

UN Women contribution to the implementation of resolution A/RES/72/179

For many women, migration is a positive experience leading to a better life which can enhance their livelihood opportunities, autonomy and empowerment. However, migration can also expose women and girls to serious violations of their human rights. Migrant women and girls face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination not only as women and girls, but also based on any number of interconnected characteristics, *inter alia*, migration status, age, income, ethnicity, nationality, religion, marital and family status, sexual orientation and gender identity, disability, health status, HIV status, pregnancy, place of residence and economic and social situation. Moreover, migrant women and girls experience greater levels of discrimination because laws and policies often reproduce or reinforce existing gender inequalities in countries of origin, transit and destination, and subsequently may face heightened risks of:

- Sexual and gender-based violence
- Trafficking in persons
- Labour market and occupational segregation and unequal remuneration, including the concentration of women migrant workers in low-paid, low-skilled and informal employment
- Forced labour, exploitation and abuse
- Sexual harassment in the workplace and/or places of education
- Discrimination in law and practice, including sex-specific limitations or bans on women's freedom of movement
- Poverty
- Discrimination in accessing services

UN Women works at the global, regional and national level to promote the development and implementation of gender-responsive migration policies, laws and programmes addressing the specific needs, challenges and situations of vulnerability of all migrants, while promoting gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. Since 2017, UN Women has served as the substantive secretariat for the Expert Working Group on addressing women's human rights in the Global Compact for Migration. The group is comprised of experts from UN agencies, human rights treaty bodies, Special Procedures mandate holders, civil society organizations and academia.

UN Women, in consultation with the Expert Working Group, advocates for the development and implementation of gender-responsive migration policies in accordance with international human rights frameworks, including the development of the Global Compact for Migration. During the negotiations leading to the development of the Global Compact in 2018, the Expert Working Group, in partnership with UN Women, produced a Guidance Note series offering clear and concrete guidance on ensuring that the human rights of all women and girls in migration were at the core of the Global Compact for Migration.¹

¹ More information about the Expert Working Group and the Guidance Note series can be found here: <https://www.empowerwomen.org/en/who-we-are/initiatives/expert-working-group-migration>

As a result of these efforts and the commitments made by Member States and other stakeholders, the Global Compact includes human rights-based and gender-responsive approaches as core guiding principles. To support Member States in turning these commitments into actions UN Women, in consultation with the Expert Working Group, conducted a gender analysis of the GCM and developed the *Policies and Practice: A Guide to Gender-Responsive Implementation of the GCM*.² Building on the gender-responsive approach outlined in the guiding principles of the GCM, this Guide outlines the specific needs, challenges and situations of vulnerability faced by women and girls at all stages of migration, while emphasizing the positive contributions that they make in countries of origin, transit and destination. The Guide also provides concrete measures for gender-responsive implementation of the 23 GCM objectives, and examples of good practices of gender-responsive migration governance.

UN Women and ILO, in collaboration with UNODC, is implementing the project *Safe and Fair: Realizing Women Migrant Workers' Rights and Opportunities in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Region*, which is part of the Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls, a global multi-year initiative between the European Union and the United Nations. The Safe and Fair project aims to address risks faced by migrant women inherent in migration, which can increase their risk to violence and trafficking. This will be done by:

- Improving the frameworks that govern labour migration and ending violence against women;
- Improving access to information and services for women migrant workers and opportunities for them to network and organise;
- Producing data and evidence on the experiences of women migrant workers; and
- Campaigning to generate a better understanding of the contribution of women migrants

UN Women's Asia-Pacific Regional Office has developed the *Empowering Women Migrant Workers from South Asia: Toolkit for Gender-Responsive Employment and Recruitment*.³ The Toolkit provides comprehensive guidance on ensuring the protection and promotion of the rights of women migrant workers at all stages of migration. The Toolkit includes a policy brief series that describes the process of establishing national, bilateral and regional policy protections. For example, the *Gender-responsive Guidance on Employment Contracts* supports relevant stakeholders in the development of rights-based, gender-responsive employment contracts to help ensure that women migrant workers are able to exercise their right to decent work and safe migration, and the *Gender-responsive Self-assessment Tool for Recruitment Agencies* provides recruiters with information on how to protect and promote the rights of women migrant workers in practice at all stages of migration.

² A two-pager providing information on the Policies and Practice Guide can be accessed here: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/12/guide-for-gender-responsive-implementation-of-the-global-compact-for-migration>

³ This publication is available at: <http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2019/03/empowering-women-migrant-workers-from-south-asia#view>