



**Fifteenth Coordination Meeting on International Migration
UNHQ, New York, 16-17 February, 2017
Points on Gender & Migration for UN Global Compact on Migration**

The Women in Migration Network (WIMN) is a global network which convenes organizations and activists to expand rights-centered policies that prioritize the interests of diverse women and families affected by migration around the world. Below find key advocacy points for the Global Compact on Migration process:

- The concept of “women in migration” goes beyond migrant women workers to include women and girls who are neither workers nor migrants, but are directly affected by migration. This includes women seeking to remain at home, women in transit, women who remain behind when spouses migrate, and migrant women that have been deported. It also includes LBTQI women and girls in these contexts.
- Human rights and women’s rights are not standards to be used only when it is practical. They are non-negotiable and should be at the centre of all migration policy.
- Women in migration are not “vulnerable populations” in need of “rescue”. They are advocates for their rights and agents of change. Current immigration policies put women at risk and in a situation of vulnerability.
- Women in migration experience multiple forms of discrimination, States must actively prioritize ending all forms of discrimination against women, regardless of legal status or factors including race, ethnicity, nationality, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, health and pregnancy status, or occupation.
- For migration to be voluntary, States must bring a rights-based approach to development that enables women’s human rights, women’s role in decision-making, women’s bodily integrity, decent work, social protections and sustainable environmental practices among other factors.
- Women in migration does *not* only refer to domestic workers and trafficked women—it is about the broad and diverse ways that women are impacted by their own migration or that of family members as well as their right to remain at home.
- Anti-trafficking policies should not be anti-migration. By stating that “We will combat with all the means at our disposal the abuses and exploitation suffered by countless refugees and migrants in vulnerable situations” (para. 9, 35 and 36) the New York Declaration justifies securitization of migration policies. Anti-trafficking policies are being used to target migrant workers through raids on places of work, often resulting in migrants in irregular status being detained and deported.
- Women in migration are not alone, they have families and their right to family life should be taken into account as a priority human rights principle. Circular migration, deportation and repatriation aggravate family separation.
- Women increasingly migrate for work, which is disproportionately precarious, in informal, unregulated, low-wage sectors. Measures need to be taken to provide all

migrant women workers with regular channels for migration that guarantee full labour rights protections.

- Migrant women workers should not be instrumentalised as a source of income to their countries of origin through remittances, nor as a source of cheap labor in destination countries. Their agency and political and social leadership must be recognized. UN development agendas should not see migrant women only as economic agents.
- Calls to improve bilateral temporary labour contracts with a “gender sensitive” perspective are insufficient. What is needed is the full realization of women’s human and labour rights, including CEDAW General Recommendation 26 and ILO Conventions including Convention 189, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Comment No. 23 on the right to just and favourable conditions of work, among others. This General Comment is clear that the right to work extends to migrants (also established in GC20 on non-discrimination).
- The Global Compact must shift from an emphasis on circular migration to regularisation, enabling permanent residence and eventually citizenship, including family reunification initiatives. States which welcome migrant labour must also extend full political, economic and social human rights.
- Access to justice, education and health, including sexual and reproductive health and mental health, should be granted for all women, independent of their nationality, or migration or residency status. ‘Firewalls’ must be implemented between immigration enforcement and provision of public services.
- Victims and survivors of gender-based violence or other forms of violence in countries of transit and destination should be able to safely report crime and abuse without fearing deportation, regardless of their migration status.
- Undocumented migration is not a crime. States must establish a presumption against immigration detention in law, end the detention for immigration purposes of all children, regardless of their status or the status of their parents. Now is the time for countries to eliminate all forms of immigration-related detention, the criminalization of migrants and those who assist them and defend their rights.
- End discrimination against migrants or anyone perceived to be a migrant, in conformity with international human rights standards that protect the rights of migrants, regardless of their status or circumstance, from multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination throughout their migration.
- Reject the scapegoating of migrants in the name of women’s rights, as has occurred in the name of “protecting women” from gender-based violence with racist tropes about Black and Muslim migrant men, used to feed anti-immigrant and refugee sentiment. Also reject labeling some migrants “good” and others “bad”, or creating a dichotomy between “good” refugees and “bad” migrants. The UN anti-xenophobia campaign should address the economic and social realities that feed xenophobia, and public policies that criminalize migrants.
- The Global Compact on Migration process should have broad self-organized civil society engagement in regional and thematic meetings, Prep-Com’s and UNGA Summit. Emerging mechanisms for global migration governance should establish permanent multi-stakeholder fora with civil society, migrant and migrant women’s organizations, ensuring that organized migrant women are recognized and engaged in the policy spaces that impact their lives.