

57th Directing Council Side Event

Migration and Health: Challenges and opportunities

October 2nd, 2019 - 12:30pm to 2:00pm
Room B

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| Moderator | Dr. Ciro Ugarte , Director, Health Emergencies, PAHO/WHO |
| Opening Remarks | Dr. Carissa Etienne , Director, PAHO/WHO (5') |
| Global and Regional perspectives on Migration and Health | Dr. Ranieri Guerra , Assistant Director-General, WHO (15') |
| National experiences and lessons learned. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dr. Ivan Darío Gonzalez – Vice-Minister of Health, Colombia. (10')• Dr. Hugo López-Gatell, Deputy Secretary of Health, Mexico (10')• Dr. Marcus Vinicius Quito - Technical Advisor to the General Coordinator of Occupational Health, Ministry of Health, Brazil (10') |
| General discussion (30') | |
| Main conclusions and way forward (10') | All four panel members (2'each) |

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The Region of the Americas has faced many migratory movements related to economic, social and political challenges, including conflicts, wars and natural disasters. However, in recent years, the intensification of two mass migration phenomena has been observed recently in the Americas: migration from Mesoamerica towards the United States, and the migration from Venezuela to neighboring South American, Central American, and Caribbean countries. These new migratory movements have placed these phenomena at the center of attention of the countries in Western Hemisphere

The migration phenomenon has important economic and social implications for host communities and the health sector is one of the most impacted as the demand for health services increases considerably. Different studies of the World Bank, OECD, and the IOM highlight that migrants can be users of health services and can also represent an opportunity for development in a medium and long term. The impact of migrants in countries' development will depend on the approach to migration.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes for the first time the contribution of migration to sustainable development. 11 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) contain targets and indicators that are related to migration or displacement. The basic principle of the Agenda is "leaving no one behind," and this includes migrants.

PAHO convened a high-level meeting on migration and health in November 2018¹, aimed at reviewing the regional health panorama within the context of mass migrations; addressing key challenges for improving the countries' health systems and services for migrants and host populations; identifying priority actions to address the health needs of migrants, while protecting regional gains in terms of elimination and control of endemic and epidemic-prone diseases; and discussing challenges for resource mobilization and health services financing.

Subsequently, a guidance document on migration and health was developed and published to serve as a resource for Member States to address the public health and health system challenges related to migration, including the promotion and protection of the health of migrants throughout their migration process².

The following short-term and medium-term interventions were recommended for implementation by Member States and PASB:

¹ [Regional Ministerial Meeting on Mass Migration and Health](#)

² [Guidance document on Migration and Health](#)

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All Member States:

- Invest in and prioritize general vaccination to reach at least 95% coverage in all municipalities and communities and address outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases.
- Strengthen the resilience of health systems in accordance with Resolution CD55.R8,³ adopted in 2016, and the Strategy for Universal Access to Health and Universal Health Coverage,⁴ adopted in 2014.
- Continue efforts to address the health needs of migrants in accordance with Resolution CD55.R13, adopted in 2016.⁵
- Scale up activities for malaria surveillance and response in all affected countries, along with efforts to prevent reestablishment of transmission in malaria-free areas.

Pan American Sanitary Bureau:

- Continue supporting Venezuela in response to the current health situation, particularly regarding control of measles, diphtheria, and malaria outbreaks.
- Support all Member States to:
 - i. Strengthen health surveillance, information management, and monitoring
 - ii. Improve access to health services for migrants and the host population
 - iii. Improve communication and exchange of information to counter xenophobia, stigma, and discrimination
 - iv. Strengthen partnerships, networks, and multi-country frameworks to understand the status and promote and protect the health of migrants
 - v. Adapt policies, programs, and legal frameworks to promote and protect the health and well-being of migrants

Objective: This event aims to highlight the link between migration, health, and development, and to identify the main challenges and opportunities for countries' development while guaranteeing the right to health in a migratory context.

Expected results:

- To provide tools to Member States to guarantee and protect the right to health in the context of migration with a development perspective, allowing them to address challenges and to make accurate long-term decisions.
- To provide alternative approaches to Member States and international organizations in order to guarantee the right to health in migratory contexts.

³ [PAHO/WHO, Resilient Health Systems \(CD55.R8\), 2016](#)

⁴ [PAHO/WHO, Strategy for Universal Access to Health and Universal Health Coverage \(CD53.R14\), 2014](#)

⁵ [PAHO/WHO, Health of Migrants \(Resolution CD55.R13\), 2016](#)