



## **“Domestic Workers at the interface of Migration & Development: Action to Expand Good Practice”**

**GFMD Thematic Meeting organized and hosted by the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ), Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Government of Jamaica in partnership with the GFMD Swiss Chair, UN Women & IOM**

Kingston, Jamaica  
September 7 and 8, 2011

### **Concept Note**

Jamaica is hosting a GFMD workshop on “Migrant Domestic workers at the Interface of Migration and Development”, as part of the Swiss GFMD Chair’s program of thematic meetings in various regions of the world. Jamaica is organizing the workshop in cooperation with the Swiss Chair of the GFMD, and in partnership with UN Women and IOM. The workshop will engage policy makers, expert international organizations and civil society from countries of origin and destination in the Caribbean, Latin American and North American region; but also from other regions such as Asia, Africa and Europe.

Migrant domestic workers were identified in the 2010 GFMD meeting in Puerto Vallarta as a particularly vulnerable group at the interface of migration and development. The global domestic work industry is growing, and posing increasingly complex policy challenges for labour legislation, human rights, gender, and development. While data remain scarce, ILO estimates suggest that there are tens of millions of domestic workers abroad; and that in regions like Europe, the Gulf States and the Middle East, female domestic workers (both documented and undocumented) account for the majority of these.

In many countries and regions there are no labour laws to protect domestic workers, many of whom come from economically disadvantaged circumstances. The women who commonly perform this work have often left their own families behind to work in other private households. They are integrated into gendered, occupationally segmented global care economy chains involving a hierarchy of women across countries of destination and origin. Despite the important contribution that female migrant workers make to development at both ends, domestic care work has remained peripheral to the development agenda.

While the major flows to date have been south-north (e.g. LAC to North America, East Africa to Europe, or Asia to the Middle East), south-south migration flows are now appearing, as demand for domestic workers rises in middle income countries such as South Africa, Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Singapore and India, where there are better living standards and increased employment opportunities for women.



The workshop offers a timely opportunity for concrete regional and transnational debate about this important issue; and to identify some exemplary practices by governments and international and civil society partners to address the development and gender-related challenges in this sector. It will support and complement the larger debate this year in the International Labour Conference (ILC) on decent work for domestic workers, aimed at a possible comprehensive standard (Convention) on domestic workers.

The **objectives of the workshop** are to:

- ☐ *share good practices* on and labour and social protections for domestic workers
- ☐ *develop a gender sensitive checklist for labour laws* recognizing domestic work and for employment contracts for domestic workers
- ☐ *develop strategies for implementation of good practices* on social protection of domestic workers.

Participants are encouraged to interact freely in the spirit of expanding the “Common Space” between governments and civil society.

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