Strategic Response Priorities

1. Support the Government’s efforts to facilitate regular entry and regularize Venezuelans’ stay in the country, while enhancing access to asylum and advocating for greater regular access to the country.

2. Respond to humanitarian needs of those entering and/or transiting through Ecuador.

3. Increase the integration component of the response, with activities that promote access to rights and basic services, socio-economic and financial inclusion and social cohesion, as a way to prevent discrimination and xenophobia.

Situation

Ecuador, which has until recently maintained an open-door policy towards Venezuelans, has been a country of destination and transit for refugees and migrants from Venezuela, with more than 1.7 million having entered the country regularly since 2017. It is expected that by end-2019, Ecuador will host up to 548,000 refugees and migrants from Venezuela. This represents a significant increase from end-2018 (250,752).

In August 2019, the Government of Ecuador introduced a visa requirement for Venezuelans and in parallel announced a regularization process for Venezuelans who meet several requirements, including the need for a passport. This measure has significantly impacted options for Venezuelans to access the territory. It is noted, however, that increasing numbers of Venezuelans enter the country irregularly, exposing themselves to significant protection risks, including smuggling and trafficking. Similar risks are faced by those without the required documentation and who remain irregular.

Despite the universal access to basic services, including healthcare and education, barriers continue to be reported and are compounded by socio-economic challenges faced by the country and by Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Ecuador. With strained local infrastructures, especially in the areas most affected by the influx, an increased focus on the needs of host communities, as well as social cohesion and livelihood opportunities for refugees and migrants are needed to avoid host fatigue, xenophobia and to ensure the socio-economic integration of the refugee and migrant population.