Thank you Chair,

This statement has been drafted through a wide consultation and attempts to reflect the diversity of views within the NGO community.

**Argentina**
We express our deep concern regarding the adoption of Decree 70/2017. These modifications make immigrants more vulnerable to rights offenses and weaken their protection.

With respect to the refugee population in Argentina, NGOs welcome the “Syrian Program”. Yet, the full recognition of the rights of the refugee population in Argentina is still pending implementation of the 2006 “General Act for Refugee Acknowledgment and Protection”.

**Brazil**
In Brazil we are highly concerned with the militarized border management strategy, taking restrictive measures. This will have an impact on migrant populations at the borders and will result in the decline of access to rights.

**Canada**
We welcome the initiatives taken on by the Canadian government that have resulted in the increase in the number of refugees offered resettlement opportunities. The Canadian government has also implemented an integration plan for newcomers, which NGOs strongly support.

**Colombia**
We applaud the peace accords reached between the Colombian government and the FARC\(^1\), an important first step towards lasting peace.

However, 4.9 million people still depend on humanitarian aid. There are serious protection concerns in areas such as Choco, Valle del Cauca, Nariño, Norte de Santander and Putumayo, where the emergence of new non-state armed actors is leading to killings, forced recruitment of children, gender based violence, and lack of access to food, water, sanitation and education. It is therefore vital that the international humanitarian community does not withdraw its support before alternative mechanisms are in place.

\(^1\) Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
Finally, Colombia should continue to strengthen its humanitarian responses in line with the Cartagena Declaration, the Brazil Plan of Action, and the San José Action Statement in order to achieve durable solutions.

**Costa Rica**
We are concerned about the need of international protection of migratory flows from Haiti, Venezuela, Colombia, Cuba as well as from Africa and Asia.

While UNHCR’s presence at the borders should be increased in order to identify and support people in need of international protection, NGOs welcome the initiative taken by the Costa Rican government to grant provisional documents in order for people to continue their journey.

**Ecuador**
NGOs welcome the promulgation of Ecuador’s Law of Human Mobility and call for its swift implementation to ensure respect of refugees’ and migrants’ rights. Also, with this new law, Ecuador officially joins Peru and Argentina in legally recognizing the situation of statelessness.

Yet, the collective expulsion of 121 Cuban citizens in July 2016 was a clear violation of due process, the right to seek asylum, and the non-derogable prohibition on refoulement. Also, Ecuador should continue to ensure the recognition, protection and assistance to people in need of international protection from Colombia.

Voluntary repatriation should only be considered after a thorough analysis of the safety to return. Resettlement or local integration must remain an option.

**Mexico**
In Mexico, we are highly concerned about the southern border program prioritising militarization, detention and other migration control policies.

Also, the U.S. President’s proposed wall on the northern border between Mexico and the United States will only worsen the current humanitarian situation. When there are more obstacles to safely crossing borders, the result is less protection. Such practices contradict with ratified international instruments.

**The Northern Triangle**
The humanitarian fallout from violence in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras is at a tipping point. High levels of violence persist throughout the region, which leads to increased forced migration and internal displacement. Despite the stark warnings, governments in the region have been unable to prevent the violence or systematically respond to the needs of those fleeing.

There is a clear association between the current violence in the Northern Triangle and gaps in the response to institutional protection. Moreover, Guatemala and El Salvador continue to not recognize the internal displacement of people due to violence as a serious humanitarian situation. In Guatemala's case, to deepen knowledge on this matter, the Universidad Rafael Landívar and
UNHCR will conduct a study on internal displacement, which will hopefully provide an important contribution to this Standing Committee.

The government of Honduras has recognized internal displacement as a serious concern. We welcome the undertaking to draft a law on internal displacement. Nonetheless, Honduras should also take comprehensive action to tackle the root causes of displacement and to protect IDPs.

**Panama**

It is of particular concern that Panama is receiving an increased number of “mixed” flows of refugees and migrants. Increased needs for protection of migrants and asylum seekers in Panama must be addressed.

**Peru, Bolivia & Chile**

We highlight the need for international protection of the large mixed migration flows in the borders of Peru, Bolivia and Chile that constitute a majority of Colombian population. Furthermore, we express our concern on these migration routes that have a large presence of human trafficking networks. We applaud initiatives taken by authorities to prevent the rejection of asylum seekers at borders and ensure adequate due process in the refugee status determination procedure.

**United States and its influence in the region**

NGOs from the Americas are deeply concerned with the current changes in U.S. immigration policies. Given the intense focus on increased border controls, the use of detention as a tool of migration management, restricted access to asylum, and other policies of externalized containment, hundreds of families have already been torn apart. We see refugees being denied entry into the U.S., subject to new mandatory detention policies, and increasingly becoming the victims of hate crimes. Furthermore, the deportation of people in need of international protection is highly alarming.

The impacts of U.S. policies on human security in the region is also a matter of concern. To build a safe and secure future for the next generation of people throughout the region, governments must create a coordinated regional response to share responsibility, not unilaterally close their borders.

**Venezuela**

The situation in Venezuela is of great concern and threatens to destabilize further the border areas between Venezuela and Colombia. The number of people at risk is increasing and civilians are running out of resources to cope with the situation.

A longer version of this statement can be found on ICVA’s website at icvanetwork.org.

Thank you, Chair.