



Global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration

Sixth Informal Thematic Session: “Irregular migration and regular pathways, including decent work, labour mobility, recognition of skills and qualifications and other relevant measures” _

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Comment on Panel 1: Irregular Migration and Regular Pathways

The particular conditions of women in migration put a spotlight on the consequences of state policies that emphasize migration deterrent strategies, fail to provide for access to safe and regular passage, to due process, human rights protections at international borders, labor protections and access to decent work.

We are not interested in pity about the tragic circumstances of women migrants who may need to access smugglers in order to move themselves and their families across borders, who experience sexual abuse, violence and death in transit, who will find themselves in dangerous environments dominated by human traffickers. (As a side point, we would urge that the Compact process provide a better understanding of both smuggling and trafficking and not simply conflate the two.)

We believe the Compact should promote access to regularization and family unity, rather than focus on returns. We urge commitments to identify the many ways in which migrants can move from irregular to regular status.

Regularization should be a core policy for safe migration pathways, coupled with an end to criminalization of irregular migration, the detention of women, men and children, their deportation and the separation of families. Access to crossing borders, establishing residence and gaining work permits should be treated as administrative issues.

Regularization supports access to housing, the ability to work in the formal economy, healthcare, including sexual and reproductive health services, access to bank accounts, access to the justice system, and to education.

Regularization for women in irregular status enables them to come out of the shadows, exercise agency in joining unions, advocating for services, and defending their rights, including resistance to discrimination. As such, regularization promotes women’s autonomy and rights, and indeed, best serves the interests of all migrants and their families.

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