

Promoting and Protecting Women Migrant Workers' Labour and Human Rights through CEDAW and CMW

Side Event at CEDAW Session 64

21 July 2016, 1:15 – 2:45 p.m. | Palais des Nations, Room XXIV, Geneva

Concept Note for a Side Event

Women make up approximately half of the 244 million international migrants worldwide contributing to sustainable development. As stressed in the report of the Secretary-General "In Safety and Dignity: Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants", they face high risks of sexual and gender-based violence, psychosocial stress and trauma, health complications, physical harm, injury and exploitation. Migrant women are also commonly subject to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, as women, migrants, and often on additional grounds such as race or belonging to a minority group. Such gender-based discrimination limits women's decision-making and agency in the household and in the labor market, as well as their mobility – within and outside their countries of origin.

UN Women's project "Promoting and Protecting Women Migrant Workers' labour and human rights: Engaging with international, national human rights mechanisms to enhance accountability" strives to promote women migrant workers' (WMWs) rights and protect them against exclusion and exploitation at all stages of migration. This global project is funded by the European Union (EU), and aims to contribute to this overall objective by:

- a. strengthening strategic international human rights mechanisms, national oversight institutions and governments to ensure accountability to women migrant workers at all stages;
- b. strengthening women migrant workers' organizations and their support groups to effectively engage with the above stakeholders to ensure greater accountability to them.

Since 2014, the "Promoting and Protecting Women Migrant Workers' labour and human rights" project has been generating original research, building capacity among a variety of stakeholders, and conducting advocacy at the national level, focusing on the promotion and protection of WMWs within the framework of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), in particular General Recommendation No. 26 on Women Migrant Workers (GR26).

The 64th CEDAW session represents a platform to facilitate exchange among stakeholders on the importance of protecting and promoting the labour and human rights of WMW, and the imperative to address the distinct needs of WMW in international review processes and constructive engagement with governments and other key stakeholders.

Objectives

The side event will emphasize the distinct needs of women migrant workers (WMW) in relation to the protection of their labour and human rights, and the importance of addressing these through the review processes of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on Migrant Workers (CMW) as well as relevant International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions. The side event also seeks to highlight innovative approaches to ensuring that the rights of WMW are realized. In particular, the event will:

1. Highlight the key priorities of WMW and the importance of the protection and promotion of their rights to inclusive, sustainable development (including achieving Agenda 2030 goals);
2. Using CEDAW and its GR26 as well as CMW and its General Comment No. 1 on Migrant Domestic Workers, illustrate the importance of the Conventions as well as ILO instruments and the review processes in protecting and promoting the rights of WMW.

Synopsis

This side event will be co-organized by OHCHR and UN Women, and hosted by the CEDAW and CMW Committees. The event will bring together representatives from the CEDAW and CMW Committees, international organisations, and civil society.

Composition of panel

- **Moderator:** Mr. Simon Walker, OHCHR (confirmed)
- **Introductory remarks**
 - Ms. Hiba Qasas, UN Women (confirmed)
- **Panellists**
 - Ms. Pramila Patten, CEDAW Committee (confirmed)
 - Ms. Jasminka Dzumhur, CMW Committee (confirmed)
 - Ms. Maria Elena Valenzuela, ILO (confirmed)
 - Mr. Patrick Taran, Global Migration Policy Associates (confirmed)
 - Ms. Katrine Thomasen, Center for Reproductive Rights (confirmed)