

Statement by the Expert Working Group for addressing women’s human rights in the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, calling for a gender-responsive global compact

The Expert Working Group for addressing women’s human rights in the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, is composed of UN human rights treaty bodies, special procedural mandate holders, UN agencies, civil society organisations and academic institutions. It was established in 2017 to help ensure that the rights of the estimated 130 million migrant women around the world are fully promoted and protected in the development and implementation of the Global Compact for Migration. UN-Women serves as the substantive Secretariat of the Expert Working Group.

The Global Compact for Migration represents an unprecedented opportunity to mainstream gender equality and women’s human rights considerations in the landmark blueprint for international migration governance. We, the members of the Expert Working Group for addressing women’s rights in the global compact for migration, urge Member States to ensure that human rights, gender equality and the empowerment of all migrant women and girls are central to its development and implementation.

The Global Compact for Migration presents the international community with a unique opportunity to ensure that every woman, man, girl and boy on the move is treated with dignity, respect and, above all, have their rights fully protected and implemented as mandated by international human rights law. The Expert Working Group is committed to work in support of Member States to help ensure that the rights of all women and girls in migration are comprehensively promoted and protected in the Global Compact for Migration, and that women’s empowerment and gender equality are mainstreamed throughout as well as prioritized as standalone commitments in line with Sustainable Development Goal 5.

Gender inequalities affect all stages of migration, exposing women to gender-based violence and discrimination, and other forms of exploitation and abuse. The human rights of too many women and girls in migration are unsecured, unprotected and unfulfilled, with limited or no access to gender-responsive services and support. At all stages of migration, women and girls may be subjected to racism, xenophobia, discrimination, violence, abuse and even death – often at the hands of smugglers from whom they had sought assistance in their migration journey, and by traffickers who seek to exploit them. Regular migration pathways remain insufficient, and where they do exist are often perilous and unsafe. And whilst irregular entry and/or stay in a foreign country is an administrative offence and not a criminal one, the detention of irregular migrants continues to be used as a punitive measure by some States, which places women and girls at particular risk. In addition, approximately 44 percent of all migrant workers are women many of whom face employment situations which are often precarious, and concentrated in informal, low-paid and unregulated sectors, such as hospitality, agriculture, and domestic and care work.

We believe that when migration is a choice, it can be an empowering experience for women and girls, allowing them to explore and take up opportunities to exercise greater autonomy and enrich their lives, livelihoods, and wellbeing for themselves and their families.

In line with our [expert recommendations](#), we urge Member States to ensure that the Global Compact for Migration will:

- i. Protect, promote, respect and fulfill the human rights of women and girls, including those who identify as lesbian, bisexual or transgender, at all stages of migration in accordance with all nine international human rights instruments as well as related standards and mechanisms, including:

- Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and General Recommendation No. 26 on women migrant workers
 - International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (ICRMW)
 - International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and General Comment No. 16 on the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights
 - International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
 - Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
 - International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) and General Recommendation 25 on gender-related dimensions of racial discrimination
 - ILO Convention concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers (No. 189), ILO Migration for Employment Convention (Revised) (No. 97), and the ILO Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention (No. 143).
- ii. Commit to the elimination and punishment of all forms of violence against all women and girls in countries of origin, transit and destination.
 - iii. Provide migrant women and girls with the same access as nationals/citizens to human rights-based and gender-responsive services at all stages of migration including, but not limited to, justice, safe report, education and healthcare, including sexual and reproductive health services.
 - iv. Reaffirm the importance of family unity and the right to family reunification. No women should ever be criminalised solely on the grounds of their migratory status and the practice of detaining children must be ended without delay.
 - v. Ensure women's and girls' leadership and full, equal and effective participation in all migration-related decision-making processes and governance, including the involvement of migrant women's organisations.
 - vi. Recognise the economic, social and cultural rights of women in migration, and support their roles and contributions to the well-being and development of their families, communities, and countries of origin, transit and destination.
 - vii. Promote gender-responsive research, data collection, analysis and accountability measures in order to inform the development of gender-responsive and evidence-based migration policies.

For too long, gender-blind migration policies have left women and girls exposed to marginalization, discrimination, abuse and violence; it is of great urgency that sanctions and remedies are made available to ensure that migrant women and girls are free from any violations of their human rights. States must duly recognise the leadership and participation of women in migration and their economic, social and political contributions to sustainable development in countries of origin, transit and destination, including being accountable for approximately half of the \$601 billion sent in global remittances.

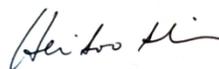
We, the undersigned members of the Expert Working Group, call upon Member States to develop a global compact that reflects the concerns of women and girls in migration and realizes their human rights. With women making up 50 percent of international migrants, it is high time they have 100 percent of their rights protected.

Signatories of the Expert Working Group:



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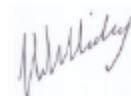


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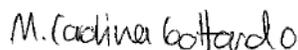
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