**DRAFT Concept Note**

***Regional Conference on Migration (RCM)***

***Workshop on unscrupulous immigration consultants***

***Co-Sponsored by Canada and Guatemala***

**Synopsis**

Fraud is a crime in Canada. It presents an ongoing challenge to the integrity of immigration and border programs across regions, and it is in everyone’s interest to prevent fraud, especially to protect highly vulnerable immigrants who often become the victims of the agents of fraudulent crime. To protect the integrity of Canada’s immigration program, as well as immigrants and temporary foreign workers, Canada proposed to sponsor a workshop, under the auspices of the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM), aimed at informing participants about changes in our immigration laws aimed at combating fraud and preventing the exploitation of vulnerable immigrants from unscrupulous immigration consultants. This is a priority element of Canada’s program integrity efforts as well as our criminal investigations program. Canada would like to actively engage in and support information exchange, networking, and explore opportunities for cooperation to address this aspect of irregular migration.

In May 2014, the Government of Guatemala formally informed the Government of Canada of its decision to co-sponsor this event. The venue is still to be determined and the tentative dates are: December 10-11, 2014.

As a way of background, this proposal follows up on a commitment made by Canada at the last RCGM meeting, in November 2013 in Costa Rica, to hold a region-wide workshop on unscrupulous immigration consultants. At this meeting Guatemala offered to consider co-sponsoring this event with Canada. The proposed workshop will provide an opportunity for Canada and Guatemala, as well as other RCM countries and the Regional Network of Civil Organizations for Migration (RNCOM) to share information about legislation regarding the use of authorized representatives and fraud issues associated with the use of unscrupulous and/or ghost consultants. The workshop will also be an opportunity understand the regulatory body’s role, if any, share and discuss possible approaches to enhance public and stakeholder awareness, develop legislation, investigate cases and follow through with prosecution.

**Logistics**

*Tentative Date*: Dec 10-11, 2014

*Location*: TBD (Guatemala City)

*Format*: Two-day workshop with presentations and time for questions and plenary discussions

**Participants**

* RCM countries’ representatives from immigration, border control, public safety, etc.
* RCM observer organizations
* RNCOM and other civil society organizations

**Agenda**

RCM member countries’ efforts to combat unscrupulous immigration practices. Themes to be covered may include:

* Experiences regarding third-country nationals using facilitators, consultants, etc.
* Ghost consultants
* Public awareness campaigns
* Legislation
* Licensing/Regulation of consultants
* Passport issuance systems and measures regarding passport integrity
* Case investigations and prosecutions
* Results/Moving forward/Options for cooperation