

Migrant Women's Rights are Human Rights!

Migrant Women Need Allies in Women's Movements Worldwide

A group of migrant women's organizations, trade unionists and faith-based groups have come together at the AWID Forum to seek alliances with women's organizations in claiming migrant women's human rights. We have been meeting as a women's caucus in international venues including the UN Commission on the Status of Women and the People's Global Action on Migration, Development and Human Rights for several years. We held a two-day strategy meeting prior to the AWID Forum and a breakout session at the Forum. We have created a *Women and Global Migration Working Group* to carry out joint campaigns and make migrant women visible in international policy-making arenas.

We salute AWID for making spaces for women who have been at the margins of feminist movements and for putting the rights of migrant women and many other marginalized women on the agenda. We have found that building these alliances is still very hard and we have much work to do. We urge AWID to continue to prioritize economic justice as a central aspect of the women's human rights agenda and to make migrant women's rights a significant concern.

The neo-liberal economic model, imposed on many nations through trade, aid, economic and financial policy, has undermined national economies and forced millions to migrate in search of livelihoods. Global trade regimes have liberalized the movement of capital and goods but not the movement of persons. GATTs trade in services (Mode IV) would facilitate specific forms of labor mobility as "trade in natural persons." Far from a focus on the rights of migrants, this framework seeks to commodify migrant workers as cogs in a globalized workplace. Their labor and remittances are wanted while their rights are denied. Climate change is a growing factor in driving internal and cross-border migration. Thus, migration issues must be addressed through global economic policies that enhance sustainable development and job creation, especially in the global South, and make migration a choice rather than a necessity.

Women are 49% of the total population of international migrants estimated at 214 million [IOM]. As national women's movements seek to strengthen legal statutes and social protection for women in their countries, the rights and realities of migrant women are excluded unless made explicit, because the basic rights of citizens are not extended to migrants in most countries. Women migrants face unique challenges. Many women must leave their children behind in order to find work to support their families. Others migrate with their families, and bear the burdens of intense work plus care-giving at home. Women tend to find work in traditional women's roles—domestic work, child care, cooking, garment, piece work—where they work long hours for low pay and intense exploitation. Domestic work is a particularly egregious situation, where women are isolated and sometimes abused, with no benefits or

