

Group of Friends of Migration

**Migration in the time of COVID-19: Migrant health and remittances amid the
COVID-19 pandemic**

June 4th, 2020

- I would like to thank the Missions of Bangladesh, Benin, Ireland and Mexico, the co-chairs of the “Group of Friends of Migration” for convening this meeting and for your leadership on this important agenda.
- Also, I thank to the Minister Cannon from Ireland for his welcome remarks and for the presentations made by the experts from the World Health Organization and the International Fund for Agricultural Development.
- For Colombia, migration is a multidimensional phenomenon that requires comprehensive management.
- As a country of origin, transit and destination, we consider that migration is an opportunity given its invaluable contribution to sustainable development.
- The immense migratory flow from Venezuela, caused by the accelerated deterioration of the socioeconomic and humanitarian situation in that country, poses enormous challenges for Latin America and, in particular, for my country.

- We are the main recipient of Venezuelan refugees and migrants, and also of returned Colombians.
- Since 2015, more than 5 million Venezuelans have fled their country and, by the end of 2020, this figure will rise to 6.5 million people. Currently, 1.8 million Venezuelan migrants live in Colombia.
- It is an unprecedented situation in the region, with an undeniable humanitarian dimension, which requires a caring and responsible response.
- Today more than ever, we need to address adequately the needs of vulnerable migrants and their host communities.
- Our health system has provided continuous care for migrants. However, it is facing great pressures and challenges in providing social services to this population in the current circumstances.
- Colombia is determined to continue providing assistance with the spirit of solidarity , hand in hand with all countries and organizations that are committed to this collective effort. Hence, more international cooperation is required.
- Regarding COVID-19 and remittances, I would like to highlight that they represented 2% of Colombia´s GDP in 2019. With the virus, they have

decreased 38% by April 2020. There is no doubt that these numbers break the positive growth path that remittances experienced since 2012.

- As the Secretary General mentioned in his new policy brief, “COVID-19 and People on the Move”, this emergency is an opportunity to reimagine human mobility.
- For that reason, we should look carefully at the nexus between health and economy. We cannot approach the pandemic just from one perspective. A holistic approach is necessary to achieve a sustainable recovery. A global approach is critical.
- This is the time for more cooperation and more solidarity.

Thank you.