Network on Border Management;
    - ii. Network on Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants;
    - iii. Network on Migrant Children and Adolescents;
    - iv. Network on Environment, Climate Change, Disasters and Migration;
    - v. Network on Gender and Migration;
    - vi. Network on Social and Labour Integration: Work and Education.
  - c. The creation and launching of the Suramérica Abierta platform, financed by the IOM Development Fund, considered as a tool that can provide accurate and up-to-date information in real time on migration regulations in the context of the health care measures that countries must currently adopt due to public health considerations. In addition, it stated that work is being done for the forthcoming release of the Suramérica Abierta mobile application, and the effectiveness of this platform will be assessed so that the aforementioned project can continue over time, evaluating its multiple uses.
  - d. Contacts and dialogue with the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM).
5. The plenary session received, by means of a virtual presentation, the explanatory report of the tasks performed and the conclusions drawn in each network, as fully detailed in Annex I of this Declaration, which is an integral part hereof.

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6. The SACM countries welcomed the revitalisation of this space for regional political consensus on international migration, after two consecutive years without holding meetings, and congratulated the PPT of Argentina and the TS on the coordination, organisation and convening of the encounters, as well as the preparation and virtual transmission of working documents given the applicable restriction on face-to-face meetings in most SACM countries.

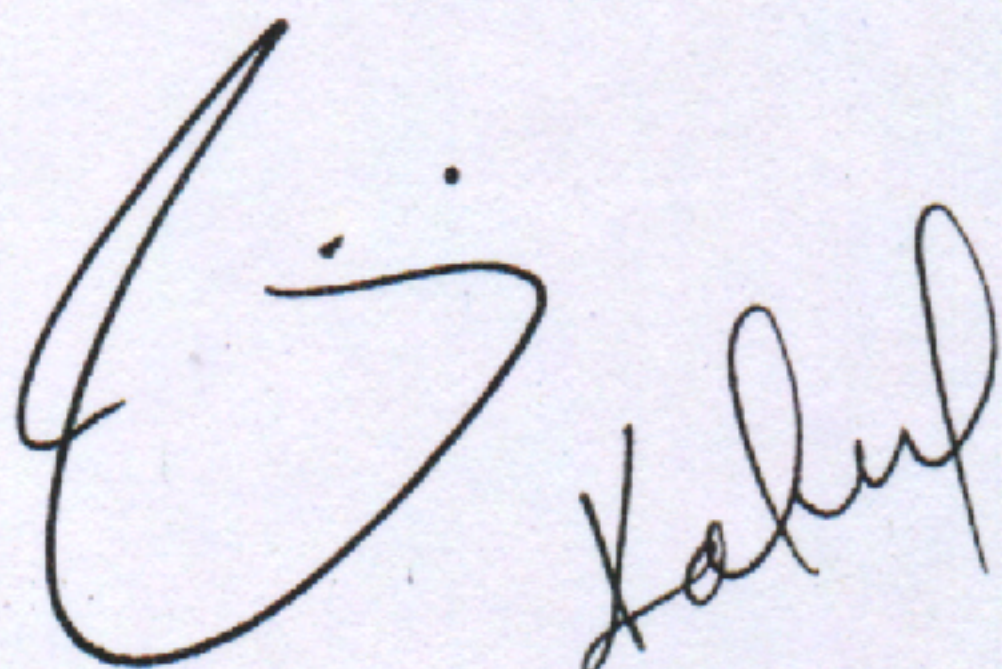
7. In addition, the organisation of the work of the SACM in networks was highlighted, as it is the first time that the mechanism has adopted an annual work plan aimed at achieving a tangible outcome in each central theme.

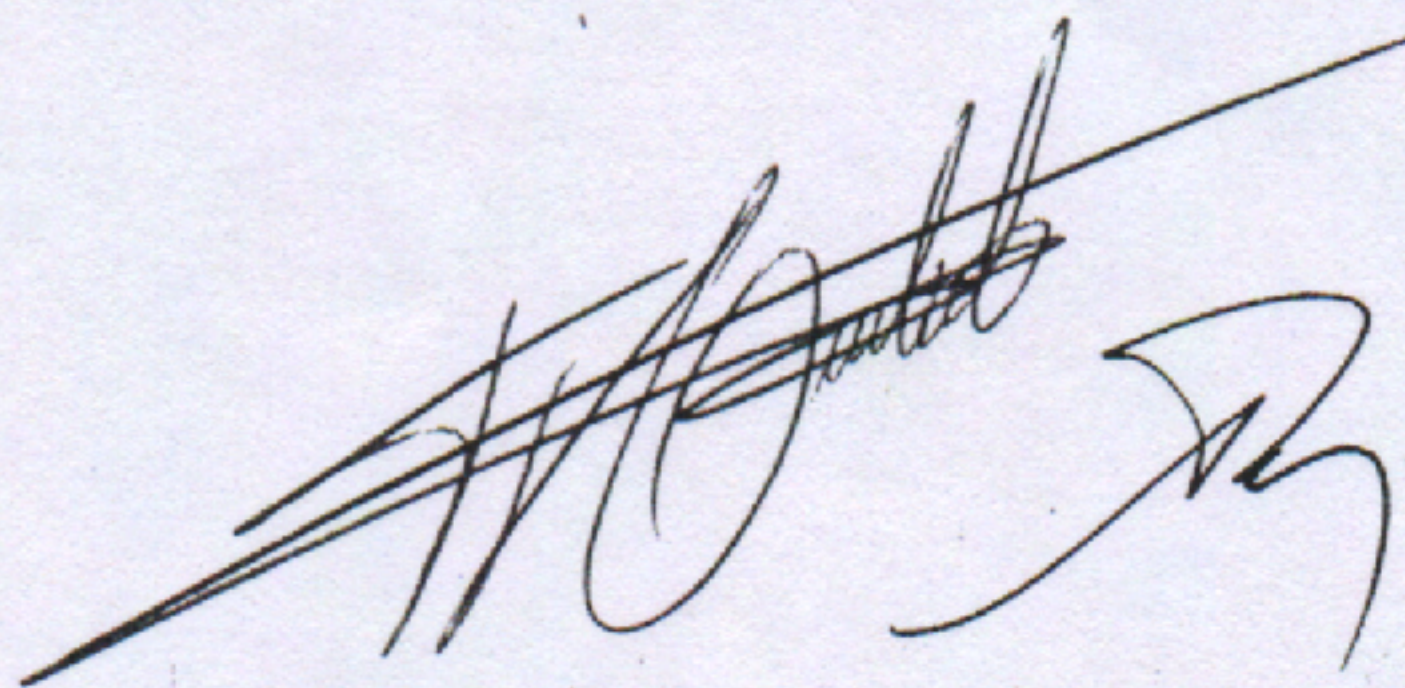
8. The importance of the theme of the 19<sup>th</sup> South American Conference on Migration, "Migration and Access to Rights: Regional Challenges in the Face of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Experiences, Lessons Learnt and a Look into the Future", was underscored, with the conviction that it is necessary to address migration management in the region by bringing together the full respect for the human rights of migrants with the need to maintain sanitary conditions in line with a pandemic situation.

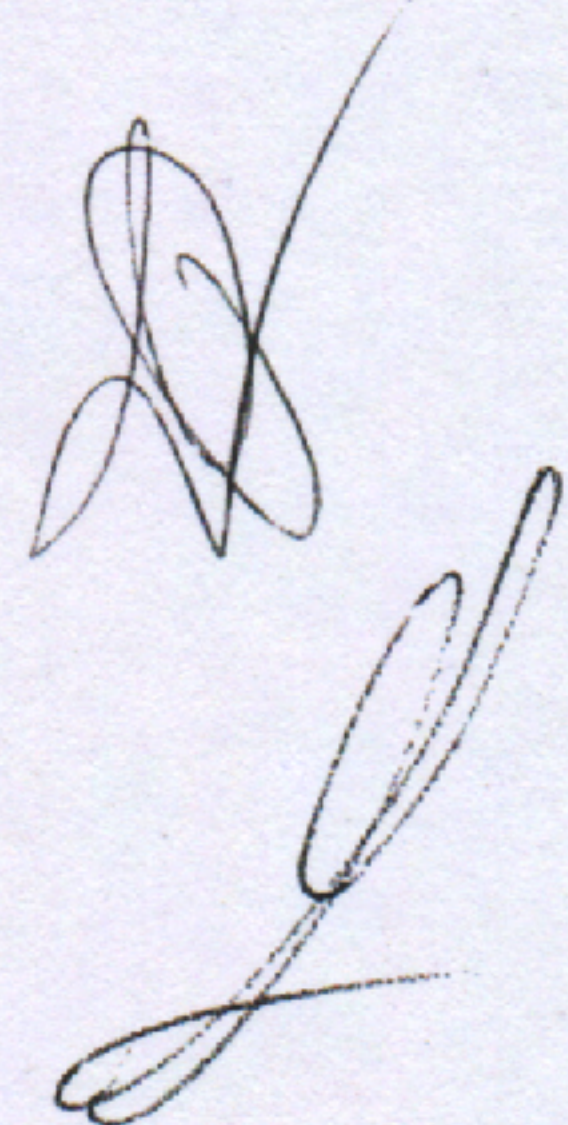
9. Emphasis was placed on the importance of dialogue and cooperation among differentiated regional mechanisms, but with interests and competence in the same issues, which was promoted during the PPT of Argentina, as is the case of synergy among the SACM, the Institute of Public Policies on Human Rights (IPPDH) and the Specialised Forum on Migration (FEM), both of MERCOSUR, and also with the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM), as well as other regional spaces and mechanisms addressing the human mobility issue. In addition, the efforts of the Andean Community, which adopted Decision 878 "Andean Migration Statute", were highlighted.

10. The launching of the Suramérica Abierta platform, as well as the development of the mobile application, was welcomed. It was decided that the scope and performance of the Platform would be studied, and that the IOM Regional Office would continue providing financial support for such project in 2022.

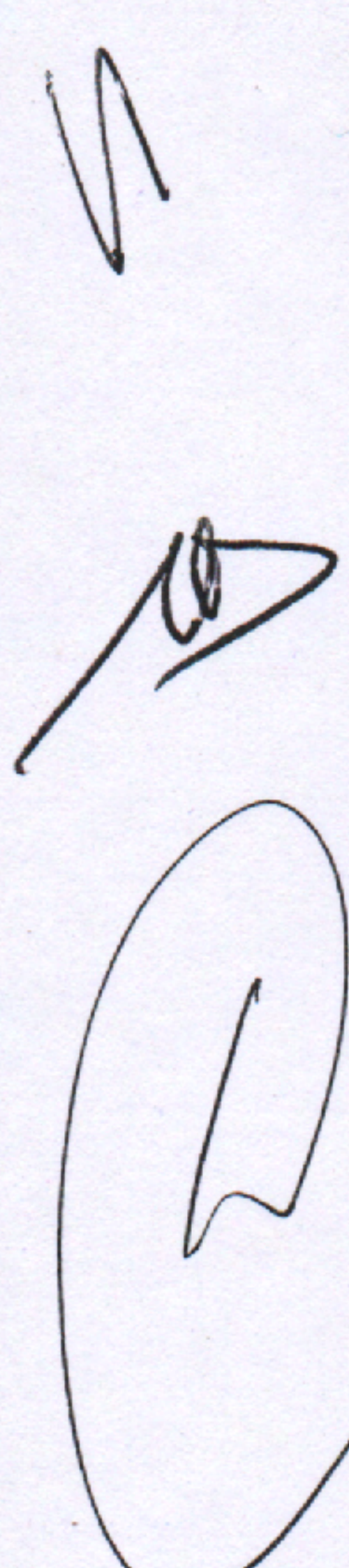
11. As regards the relationship with the civil society, the following was stated:

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- i. The 19<sup>th</sup> SACM sought to place value on an active relationship with the civil society. The SACM countries took note of the points made by the civil society in the document entitled "Contributions of the Civil Society to the 19<sup>th</sup> SACM", which was timely distributed digitally by the Technical Secretariat, and it was agreed to study the requests made as well as possible new forms of dialogue.
- ii. The PPT offered civil society organisations the possibility to transmit a previously recorded message at the Plenary Session. In line with this, this Plenary Session received a virtual message recorded by representatives of civil society organisations, which was transmitted on August 26.
- iii. The SACM, with the inputs mentioned in the preceding paragraph and considering the background of the 17<sup>th</sup> meeting, under the Presidency Pro Tempore of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay, and the 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of the SACM, under the Presidency Pro Tempore of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, both of which welcomed and heard a delegation of the civil society, considered it relevant to study a possible institutionalised mechanism for the participation of the civil society. For that purpose, the Technical Secretariat was requested to draft a report on how this issue is addressed in other regional consultative processes that can serve as an input for the assessment of this issue by the SACM.

12. The SACM especially acknowledged the participation in the opening of the Plenary Meeting of Mr António Vitorino, Director General of IOM, and Mr Marcelo Pisani, Regional Director of IOM for South America. In addition, it expressed its appreciation for the participation and contributions made by the other Observers and special guests.

13. The PPT of Argentina stated that it had received the candidature of the Republic of Chile to assume the Presidency Pro Tempore of the 20<sup>th</sup> South American Conference on Migration. In this regard, the SACM members accepted such candidature in the plenary session, and a possible prompt appointment of the country to hold the Presidency Pro Tempore of the 21<sup>st</sup> SACM was discussed, so as to reactivate the "Troika" in terms of Article 7 of the Regulations on the Organization and Functioning of the South American Conference on Migration. The SACM was pleased, appreciated the offer and decided to formally hand over the presidency at a virtual meeting in the third week of September (next September 16) during the intersessional meeting and implementation of the troika of the SACM.

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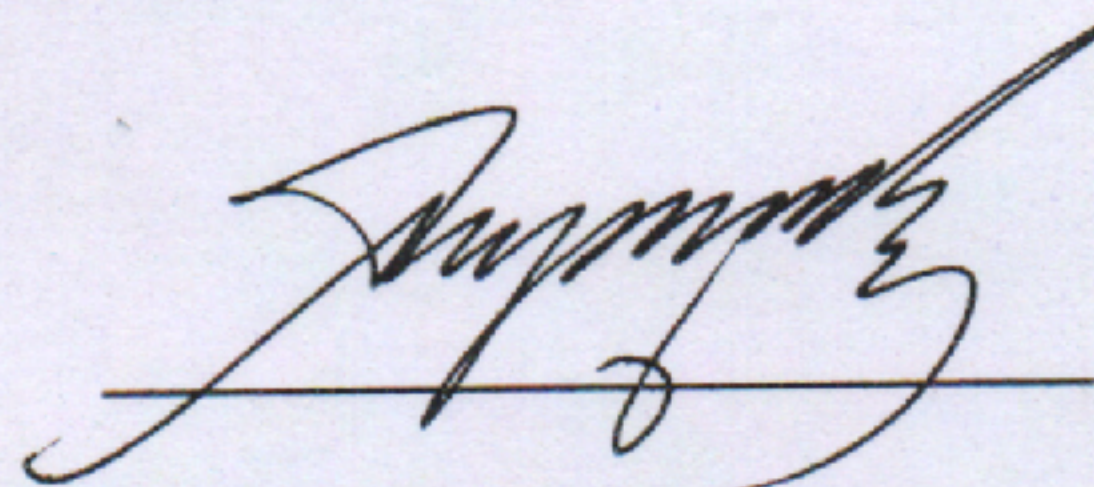


14. The SACM expressed its gratitude to the Government of the Argentine Republic, in its capacity as President Pro Tempore, as the country organising this South American Conference on Migration; to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship; to the National Directorate of Migration; and to the Ministries of Education, and Labour, Employment and Social Security of the Argentine Republic for the successful development of the 19<sup>th</sup> SACM, as well as to the Technical Secretariat of IOM, Regional Office for South America, for the permanent support provided.

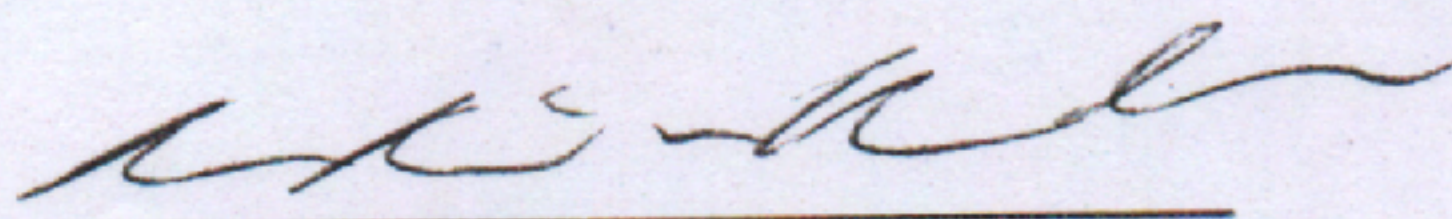
In witness whereof, the member countries of the South American Conference on Migration, sign this document on August 26, 2021, in English and Spanish, both texts being equally authentic.



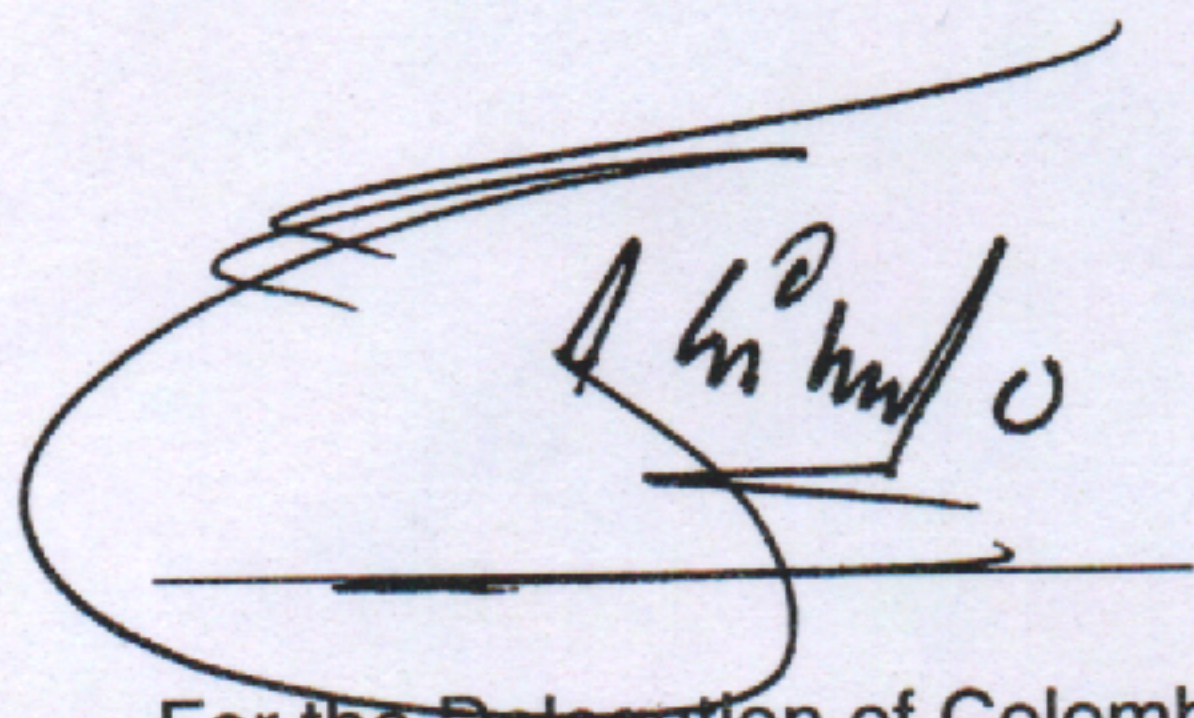
For the Delegation of the Argentine Republic  
Minister Ana Laura Cachaza  
General Director of  
Consular Affairs



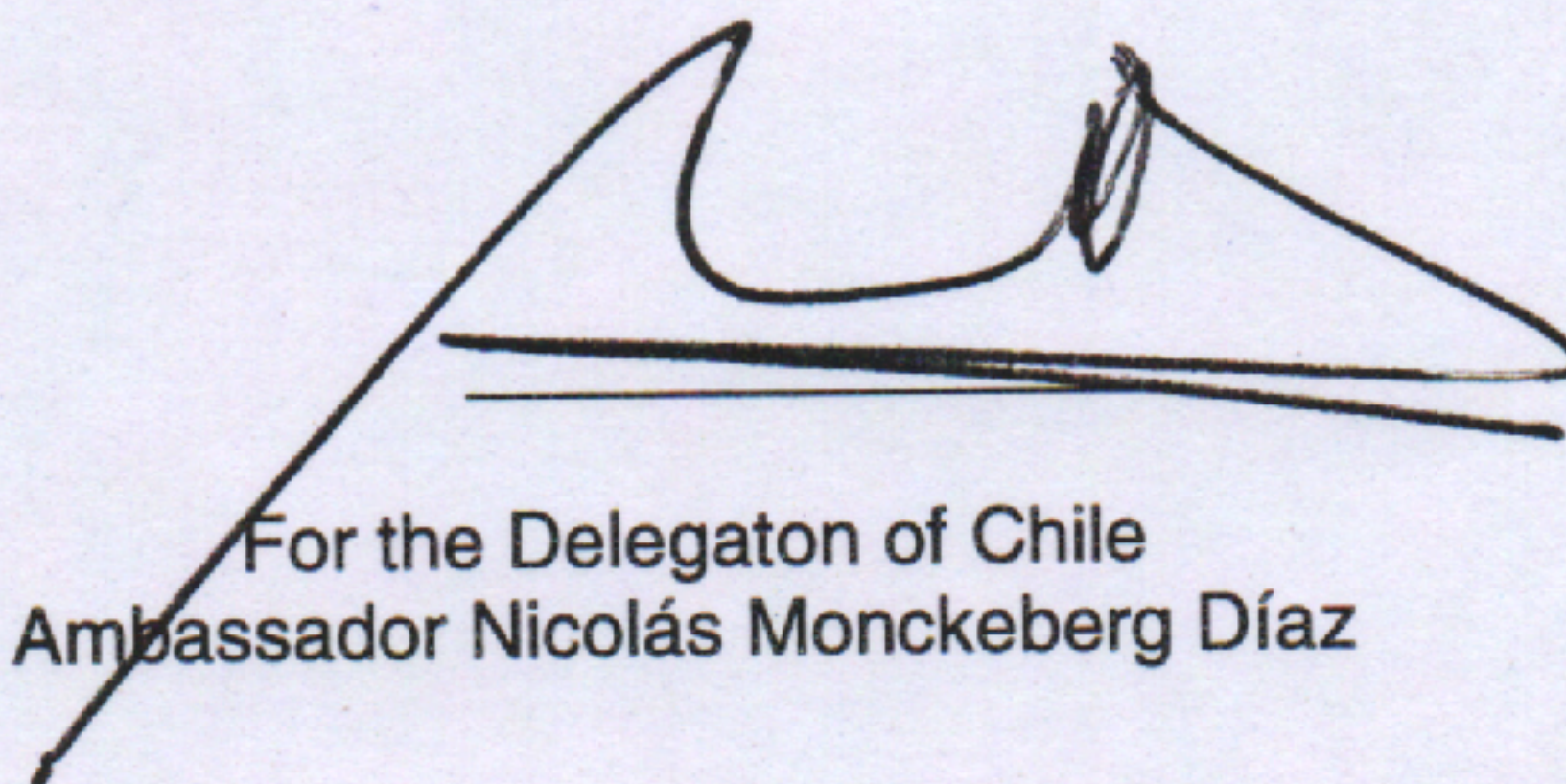
For the Delegation of Bolivia  
Ambassador Jorge Ramiro Tapia Sainz



For the Delegation of Brazil  
Minister Counsellor Rui Vasconcellos



For the Delegation of Colombia  
Ambassador Alvaro Pava Camelo



For the Delegation of Chile  
Ambassador Nicolás Monckeberg Díaz



Garcés Almeida

For the Delegation of Ecuador  
Ivonne Del Consuelo Garcés Almeida,  
Chargé d' affaires

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For the Delegation of Guyana

Juan Ramón Cano Montaña  
For the Delegation of Paraguay  
Juan Ramón Cano Montaña  
Chargé d' affaires

Peter Camino Cannock

For the Delegation of Perú  
Ambassador Peter Camino Cannock

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For the Delegation of Surinam

José Luis Curbelo Candia  
For the Delegation of Uruguay

Consul General Minister José Luis Curbelo Candia

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For the Delegation of Venezuela

Counsellor Katiuska Carolina Maestre Fonseca



## Annex I

### a. Network on Border Management

- i. The Network on "Border Management" focused on the exchange of experiences of the measures undertaken and the lessons learnt in the framework of border management in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ii. To this end, the delegations made presentations about the requirements for entry, the authorised crossing points and the main measures adopted since March 2020; they discussed about the implementation of a health passport in some countries, and about the experience of the role of local governments in border areas and of civil society actors related to this issue.
- iii. As a result of this, the countries launched the "Suramérica Abierta" Platform (<https://suramericaabierta.info/>), which is a project jointly carried out with MERCOSUR's Specialised Forum on Migration (FEM, in Spanish), also with the support of MERCOSUR's Working Group on Legal and Consular Affairs (GTACJ, in Spanish), and the Presidents of MERCOSUR's member and associated States as reflected on their communiqué of December 16, 2020.

### b. Network on Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants

- i. The Network on Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants dealt with the identification of obstacles that have arisen for migrants who are victims of trafficking in the fields of prevention, assistance, prosecution and litigation in the face of COVID-19. (Chile)
- ii. In this space, in addition, the countries shared good practices which allowed them to address this issue successfully, at the same time, mainstreaming the gender approach and the victim-focused intersectional and intercultural perspective.
- iii. In the Network, discussions were held about the "Regional Action Guide for the Early Detection of Situations of Human Trafficking at Border Crossing Points of MERCOSUR and Associated States", adopted in 2012 at the Meeting of Ministers of the Interior and Security of MERCOSUR, agreeing on the need to update it by 2022, in coordination with the competent spheres of MERCOSUR



and associated States, and with the technical support of the International Organization for Migration.

- iv. In this sense, they welcomed the adoption in May 2021 of the "Declaration of the Ministries of the Interior and Security of MERCOSUR and Associated States to combat human trafficking and smuggling of migrants at the borders in the context of COVID-19", and the "Recommendation on combating human trafficking and smuggling of migrants at the borders in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic", approved by the Common Market Council of MERCOSUR and Associated States.

**c. Network on Migrant Children and Adolescents**

- i. The main objectives of the Network on Migrant Children and Adolescents were to identify the impact that, in a context of high human mobility in the region, the pandemic has had on the access to rights by migrant children and adolescents in the short, medium and long terms; to mainstream migrant children and adolescents in the strategies for mitigation of and response to the pandemic impact on populations in situations of vulnerability; to foster the development of strategies for the protection and care of migrant children and adolescents to be carried out in a post-pandemic stage, so as to counter the long-term effects that the health crisis is expected to cause; to create an exchange space for the countries in the region so as to facilitate the sharing of lessons learnt in terms of the protection of migrant children and adolescents in the current context; and to assess potential mechanisms for articulation and standardised practices for the countries in the region so as to facilitate coordination among States for the purposes of protecting children and adolescents in contexts of human mobility.

- ii. Based on the work and exchanges carried out, the SACM requested the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the MERCOSUR Institute of Human Rights Public Policy (IPPDH) to diagnose the situation of migrant children and adolescents in the context of the pandemic at a regional level. In this sense, both organisations submitted the "Complementary Recommendations for migrant children and adolescents in the context of COVID-19", which were approved by the SACM.

**d. Network on Environment, Climate Change, Disasters and Migration**

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- i. The Network on Environment, Climate Change, Disasters and Migration identified, for the purposes of its creation, national focal points from migration and environmental areas. This network introduces a new subject in the South American region, and aims at identifying the needs of persons displaced due to the effects of climate change and disasters in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic; identifying good practices and concrete solutions contributed by the member States in terms of disaster-induced migration, environmental degradation and climate change, as well as producing dissemination material on this topic.
  - ii. In this sense, the network set out to follow up the implementation of the "Regional Guidelines on the Protection and Assistance of Cross-Border Displaced Persons and Migrants in Countries Affected by Natural Disasters", approved by the SACM in its 2018 Sucre Declaration, as it offers the countries good practices and useful elements to address the situation of people who cross borders in disaster and climate change scenarios. The countries appreciated the participation of the South American Network for Environmental Migrations (RESAMA), which contributed knowledge and expertise of this issue.
  - iii. The countries welcomed the organisation, in the framework of this network, of the Virtual Training Workshop for the SACM member countries on "Cross-border displacement and assistance of migrants in the context of disasters", co-organised by the PPT and the National Directorate for Migration of the Argentine Republic, and the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD) and IOM.

**e. Network on Gender and Migration**

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- i. The Network on Gender and Migration recognised the importance of identifying, sharing and enhancing those actions which contribute to including the gender perspective in migration policies.
  - ii. The Network on Gender and Migration, with the support of IOM's Technical Secretariat, submitted a document entitled "Recommendations on drafting guidelines for the care and protection of migrant women, girls and sex/gender diverse people in South America", which, based on a diagnostic analysis of the reality and characteristics of the countries that are part of the SACM in the current context of the pandemic, shall serve as a basis to draft guidelines for the care and protection of migrant women, girls and sex/gender diverse people in South America, in all their diversity, from a comprehensive, intersectional and human
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rights-based perspective, identifying the practices that best guarantee the protection of women and sex/gender diverse persons in all the stages of the migration process so as to enable their effective implementation.

**f. Network on Social and Labour Integration: Work and Education**

- i. The Network on Social and Labour Integration recognised that the pandemic caused an unprecedented crisis due to the magnitude of the economic and employment collapse, both for national workers and migrants, which mainly affected informal workers, in addition to the impact on education, reaffirming the importance of guaranteeing the right to education given its multiplying effect on the individual and social development of migrants, and highlighting the need to ensure the educational continuity and labour insertion and integration of migrants to contribute to the sustainable development of the countries in the region.
- ii. It appreciated the information provided by the countries about the labour and education situation of migrants in the region, the measures aimed at promoting social and labour integration, as well as all those actions developed by governments to address the health situation brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- iii. It stressed the progress made in the MERCOSUR regional integration bloc to facilitate the movement of workers in the region and to promote their labour integration, and acknowledged, in this sense, the value of the following regional instruments: the Residence Agreement for Nationals of MERCOSUR member and associated States, the Multilateral Agreement on Social Security, the MERCOSUR Social and Labour Declaration, and the Plan to facilitate the free movement of workers in MERCOSUR.
- iv. It valued the agreements developed in the Education Sector of MERCOSUR to facilitate the movement of students, teachers and researchers in the region, and to promote the exchange and undertaking of studies at the various education levels, as well as the granting of free visas to follow studies, graduate and postgraduate courses, secondary exchange courses of governmental and non-governmental institutions and for teaching or research purposes.
- v. It thanked the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation of Argentina for the presentation of the Programme Raíces (roots), a State policy to generate conditions for the permanent contact of Argentinian scientists, researchers and technologists who are temporarily or permanently residing abroad.



- vi. It pledged to promote regional coordination and cooperation actions fostering the exchange of information and good practices in order to ensure the social and labour integration of migrants with equal conditions and opportunities to those of nationals of the receiving countries.

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