On 11 October, a group of 66 Syrian refugees left Beirut, Lebanon, en route to Santiago, Chile, under the Emerging Resettlement Countries Joint Support Mechanism (ERCM), which is co-implemented by the IOM, the United Nations Agency for Migration, and the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR). At Santiago airport, Michelle Bachelet, President of Chile, welcomed the refugees (38 adults and 28 children). Seven families were located in Villa Alemana and another seven in Macul, thanks to agreements between the Ministry of Interior and those Municipalities.

“Our wish is that they, step by step, start leaving behind their fear, pain and uncertainty. We are aware that they come from a difficult history and we want them to find in our country a land that welcomes them with friendship and good will, so they can rebuild their history and raise their families in peace and safety,” President Bachelet said in her welcome message.
On October 5th during the Citizen’s Plaza organized by the Attorney General’s Office, IOM Chile Chief of Mission Norberto Girón, along with Attorney General Jorge Abbott, signed this historic Agreement that ratifies the joint commitment to combat migrant smuggling and trafficking. This includes training in the areas of prevention, prosecution, and punishment of the crimes of migrant smuggling and trafficking. The Agreement also covers the development of research projects regarding issues of shared interest. The ceremony included the participation of the heads of the Public Defender’s Office, the Carabineros of Chile, the Chilean Police, the National Human Rights Institute, the Frè Foundation, and the Department of Migration of the Ministry of the Interior and Public Security.

On 6 October, as part of the FTA Football-Tennis World Championship Tour (held for the first time in Chile and organized by the Municipality of Central Station), a Migrant Classification took place with the participation of migrants representing more than ten countries.

The activity was held in the Jean Beausejour Central Station Sports Complex (named in honor of the renowned Chilean World Cup soccer player, whose father was Haitian and mother was Mapuche), with the presence of Mayor Rodrigo Delgado.
On 17 October authorities from the United Nations System in Chile called for valuing the diversity of foods and culinary preparations from different countries and for including same in Chilean society.

Changing the future of migration through food security and rural development was the message stressed by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) on World Food Day 2017, during the ceremony held in La Vega Central, an emblematic multi-cultural space for Chilean popular culture.

The United Nations Agencies pointed out that food and agriculture continue to be fundamental to the welfare of all persons, and are linked to one of the principal causes of migration, especially in rural areas.

With coordination and support from Deniss Tala, a Chilean architect and professional photographer devoted to photographing migrant women, a Panel Discussion with migrant women was held on 17 October. The event was held in the Infrarrojo Gallery surrounded by photographs of women of African descent. The main idea of the event was to value the contributions of migrant women towards the building and development of Chilean society from a cultural, social, political, and innovation perspective. The Panel Discussion was moderated by Jorge Sagastume, and the Panelists were Jennifer Villagras from the Municipality of Maipú, Isabel Vargas from the Municipality of Central Station, Liliana Castaño from the Municipality of Santiago, Ridmar Morales from the North Metropolitan Health Service (Independencia), and Pilar Cruz, Council Member from Providencia.
United Nations Staff Day was celebrated on 26 October by representatives of the United Nations System Agencies in Chile. The event was held at the Headquarters of the U.N. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), with the participation of over 200 System staff members.

The participants took part in activities to strengthen inter-agency ties, as well as activities and photo sessions regarding the Sustainable Development Goals. This important event was attended by numerous representatives from IOM Chile.

IOM joined the U.N. System in 2016 as the United Nations Agency for Migration.

The 37th Annual Santiago International Book Fair, held between 26 October and 12 November, was a complete success. IOM Chile participated as part of the ECLAC/United Nations System stand. A significant dynamic was generated during the 18-day event through the distribution of free publications and the sharing of information regarding the U.N. Agencies.

The IOM representatives handed out printed material regarding programs such as Migration and Cities, Migration and Health, Mobility Program, the South American Journalism Award, and Migratory Notebook #8 on Migration, Environment, and Climate Change.

The stand had an ample social media visibility and also received important visitors from government, academia, and civil society.
IOM Chile participates in Regional Workshop for Developing Guidelines and/or Practices for Protecting Persons Displaced Across Borders due to Disasters

The Regional Workshop for Developing Guidelines and/or Practices for Protecting Persons Displaced Across Borders due to Disasters was held in Santiago on 30-31 October. The activity was jointly organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the South American Conference on Migration (SACM), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and was financed by the Governments of Germany and Switzerland through the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD). Governmental authorities and experts from the countries of South America attended the event.

IOM Chile participates in the International Forum on Migration and Health and in presenting the Policy for Migrant Health in Chile

With the participation of Carmen Castillo, Minister of Health, Jaime Burrows, Under-Secretary of Public Health, Gisela Alarcón, Under-Secretary of Assistance Networks, and Sebastián Pavlovic, Superintendent of Health, the International Forum on Migration and Health was inaugurated on 31 October, with support from the Agency for Cooperation and International Development (AGCID), the Chilean-Mexican Cooperation Fund, and the Mexican Agency for Cooperation (AMEXCID). IOM Chile was represented by Chief of Mission Norberto Girón, Karen Carpio from the Health Area of the IOM Regional Office for Central America, North America, and the Caribbean, and Alex Alarcón and Félix Martínez, Focal Points for the Migration and Health Program and the Trafficking in Persons Program, respectively.

This event marks a milestone for the IOM, which in 2014 began to promote the concept of Migration and Health through a series of Training Workshops on Assisting Victims of Trafficking for health officials from all regions of the country, in order to provide them with tools for detecting cases and to generate input for an Inter-Sector Protocol for Assisting Victims of Trafficking.
Invited by IOM Chile, Estación Central Mayor Rodrigo Delgado, Chairman of the Migratory Affairs Commission of the Association of Chilean Municipalities, participates in the Global Conference on Migration and Cities in Mechelen, Belgium

On 16-17 November, more than 150 mayors and other representatives of regional and local governments participated in the Global Conference on Migration and Cities, organized by UN Habitat (United Nations Program for Human Settlements), the Global Network of Cities and Local and Regional Governments (UCLG), the International Organization for Migration (IOM, the United Nations Agency for Migration), the Government of Belgium, and the City of Mechelen. Invited by IOM Chile as a Panel Member was Rodrigo Delgado, Mayor of the Municipality of Central Station (Metropolitan Region) and Chairman of the Migratory Affairs Commission of the Association of Chilean Municipalities.

Service Fair for Colombians in Chile - Colombia Nos Une Program

On 25-26 November more than 6,000 people attended the second Service Fair for Colombians held in Santiago, Chile. Organized by the Colombian Chancellery and the Colombia Nos Une Program. The Fair included entities from the Governments of Chile and Colombia, such as the Colombian Pensions Bureau, the Victim Services and Land Restitution Unit, Colombia Migration, the Colombian Chancellery, the Colombian Chamber of Construction, and the National Savings Fund.
Talca, capital of the Maule Region, hosted this important Forum organized by IOM Chile along with the Catholic University of Maule. On 24 November this event brought together top-level officials from the regional government, the business sector, academia, and migrant associations.

The opening ceremony participants included Carmen María del Picó, Head of the Regional Unit for International Affairs from the Maule Regional Intendency, Ana Bell Jaras, Head of International Relations from the Labor Bureau, Darko Tapia, Regional Labor Director, Jorge Burgo, General Director of Outreach for the Catholic University of Maule, IOM Chile Chief of Mission Norberto Girón, and Gustavo Espinoza, Under-Prefect and Head of the Investigative Police Foreigners Unit in Talca. The Forum was attended by representatives from migrant associations and the business sector, among others.

In order to join forces to inform and bring public services closer to the migrant population in Osorno, on December 1st a Cooperation Agreement was signed between the Osorno Health Service and the IOM. The main objective is to develop strategies and coordinated actions that promote and give access to healthcare for migrants residing in the Province of Osorno, thus responding to a growing need due to the increased number of foreign residents in Chile. The Agreement was signed in the presence of hospital directors from the Provincial Network, as these centers are to a large extent called on to address the healthcare demands of the migrant population.
Movement Operations Training for Latin America

IOM Chile organized the Regional Training Program for operations personnel held on 4-8 December. This forum brought together 21 representatives from IOM Offices in North America, Central America, and South America in charge of movements, with a specific focus on Reserve Funds and the issuance of airline tickets for different categories of migrants.

This is the first time this training effort has taken place in the Americas. The activity was conducted by Margaret Wambui Kamau, Senior Movement Operations Manager, and Virginie Rault, Administrative Assistant, DOE Movement Management Unit.

The training event allowed the participants to discuss the IOM’s movement management systems (Amadeus, Mimosa, and iGATOR) in order to compare similarities and differences between countries.

Out-of-Mind Talks at the International Social Innovation Fair

Jaime Esponda from IOM Chile participated in the Out-of-Mind Talk ‘We Are All Migrants, Some Cross Borders’ on 7 December at the La Moneda Cultural Center, within the context of the International Social Innovation Fair (FiiS).

The other speakers included the renowned singer, composer, and musician Joe Vasconcelos, Bolivian executive Carla Romero from BancoEstado, Josefine Palma from the Jesuit Migrant Service, and Haitian migrant and entrepreneur Wilmer Petit- Frere, all of whom expressed significant and profound reflections on the experience of being a migrant and the challenges of migration during Chile’s history.
In a ceremony conducted by Jorge Luis De Lama, Director of the Tacna Decentralized Agency of the Civil Defense Institute (INDECI), IOM Chile Chief of Mission Norberto Girón, and Nicolás Vexlir in representation of IOM Chief of Mission Peru Mission Chief Iván Dávalos, and attended by governmental officials from Tacna and Chile, three tactical tents were donated to INDECI Tacna on 7 December, thus strengthening ties between the three institutions.

The area that includes the Arica-Parinacota Region of Chile and the Tacna Region of Peru has been seismically calm for 139 years. The logistical support between INDECI Peru and ONEMI Chile (National Emergency Response Office) strengthens the support that these institutions can provide to victims in case of an adverse event.

Chile held its Presidential Election on 17 December 2017. Historical milestones for this election included the first opportunity for Chileans residing abroad to vote, the participation of migrants, the gender quota, and an increase in the number of congressional seats.

Chileans residing abroad in 62 countries were able to vote. A total of 23,308 expatriates voted, with the highest numbers turning out in Argentina (3,880), the United States (3,393), Canada (1,773), Spain (1,654), Australia (1,366), and Germany (1,168).

Another significant fact and a highly relevant advance in inclusion was the presence of migrant voters, who comprised eight percent of the voter registry. 260,000 migrants participated representing more than twenty nationalities, mostly Peruvians, Argentinians, and Bolivians.
International Migration Film Festival in Chile

This Festival, held for the first time in Chile, was part of the activities carried out between 5 and 18 December in more than 100 IOM Missions all over the world, with the projection of more than thirty documentaries and movies on migration that capture the promise and challenges seen in every region of the world. These activities were held leading up to International Migrants Day on 18 December.

Cinema and migration share a magical link that was born over a century ago, when producers, many of whom were migrants themselves, began to make movies about a world in movement.

Their movies carried the dramatic, moving, and comical stories of migrants to diverse audiences through images and emotions that held meaning for each culture.

Message from the Director General on International Migrants Day

On the occasion of International Migrants Day on 18 December, Ambassador William Lacy Swing, IOM Director General, delivered his message entitled ‘Our Right to Enter Must Be Exercised through Safe Migration, Not in a Leaky Boat.’

In part his message reads: “This is the type of migration we see on the news, the worst version of which has led to a striking reality (revealed first by the IOM) of African migrants who are sold as slaves and bonded servants. While populations increase and economic crises cause migrants to forsake caution and leave their homes, the inevitable result is a rise in populism in the recipient communities that are struggling against unemployment and identity issues.”

“For all these reasons, I am placing much of my hope with the Global Pact on Migration, which will be signed in late 2018. The Pact is being negotiated by the Member States and sponsored by the United Nations, and seeks to address international migration in a comprehensive manner. It is the first agreement of its kind among governments. It is essential to point out that the Pact will not affect the sovereignty of each State nor will it be legally binding, possibly due to the explosive nature of the issues it refers to.”