



The UN Global Compact on Migration: What we Need

The Women in Migration Network welcomes a new focus by the global community on the urgency of international cooperation on migration governance. We affirm the primacy of migrant human rights, regardless of status and urge that the Compact strongly commits to and complies with states' existing obligations to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of all migrants.

Women in migration includes:

- women in countries of origin, transit and destination and family members of migrants.
- lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTI+) women and girls.
- migrant women in a variety of employment, not only domestic workers or trafficked women.

The Global Compact Should:

1. Address Multiple Oppressions

Women in migration experience a diverse intersection of identities (for example race, age, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity etc.) and multiple oppressions. The Compact must ensure that all identities are recognised and integrated in all policies.

2. Affirm Women's Agency

Migrant women are not a 'vulnerable' population in need of 'protection'. Current discriminatory migration policies *put* women in a situation of vulnerability. By focusing on protection we limit women's autonomy and rights.

The Compact must recognise:

- migrant women as agents of change and advocates for their rights not 'victims'
- the protection of women's rights, not 'protection of women'
- that anti- trafficking policy cannot justify restrictive and discriminatory policies in the name of 'protecting women and girls'.

3. Focus on Regularisation and De-criminalisation

Undocumented or irregular migration is not a crime. Access to crossing borders, residence and work permits are administrative issues, not criminal ones.

The Compact should:

- decriminalise both irregular migration and smuggling and not conflict these with trafficking.

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- call on states to actively challenge racism and xenophobia surrounding both regular and irregular migration
- end all detention due to irregular migration status
- recognise migrants' universal human rights in law and in practice. Borders are not zones of exception.
- implement firewalls to enable access to justice and services regardless of status.

4. Support Labour Rights and End Circular Migration Schemes

The Compact should be about migrant rights, not the movement of labour to meet nations' and corporate needs. Migrant women are *not* 'instruments of development' — a framing which focuses solely on the economic benefits of migrant labour.

The Compact should:

- guarantee migrant women's access to full human and labour rights, regardless of economic sector or migration status.
- challenge nation's reliance on migrant remittances as a source of developmental aid by:
 - affirming trade, fiscal and macro-economic policies that strengthen national budgets so that countries of origin can guarantee social and economic human rights
 - having developed nations follow through on Official Development Assistance commitments as part of the shared responsibility to global development.
 - ensure that new labour migration systems allow for visa and documentation portability; do not tie visa or employment to a particular employer; allow workers full freedom of association rights and access to labour laws; and do not discriminate on job segregation or gender.
- do not promote temporary and circular work programmes as a development solution.
- promote regularisation programmes that offer pathways to citizenship, and prioritise family unification in migration governance (where family can take many forms).
- address the structural global and national inequalities that have created push factors for migrant and institutionalize mechanisms to address them

5. Increase Participation in Migration Governance

Women in migration must be recognised and engaged in the policy spaces that impact their lives at the local, national, regional and global levels.

The Compact must:

- institutionalise the voices of migrant women in monitoring and implementation of the Compact, considering such models as the Major Groups in the High Level Political Forum or Indigenous Peoples in the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples.