Nicaragua is pleased to receive the Presidency Pro-Témpore of the Regional Conference on Migration, under the theme *“For a Region Free of Trafficking in Persons.”*

Recognizing the importance of this issue, Nicaragua undertakes the commitment of promoting the fight against Trafficking in Persons through clear actions, oriented towards the respect of the human rights, including the protection of migrants and the need of policies to guarantee the assistance to victims of trafficking in persons.

Through the Presidency Pro-Témpore in 2014, we expect to strengthen our region in the prevention and detection of this crime; this involves guiding our institutions into the knowledge of the problem, and also informing our population with the aim to counteract the recruitment process of the traffickers.

The Palermo Protocol defines Trafficking in Persons as *“The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.”* Therefore, it is needed to spread the knowledge of these recruitment methods to the population, so they know where to turn and how to get national and regional assistance.

In general, Trafficking in Persons is not detected because people leave their countries with their respective documents and through regular controls, so it is necessary to work on the detection of these cases.

The relationship established voluntarily with the traffickers, makes it look like a normal commercial relationship, which obscures the fact that this is a form of abuse that seriously violates the freedom of people and inviolable and inalienable human rights, hindering the attention of family, community and the authorities themselves. (Trafficking of Women, a manifestation of violence against women, IOM 2012)

We must work to operationalize and implement actions in order to ensure that our children, as well as our women and men, can move through the region freely and safely.

We will have to join forces to create mechanisms of coordination among the coalitions against Trafficking in Persons, in order to guarantee a timely response in the processes of detection, reinsertion, and assistance to these victims.

Within these coordination mechanisms, we will seek to contribute in the process of prosecution of the traffickers, including their processes of recruitment, means used, and its purpose.

Trafficking in persons is financed by the use of a human body, be it female, male or children; this *“Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.” (Palermo Protocol)*

During the XVI Regional Conference on Migration, the Vice-Ministers reaffirmed their commitment by approving ***“the linkage of the Regional Coalition against Trafficking in Persons with the RCM, with the participation of countries that express interest.”*** Also, workshops and seminars related to the issue have been held and in 2007, the document *“Regional Guidelines for Special Protection in Cases of Repatriation of Child Victims of Trafficking”* was adopted.

Nicaragua’s Presidency Pro-Témpore is committed to working in terms of three central themes in order to promote strategic and clear routes for the eradication of trafficking in persons within our region.

* **Trafficking of Women: A look at the Manifestations of this Crime in the Region**

Gender discrimination infringes women and girls, creating favorable conditions for trafficking networks.

It is estimated that the 80% of women and girls victims of trafficking are victims of sexual exploitation (IOM 2012); men looking for sexual satisfaction originate a high demand of this population and therefore the rise in the offer of sexual services. Nonetheless, servitude and forced labor are frequent.

Thus, it is important to take into account gender issues in order to give a different look to trafficking in persons and recognizing this inequality of power with the aim of improving the early detection, rescue, protection, intervention and reinsertion of the victims.

In this regard, the RCM becomes an important instrument to contribute to the eradication of trafficking in persons while fostering changes to procedures and legal frameworks based on best practices, which include the participation of counterparts from the coalitions against Trafficking in Persons.

* **Labor Trafficking and Slavery: Vulnerable Men and Women**

People who have been victims of trafficking for labor exploitation are often forced to work in sectors such as agriculture, construction, services and manufacturing industry. (ILO 2010)

Obviously, the most common manifestation of Trafficking in Persons is that for prostitution and sexual exploitation, but we cannot forget the deceiving suffered by many men and women who are searching for genuine job opportunities.

According to estimates by the ILO in Latin America, 14 million women are in paid domestic work, representing 15% of female employment in some countries. (ILO 2010)

Domestic work and other jobs in sectors such as construction, agriculture, and manufacturing and service industries are known as activities in which men and women are exposed to poor conditions and very few regulations.

In this sense, it is necessary to analyze the risk factors for this vulnerable population and perform actions that lead us to guarantee access to their universal human rights.

This is why the RCM is a key in the development of strategies, information campaigns, and serves as a platform for the establishment of policies.

* **Trafficking in Children: Concrete Actions for its Eradication.**

It is widely recognized that trafficking in children is one of the most violent activities because in general, it implies kidnapping and coercion; most of the victims fall easily into the lies and deception of adults who abuse their position of authority. (IOM 2012)

Marriages based on lies to mislead adolescents in false promises of a better life are within the major abuses against girls.

We have worked on training Officer for Child Protection (OPIS – Spanish acronym), but we must analyze and asses the mechanism and procedures that will allow us to strengthen and guide efforts to reach better results on detection, protection and assistance to this potential child victims.

In this regard, the Presidency Pro-Témpore is proposing to strengthen the concord in the region in order to contribute to the fight against Trafficking in Persons

In this regard, the Presidency Pro-Témpore aims to strengthen unity in the region as a way to contribute to the fight against Trafficking in Persons, fully aware that the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM) is a key to the eradication of this crime in the region through its open and honest dialogue, and the willingness of states to protect the human rights of migrants and to strengthen immigration regulations.