



**Speech by Ambassador Javier Paulinich,  
Permanent Secretary of the Latin American  
and Caribbean Economic System (SELA)**

**Intra-Regional Relations**

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The Honourable Dr Walker San Miguel, Secretary-General of the Andean Community;

The Honourable Mr Víctor Rico, Secretary-General of CAF-development bank of Latin America;

Your Excellency Ambassador José Antonio Arróspide, Director-General of the Andean Community;

The Honourable Diego Beltrand, Regional Director for South America of the International Organization for Migration;

The Honourable José Iván Dávalos, Head of Mission of the International Organization for Migration in Peru;

The Honourable Tricia Barrow, Political Advisor of the Association of Caribbean States;

The Honourable Claire Charbit, Head of Unit of Territorial Dialogue and Migration of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development;

Ambassadors and representatives of the Member States of SELA;

Representatives of regional and international organizations;

Representatives of public and private institutions of Peru;

Distinguished speakers, participants and special guests;

Ladies and gentlemen,

In my capacity as Permanent Secretary of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), I wish to warmly welcome you to the "Regional Meeting on Migration and Migration Policies in Latin America and the Caribbean", which we organized in collaboration with the General Secretariat of the Andean Community, to whom we are deeply grateful for their support in the conduction of this event.

In addition, I would like to express my gratitude to the government authorities responsible for migration flows in our Member States, as well as the representatives of regional and international organizations and the private sector of Latin America and the Caribbean, who kindly accepted our invitation to participate in this meeting, which has two fundamental objectives: a) Recognize and analyze the main determining factors of migration flows in the region, and b) Stress the importance of migration flows as a significant expression of integration processes while exploring the key regional challenges concerning migration policies.

The issue of migration flows is highly important at the global level. Despite being a social phenomenon found in all stages of the history of humanity, the process of analyzing it is a complex undertaking, because it is difficult to make a comprehensive review of its economic, social and political factors, as well as its consequences and impacts on countries and regions.

According to the existing literature, some of the key factors that influence the decision to migrate have been identified. Economic prosperity, inequality in income distribution, violence, and political and social conflicts arise as the most outstanding factors. In general, the reasons are linked to the search for better conditions of life, and work and study opportunities.

## 2

From 1970 to 2015, the number of migrants globally grew from 84 million to 243 million<sup>1</sup>. However, despite the remarkable increase in absolute terms, relative figures for the total population reveal stagnation at around 2% and 3%.

South-North migration has been the trend for the last 50 years. Little more than 40% of emigrants come from Asia, 25% from Europe, 15% from Latin America and the Caribbean, and 14% from Africa. As regards destinations, Europe and Asia have been consolidated as the major recipient regions, with slightly more than 62% of emigrants being received in 2015, followed by North America with 22%.

In contrast, and despite the notable efforts to promote regulatory harmonization and the creation of a common legislation that facilitates labour mobility as a factor, in 2015 Latin America and the Caribbean was the selected destination of only 4% of emigrants in the world. However, there has been an increase in intra-regional movements, which rose from 27% during the period 2009-2012 to 34% during the three-year period 2012-2015<sup>2</sup>.

Another important aspect arising from the analysis of the migration phenomenon is its financial contribution through remittances. In 2016, income from remittances in Latin American and Caribbean countries reached an all-time high of US\$ 70,000 million, as a result of a significant growth for seven consecutive years. In our region, and with special emphasis on Central American and Caribbean countries, these resources represent a considerable amount that sustains household consumption and helps fight poverty and inequality.

From the perspective of economic growth, migration flows create winners and losers<sup>3</sup>. Those countries that have managed to make their labour markets more flexible and implement sophisticated migration policies have been able to increase job creation, reduce their price levels and capitalize on the increases in their levels of labour productivity through the agglomeration of skills and further expansion of productive capacities.

This has not been the case in our region, where countries are still mainly of emigration. In this connection, we must ensure the development of policies aimed at incorporating criteria of efficiency that will result in migration regulations for competitiveness and productive transformation.

At present, migrations have been at the centre of the political debate and have become a challenge for the management of national sovereignty, public safety and promotion of globalization. We hope that this space for reflection and discussion is conducive for the presentation of successful experiences and the creation of synergy, in order to reach higher levels of integration in our Latin America and the Caribbean.

Finally, I wish you the best of success in your deliberations and once again express my gratitude to the General Secretariat of the Andean Community for their support in the conduction of this important regional meeting.

Thank you very much.

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<sup>1</sup> Figures from the World Migration Report 2018 of the International Organization for Migration.

<sup>2</sup> Figures from the Third Report of the Continuous Reporting System on International Migration in the Americas (Sicremi), prepared by the OECD and the OAS.

<sup>3</sup> IMF (2015-March). Jobs on the line. Finance & Development.