

Women's Rights in Global Migration Policy

A backgrounder towards the Marrakech Women's Rights Manifesto

Women bear a disproportionate share of unpaid work and are often forced to bear the burden of communities and families in crisis, making up for a shortfall in public provisioning. Women experience marginalization, even as many also act as change leaders—addressing issues ranging from access to public services to the need for decent work, from the local impacts of climate change, to housing and land access. Women often carry the weight of families and communities in situations of economic dislocation, conflict, climate-related disasters or social and political exclusion.

Yet, women's human rights in migration are systematically violated. Women's priorities and voices are regularly missing from policies and programs purportedly designed to support their work, to protect their bodies, care for their environment and generally impact their lives. ***With its commitment to make visible women's human rights, and to take seriously women's primary concerns, the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) is a major opportunity to correct this generations-old exclusion of women and girls.***

Women are half of some 258 million migrants in the world today. Many are leaders in their communities of origin and when they migrate. Whether while migrating, in their countries of origin or destination, or when they return—women in migration play a crucial role as human rights defenders and in sustaining and rebuilding communities.

Women face particular migration realities because of their gender in countries of origin, including the inability to migrate, and while in transit, at borders and in destination countries. Women increasingly migrate for work, which is disproportionately precarious and low-wage. Women and girls are particularly impacted by failed development policies that result in climate-related and other displacement, extremely exploitative work, migrating spouses and divided families, increased care burdens, and violence.

While women come from diverse backgrounds and are not a uniform group, women and girls, including LGBTQI¹ women and girls, share the experience of gender inequality in its different manifestations. Women and girls are given different labels while migrating -- being called internally displaced, migrants, victims of trafficking, stateless, climate-displaced, refugees or asylum-seekers—but all move seeking safety, autonomy and livelihoods with dignity and rights.

This Women's Manifesto provides a common platform that affirms our commitment to collective action and an agenda for gender equality and equity in migration policy in the context of sustainable development. This includes government commitments to Agenda 2030, the Sustainable Development Goals, and all post 2015 UN development goals.

¹ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, and Intersex