

CONCEPT NOTE

Promoting and Protecting the Rights of the World's Women Migrant Workers: Partnerships for Migration and Human Development: Shared Prosperity – Shared Responsibility.

A High Level Pre GFMD IV Consultation

organized by

Government of Mexico in partnership with UNIFEM (part of UN Women)

Mexico City, Mexico, 7-8, September, 2010

Background

Consistent with its vision and objectives for the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) 2010¹ – the fourth in a series of global fora convened by Belgium, the Philippines and Greece -the Government of Mexico, this year's GFMD host, proposes as the forum's central theme: "**Partnerships for Migration and Human Development: Shared Prosperity – Shared Responsibility**". Among the many important innovations that Mexico has introduced is an entire Round Table session (2.2) on Gender, Migration and the Family.

This is critical for a number of reasons: the increase in women's migration, especially for care work and the nature of migration; the rights violations they experience at various stages in the migration process, including the higher costs for women than men of undocumented migration, sexual harassment and rape; the contribution that women migrants make to countries of origin and employment, despite the gender-specific discrimination and challenges that they face; and the positive experiences of many that can inform the official migration response. To exemplify, overseas labour migration, including women's overseas migration for work has become a long term enduring structural feature of many regions of the world. Women constitute almost 50% of the overseas migrant workforce in Asia, Latin America and elsewhere and in some countries in these regions the proportion of women outstrips that of overseas male migrants. Women are migrating independently for short periods largely as a family survival strategy, either through well organized, powerful and well connected private recruiting agencies, or informal social networks – both of which are often (but not always) known to exploit women . They are recruited into women-specific jobs in the formal and informal manufacturing and service sectors, but the highest concentration of women migrant workers is at the lower end of the job hierarchy in domestic and care work and the hospitality sector, where they too often suffer gross human rights violations. While trade and capital flows have been liberalized, there are barriers to transnational people flows, especially for women, in the form of restrictive emigration and immigration policies. Complete bans or country-occupation-age specific bans on women's outmigration is one example. This only exacerbates trafficking, the majority being women and children, who suffer gross human rights violations. It however needs to be pointed out that the human rights of a large number of poor documented migrants, especially women are also violated.

¹ The Global Forum on Migration and Development is a state owned and led non-binding forum for dialogue between governments on migration and development. It is a product of the UN High Level summit on migration and Development, 2006.

At the same time, remittances of migrant workers, including poor women migrant workers, constitute a significant proportion of the GDP of countries of origin and their labour adds value in countries of employment. Estimates for the Philippines and Sri Lanka stand at around 10% of the GDP. In Mexico the figure is estimated to be about 2%.² Research suggests that women migrants remit about one third of the 12-16 billion US\$ remitted to the Philippines. The amounts remitted by women would be higher if we take account of the fact that women are concentrated in the informal sector, are paid wages that are less than men for jobs of the same value and constitute the majority of those who are undocumented and trafficked. Besides migrants, including women contribute socially to both countries of origin and employment by way of skills, socio-cultural norms and practice.

Migration has both negative and positive aspects. The positive aspects are facilitated by enabling policy and institutional environments in certain contexts, bilateral agreements between countries of origin and employment, migrant women's own ingenuity and resources, and/or peer support. There are mounting examples of good practice that can be effectively drawn on to contribute to partnerships between countries and between different parts of government, civil society, employers and workers that are marked by complementarity and shared responsibility, towards shared prosperity. The full human development potential of migration can only be maximized, if gender equality and women's empowerment perspectives inform policy/programme responses to migration and the action of partners.

Against this background, the Government of Mexico in partnership with UNIFEM (part of UN Women) is organizing a pre GFMD IV consultation, entitled, "**Promoting and Protecting the Rights of Women Migrant Workers: Partnerships for Migration and Human Development: Shared Prosperity – Shared Responsibility**". UNIFEM (part of UN Women) has participated in previous GFMDs and is an officially designated partner in Round Table 2.2 for GFMD 2010. A similar pre GFMD Consultation entitled, "International Conference to Promote the Rights of Migrant Women was similarly organized by the Government of the Republic of Philippines and UNIFEM in 2008 in the Philippines and the outcomes embodied in a document – the Manila Declaration, 2008 influenced the gender outcomes of GFMD 2008.

This pre GFMD IV consultation in Mexico intends to contribute to ensuring that the specific gender equality and women's rights dimensions of migration are integrated into the deliberations and outcomes of GFMD 2010. It is aligned with the overall and specific Round table themes of GFMD 2010 – (a) Promoting protected and regular migration, RT 1.1; (b) Labour mobility – Strategies for Human Development, RT 2.1; (c) Gender, Migration and the Family, RT 2.2.

Objectives

The specific objectives of this Consultation are to:

² Reporte de BANAMEX Casa de Bolsa, 2010

- identify the challenges, good practice and joint strategies that guarantee promotion and protection of women's human rights, including their labour rights, throughout the migration process
- address (i) impacts on families of male migrants, (ii) the impacts on families of female migrants; and (iii) ensure that women's livelihoods and asset accumulation is facilitated through the norms and standards that govern migration.
- develop shared strategies that participants can further develop to secure a gender equality and women's empowerment perspective in the deliberations and outcomes of GFMD 2010.

Draft Components of the Pre GFMD Consultation (Program Attached)

- High level opening session.
- 3 multisector/stakeholder panels of government and civil society, with appropriate regional representation on (a) promoting regular migration from a gender equality and women's empowerment perspective; (b) promoting the socio-cultural, labour rights of women migrant workers throughout the migration process; (c) addressing (i) impacts on families of male migrants and (ii) impacts on families of female migrants; (iii) women's livelihoods and asset accumulation
- An outcome document: the Mexico Declaration on "**Promoting and Protecting the Rights of Women Migrant Workers: Partnerships for Migration and Human Development: Shared Prosperity – Shared Responsibility**", September 2010. A drafting committee for the outcome document will be constituted.

Participants

Number

- There will be a total of 45 participants (15 of these will be from Mexico) from North/South America, Africa, Asia Pacific and Arab States, CIS/CEE

Constituencies

- Government: Ministries of Labour, National Women's Machineries
- NGOs: Regional, National, Migrant Associations.
- Academics
- International Organizations/UN Agencies
- Private Sector

Level

Senior Officials Meeting

Time

2 days: 7-8, September 2010

Venue of Meeting

Salón Morelos of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores - SRE*), Avenida Juárez No. 20, Centro Histórico, Tel: (52-55) 3686-5100.

Venue of Stay/ Accommodation

Hotel Hilton Reforma, México City
Avenida Juárez No. 70,
Centro Histórico, México, D.F., CP 06010;
Tel.: (52-55) 5130-5300; Fax: (52-55) 5130-5255.