

‘Push Factors’ for Migration

The majority of women migrate as workers or with their families, largely driven by economic necessity, but also by political, gender-based, conflict-driven, and/or climate-change factors. The failure of states to fulfill the economic, social, and political human rights of women and men play a key role in pushing women to migrate.

A discussion on migration and the SDGs cannot be limited only to the points that only mention migrants. Fulfillment of *all* of the SDGs is necessary to create an environment where women can choose to migrate or to remain at home.

We need to address the growing power of corporations to set national and global policy, undermining livelihoods and displacing people, while demanding cheap labor elsewhere. This dynamic is a central factor in driving migration, including irregular migration. Women who resist displacement due to dams, extractivism, contaminated rivers or land-grabbing are also part of the migration and development picture. They are claiming rights, seeking sustainable development, and seeking to remain at home rather than be displaced and forced to migrate. The effective implementation of the SDGs at national level can do much to avert displacement.

Women migrant workers’ role in development cannot be simply instrumentalised as “agents of development,” but must be seen in the complex nexus of their choices, their lack of choices, their family relationships and their ability to claim rights, including economic and social human rights.

In addition, women—including lesbian and transgender women—experience gender-based violence, state violence, organized crime, institutional discrimination, conflict, persecution and exclusion, which force them to leave home, but are not recognized as refugees or subjects of international protection because of these experiences. While many women are forced to flee their countries of origin, they are thrust into irregular status in destination countries because of current categorization of migrants.

The Global Compact should:

- Promote rights-based development that supports women’s human rights, women’s role in decision-making, women’s bodily integrity, decent work, social protections and sustainable environmental practices.
- Promote the fulfillment of the Sustainable Development Goals, reduce the constraints which force people to migrate and promote efforts to correct structural conditions of unemployment; gender inequalities; racial, ethnic and religious oppression; austerity cuts; toxic pollution or land grabbing in countries of origin.