

## **Trilateral statement on joint commitment to Latin America**

The United States, Spain, and Canada hereby announce our intent to partner together to deepen our engagement in Latin America. This partnership will promote safe, orderly, humane, and regular migration, and create economic and social opportunities and strengthen development options for the people of the region. The United States, Spain, and Canada will leverage their collective engagement in the region to continue to promote and expand regular labor migration opportunities, including through “circular” or temporary labor mobility; strengthen the capacity of national governments to fairly and ethically recruit, vet, and support eligible workers to employment abroad; increase protections for and awareness of workers’ rights; and generate sustained international attention to this vital region. This partnership will build upon our existing support to relevant national ministries, leverage additional bilateral relationships with key stakeholders, and engage with new and innovative initiatives including Regional Processing Centers. Our cooperation rests on a foundation of shared dedication to the people of the region, shared interest in addressing labor shortages in key industries in participating destination countries, shared commitment to the empowerment of workers, and shared awareness of the need to proactively manage irregular migration through the promotion of safe, orderly, humane, and regular pathways.

This announcement also reinforces our mutual interest in the region, underscoring the common hemispheric understanding, approach, and commitments in the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection and the United States’ “Call to Action” for Central America.

As part of this joint commitment, the United States, Spain, and Canada have established specific goals which are outlined below. The three countries are committed to working together with relevant governments in the region to meet these ambitious targets and support each other’s efforts in achieving them.

In addition, the three countries will engage multilateral institutions and organizations to identify ways in which these institutions can support labor migration pathways, including support to advance fair recruitment and respect for worker rights.

### **Canada:**

- In 2022, Canada welcomed more than 50,000 workers from Mexico, Guatemala, and the Caribbean in the agriculture sector alone. While the agriculture sector makes up a significant portion of temporary foreign workers from this region, labor is sought from across a variety of sectors with trends in private sector employer demand suggesting increased future growth. Canada’s temporary labor pathways are demand-driven, with certain employers directly in touch with regional stakeholders to meet labor market needs.
- As part of its joint commitment, Canada will leverage its existing temporary foreign worker pathways and economic programs such as the Agri-Food Pilot to offer safe, regular pathways as an alternative to irregular migration.
- In addition, Canada will explore further humanitarian pathways to welcome more displaced persons from the Americas to be employed in Canada. This includes the recently expanded Economic Mobility Pathway Pilot which

provides an additional pathway for skilled refugees and other displaced people to immigrate to Canada through economic pathways.

- The Government of Canada commits to growing labor mobility from the region particularly through promotion and communication activities that link Canadian employers with new stakeholders in the region, including national labor ministries. This may be particularly attractive to our small/medium sized and rural business owners in need of labor, but who may not have access to larger scale recruitment pathways.
- Canada will increase capacity building efforts in the region to address the root causes of irregular migration and promote regular pathways for labor mobility, including efforts that focus on supporting socio-economic integration and ethical recruitment of temporary foreign workers.
- Canada will share information on its policies and best practices as agreed at the North American Leaders' Summit.

### **Spain:**

- Spain has developed different regular migration pathways, based on its strong links with Latin America
  - As a part of this effort, Spain has signed migration-related agreements with the Dominican Republic (2001), Ecuador (2001), Colombia (2001), Honduras (2021), and Guatemala (2023). These bilateral agreements provide the necessary legal basis for Spain and the countries of origin to jointly work on regular migration. Under the framework of these agreements, Spain has launched several circular migration programs. In 2023, around 2,000 seasonal workers will come to Spain through these programs.
  - In addition to these bilateral agreements, Spain has developed a program for high-skilled workers which allowed 3,700 people from Colombia and Central America countries to arrive in Spain in 2022.
  - Between 2019 and 2022, Spain received from Latin America more than 300,000 asylum applications, plus 35,000 in the first quarter of 2023.
- As part of its joint commitment to promoting legal migration, Spain will increase the number of persons coming from Latin America over the next three years through pathways linked to labor market needs, enhancing existing operational capacities.
- With this objective, Spain is committed to reinforcing the existing regular pathways, expanding its circular migration program and has just enacted a new complementary pathway, relying on corporate sponsors, for persons in need of international protection with skills matching domestic labor demand shortages.

### **The United States:**

- In FY 2022, the United States issued 15,102 H-2B (non-agricultural) visas, and 3,923 H-2A (agricultural) visas to workers from northern Central America, doubling issuances for FY 2021.
  - The United States has reserved thousands of H-2B visas for nationals of northern Central America in fiscal years 2021 to 2023 and provided extensive support to the governments of northern Central America countries in identifying and vetting potential workers and facilitating

their recruitment by U.S. employers while putting in place stronger worker protections.

- As part of its joint commitment, the United States will:
  - Seek a 25 percent increase in H-2 visa issuance from northern Central America by issuing more than 25,000 H-2 visas from this region in FY 2023 and endeavor to increase FY23 numbers by at least 10 percent in FY24 (contingent upon employer demand).
  - Use up to \$65 million to operationalize a pilot grant program for agricultural employers to address labor instability and labor shortages by expanding the pool of H-2A workers from northern Central America, while also improving working conditions for both U.S. and H-2A farmworkers..
- The United States will also provide technical and administrative support to interested destination countries and to relevant ministries in partner sending countries to:
  - Strengthen the ministries' overall capacity, including to expand lawful channels to additional destination countries;
  - Protect the rights of migrant workers; and
  - Make labor migration opportunities more publicly visible, offering hope that alternatives to irregular movement exist.