

**OPENING OF THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON MIGRATION
STATISTICS (IFMS 2023)**

24 January 2023

9.30-10.20 am, Sala Raúl Prebisch

Ms. Sandra Quijada, Director of the National Institute of Statistics of Chile

Mr. António Vitorino, Director General of the IOM

Mr. Stefano Scarpetta, Director of the Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Directorate of the
OECD

Ladies, Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) it is a great honor to welcome you all as host of the Third International Forum on Migration Statistics, whose organization has been led by the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), through its Population and Statistics Divisions, in partnership with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

This International Forum brings together producers and users of migration statistics from national and international statistical offices, other government agencies, international organizations, academia, civil society, and the private sector from different corners of the world. It provides a unique opportunity to discuss ways to improve the collection, analysis, and use of migration data, to fill existing migration data gaps and, ultimately, to better inform policy making. Many of these issues are common across countries, regions and institutions but, at the same time, each context is unique, so we are certain that the exchange of practices and innovations on migration data will prove useful to all.

International migration is growing around the world, with important economic, social, cultural and political impacts on countries of origin, transit, and destination. Migration is driven by various factors, including the search for better work opportunities, family reunification, disasters or crises in countries of origin. Increased international migration, in particular, is linked to growing inequality in economic opportunities, as well as economic, environmental and humanitarian crises.

According to the United Nations estimates of the international migrant population, 281 million people resided outside their country of origin in 2020, representing 3.6% of the global population. This is the highest figure ever recorded, compared to 173 million international migrants in 2000 (2.8% of the world's population). In 2020, Europe had the highest level of *intraregional* migration in the world, but Latin America and the Caribbean has experienced the highest relative growth between 2000 and 2020: 72%. While the United States remains the main destination for migrants from Latin American and Caribbean, several countries in South America -including Chile- have also attracted many migrants from the region.

A source of concern about migration in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as in other regions of the world, is the vulnerability and the lack of effective protection in the journeys of migrants, some of whom are subject to extortion and other kinds of abuse by traffickers and criminal organizations. In our region, migratory flows of unaccompanied children and adolescents have become more common, as well as caravans of migrants traveling long distances to their final destination. Furthermore, we continue to be concerned about instances of discrimination, racism and xenophobia, and about migrant women's vulnerability to different kinds of violence.

At the global scale, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about great disruption to migratory flows and, more recently, the war between the Russian Federation and Ukraine has caused the largest refugee emergency since World War II.

To better understand and monitor these and other developments related to migration, and mobility more generally, we should strive to improve migration data. Data allows us to show, for instance, the discrimination that migrant persons often face in the labor market or in access to social services, as well as the positive contributions that migrants make to sustainable development in economic, social and demographic terms.

The goal of IFMS 2023 is, indeed, to better inform public policymaking and contribute to making public discourse and policymaking on migration more informed and evidence-based. Together with this, we need to promote the human rights of migrants and a development perspective of migration, which we have been doing for many years at ECLAC, in collaboration with other UN entities as well as with Governments and civil society organizations. At the regional level, we promote the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, as co-chairs of the United Nations Regional Network on Migration together with the International

Organization for Migration (IOM). We also promote the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, which has a chapter on international migration and protection of the human rights of all migrants.

The program of the Forum is a very rich one, including six plenaries, 24 parallel sessions and a poster exhibition addressing six priority themes including the monitoring of global agreements, impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and other overlapping crises on migration data, and new data approaches and methodologies.

ECLAC is pleased that such important topics will be covered, as they are key for development, the realization of human rights and greater equality. While we must address critical emergencies and humanitarian situations, we will also maintain a longer-term vision of migration processes as an integral part of socioeconomic development and the evolution of societies.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that we feel honored to host this Forum at ECLAC, with gratitude for the superb preparatory work done by DESA and their partners in the organization of this Forum, OECD and IOM. I convey our best wishes for the success of the Forum and confirm ECLAC's commitment to support initiatives oriented to strengthening migration statistics.

Please, make yourself at home, and make the most of these days at ECLAC.

Thank you; Muchas gracias!