

Sixty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68)

‘Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective’

Expert Group Meeting

Observer Paper Prepared by:

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

Untapped potential: Leveraging safe and orderly migration within poverty-reduction strategies to accelerate gender equality and women's empowerment

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1. Current progress towards achieving gender equality and poverty reduction outcomes

Every year there is a continued recognition that progress towards achieving gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment has been too slow, as effective, and systemic actions to redress inequalities remain limited. With only seven years left to achieve Agenda 2030, only 15.4 percent of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Goal 5 indicators are "on track".¹ The overlapping crises around the world undermine the ability to meet the promise of Agenda 2030 and deliver the Sustainable Development Goals. Furthermore, recent combined analysis of the Women's Empowerment Index (WEI) and Global Gender Parity Index (GGPI) show that women's power and freedom to make choices and seize opportunities remain, in the aggregate, largely restricted, with on average, only 60.7 percent of their full potential.²

These troubling statistics are set against the backdrop of significant global change and the urgent requirement to adapt and recover from the dire economic and social effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, disruption in global trade due to the conflict in Ukraine, and substantial threat of climate change, environmental degradation and disasters on lives and livelihoods. These significant global changes have undermined gains in gender equality and women's empowerment, as further entrenched the slow progress of poverty reduction. The most recent estimates of SDGs Goal 1 achievement suggests that 8.4 percent of the world's population, or as many as 670 million people, could still be living in extreme poverty.³ While global shifts can reinforce and entrench challenges for gender equality, women's empowerment, and poverty reduction, they also offer the potential for positive transformation and accelerated achievement of global goals.

Agenda 2030 has recognised the significance of addressing inequalities, particularly intersecting inequalities to achieve all the other goals including gender equality and women's empowerment, through Goal 10 and cross-cutting principle 2 commitment to "leave No One Behind". One area where there is limited data and concrete action to achieve equality is for migrant women, girls, and gender-diverse persons. There are multiple causal links between poverty and migration. Poverty⁴ is a key driver for migration, utilized by families and communities faced with limited livelihood and income generation prospects in their countries of origin, which is compounded by conflict, disasters, climate change and environmental degradation. Migration can be a powerful poverty-reduction tool; however, many migrants are more likely to be in or at risk of poverty than non-migrants (23 percent non-migrants versus 35 percent migrants).⁵ Furthermore, labour migration promotes growth in destination economies and migrant remittances and diaspora communities are a powerful means of poverty-reduction in countries of origin. Meanwhile, labour migrants are often more vulnerable in the workplace than non-migrants.⁶

¹ "With only seven years remaining, a mere 15.4 per cent of Goal 5 indicators with data are "on track", 61.5 per cent are at a moderate distance and 23.1 per cent are far or very far off track from 2030 targets." United Nations (2023) Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023. Special Edition. Page 22. Accessed from: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2023/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2023.pdf>

² Women's empowerment ranges from 43.2 percent of their full potential in low human development countries to 73.4 percent in very high human development countries. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) (2023) The Path to Equal. Twin indices on women's empowerment and gender equality. Accessed from: <https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents/hdp-document/pathsequal2023pdf.pdf>

³ United Nations (2023) Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023. Special Edition. Page 12. Accessed from: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2023/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2023.pdf>

⁴ Poverty entails more than the lack of income and productive resources to ensure sustainable livelihoods. Its manifestations include hunger and malnutrition, limited access to education and other basic services, social discrimination, and exclusion, as well as the lack of participation in decision-making. For further discussion see: <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/ending-poverty#:~:text=Poverty%20entails%20more%20than%20the,of%20participation%20in%20decision%20making>.

⁵ Mosler Vidal, E., 2021. Leave No Migrant Behind: The 2030 Agenda and Data Disaggregation. International Organization for Migration (IOM). Geneva. Accessed from: <https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/Migrants-in-the-SDGs.pdf>

⁶ Mosler Vidal, E., 2021. Leave No Migrant Behind: The 2030 Agenda and Data Disaggregation. International Organization for Migration (IOM). Geneva. Accessed from: <https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/Migrants-in-the-SDGs.pdf>

2. The case for leveraging human mobility within poverty reduction, institutional and financial system strengthening strategies to accelerate gender equality and women's empowerment

After several decades of work on gendered poverty, this work has consistently emphasised the need for more holistic conceptual frameworks to encapsulate gendered access to and control over resources, agency and capabilities, and social exclusion. There are multiple reasons to leverage the benefits of migration as part of poverty reduction to accelerate gender equality and women's empowerment especially for women, girls, and gender-diverse migrants, including those in countries of destination, transit, and origin. Gender influences the reasons for migrating, who migrates and to where, how people migrate and the networks they use, opportunities and resources available at destinations, and relations with the country of origin. The roles, expectations, relationships, and power dynamics associated with being a man, woman, boy, girl, or gender-diverse person significantly affect all aspects of the migration process. The risks, vulnerabilities, and needs of migrants are also shaped in large part by one's gender, as well as other intersecting characteristics including sexual orientation, age, disability, race and ethnicity, religion, and country of nationality. ***Migration can lead to shifts in gender roles, contribute to changing oppressive gender relations and provide new opportunities to improve lives. However, migration can also exacerbate existing inequalities, expose migrants to new vulnerabilities, and intensify gendered experiences of poverty, discrimination, and socio-economic inequality.***⁷

Global statistics on gender differences and disparities in migrant outcomes are limited, due to major gaps in international migration data, particularly with respect to gender.⁸ Timely, reliable, and disaggregated migration data are needed to properly identify and address systematic gender inequalities and formulate gender responsive migration policies and actions that contribute to real change particularly for women, girls, and gender-diverse persons. IOM's most recent review of the situation of female migrants shows that female migrants comprised just less than half, equivalent to 135 million or 48.1 per cent, of the global international migrant stock according to latest global estimates available.⁹ While the percentage of female migrants has not changed dramatically since the first global estimate disaggregated by sex in 1960, there are some changes according to distribution by region. The comparatively higher share of female migrants in North America and Europe, as well as in some countries in Asia over the last decades is explained, among other reasons, by the demand of service sector workers, threats of violence and family reunification policies.¹⁰ There is limited available data on gender-diverse persons experience within the migration experience and poverty reduction efforts due to the reliance by policy makers sex-disaggregated data and mainstream assumptions regarding the gender binary. Furthermore, efforts to collect gender-related data are undermined by the challenges of collecting safe and reliable data on the experiences of gender diverse persons. ***Lack of disaggregated data undermine global migration governance as well the effectiveness of policy making regarding poverty reduction and financing strategies.***

Increases in the numbers of women migrating independently or as primary wage earners within their families can also be attributed to an increasing demand in feminized labour sectors overseas, such as nursing and other caregiving roles. As women in high-income countries enter the labour force in greater numbers, the demand for migrant women to perform domestic work and child/elder care services has

⁷ Jolly, S. and H. Reeves (2005) *Gender and Migration: Overview Report*. BRIDGE Development – Gender, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton.

⁸ IOM (2023) Women and girls on the move: A snapshot of available evidence <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/resource/women-girls-move-snapshot-available-evidence>

⁹ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2020) World Social Report 2020. Accessed from: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/world-social-report/2020-2.html#:~:text=The%20World%20Social%20Report%202020,%2C%20education%2C%20communication%20and%20productivity>.

¹⁰ Abel, G.J., Cohen, J.E. (2022) Bilateral international migration flow estimates updated and refined by sex. *Sci Data* 9, 173 (2022). Accessed from: https://www.knomad.org/sites/default/files/2022-10/knomad_paper_44_gender_and_migration_g.abel_oct_2022_1.pdf

also been increasing.¹¹ Furthermore, in sectors such as manufacturing, construction and agriculture, female migrants are more commonly employed in lighter work that is considered less skilled and is less well paid. Their jobs in these sectors are often secondary or subordinate to those of their male counterparts. Therefore, much available labour migration opportunities reinforce gender inequalities in countries of destination and undermines marketable skills upon return home. Furthermore, care responsibilities have gender implications. Migrant women often earn less than their male partners/husbands, so there is an incentive for the man to keep working and ensure a higher income for the household. This hampers women's access to the labour market and pursuit of a career and increases risks of potential poverty in the event of loss of earnings by the partner. A recent IOM study found that overall, returnee migrant women faced greater reintegration challenges across the different countries studied, particularly related to economic and psychosocial dimensions of reintegration. Regarding economic reintegration, the research findings highlight that the gendered-segregated labour markets in countries of destination and origin negatively impacts the sustainability of women returnees' economic reintegration and reinforces the barriers in accessing training or employment. This entrenched gendered division of labour undermines women's previous opportunities for skills development during migration (e.g., men tend to acquire skills abroad – particularly in construction related jobs – which help them to earn a living upon their return), as well as expectations for care-related tasks upon return home which impacts women returnees' economic choices and potential opportunities.¹² Furthermore, gender parity for labour force participation slipped in 2020, while labour participation rates of migrant women are higher than for non-migrant women, and migrant domestic workers can help non-migrant women enter or re-enter the labour force.¹³ ***There is an untapped potential to utilize migration as an opportunity for upskilling and empowering women, and challenging harmful gender roles in women's economic empowerment in countries of destination and origin.***

The decision to migrate often differs by gender. Generally, gendered social norms will place higher expectations on men to be the breadwinner, while also providing them with better access to the information and resources needed to migrate. On the other hand, a mix of social factors (such as traditionally established division of care roles), cultural reasons will result in less access for women to the information and resources needed to migrate, and in lower expectations that women will migrate. However, women, girls', and gender-diverse persons, and men at times, including persons with diverse sexual orientation and sex characteristics also migrate due to risks and experience of violence.^{14,15} Persons with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) can experience violence due to not conforming to gender norms, such as honour crimes, exploitation and abuse, especially where these perceived transgressions are criminalised. As a result of social discrimination, and often exclusion from their families and wider society, persons with diverse SOGIESC may be forced to migrate to seek more progressive normative views.¹⁶ As with other groups, migrants' gender identity, sexual orientation, race and nationality, as well as marital status among other social characteristics increase the likelihood of poverty. For example, in the Bahamas, Haitian migrant women and girls, are among the most marginalized due to the intersection of their gender and

¹¹ IOM Essentials of Migration Management 2.0. Accessed from: <https://emm.iom.int/handbooks/gender-and-migration/>

¹² IOM (2023) Gendered Reintegration Experiences and Gender-Sensitive/Responsive/Transformative Approaches to Reintegration Assistance. IOM, Geneva. Accessed from: https://migrantprotection.iom.int/system/files/resources/8eef7a94-6071-4d0b-bf88-eeedcbfc3b6b/document/Final%20Version_BMZ%20gender%20study.pdf?type=node&id=5156&lang=en

¹³ ILO Global Estimates on International Migrant Workers – Results and Methodology – Third edition, ILO, 2021. Accessed from: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---migrant/documents/publication/wcms_808939.pdf

¹⁴ For female migrant respondents in Spain, economic reasons as well as the experience of violence were the two main reasons to move. About 65 per cent of women surveyed were travelling alone. This included avoiding arranged marriages, family conflicts and situations of violence and abuse from the partner or the family of origin. IOM (2023) Women and girls on the move: A snapshot of available evidence. Accessed from: <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/resource/women-girls-move-snapshot-available-evidence>

¹⁵ For instance, gang and domestic violence perpetrated against women and children is a principal driver of movements from countries like El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras.

¹⁶ Stella, F., Flynn, M., and Gawlewicz, A. (2017). Unpacking the meanings of “a normal life” among lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Eastern European migrants in Scotland. *Central and Eastern European Migration Review*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 2018, pp. 55–72. Accessed from: <https://www.sogica.org/database/stella-flynn-and-gawlewicz-unpacking-the-meanings-of-a-normal-life-among-lesbian-gay-bisexual-and-transgender-eastern-european-migrants-in-scotland-2017/>

nationality.¹⁷ Furthermore, the intersections of gender and marital status, as with migrant returnee single mothers, tended to face increased stigma and discrimination upon return home along with their children.¹⁸ *Intersectionality affects the experience of discrimination, violence and social exclusion which compounds risks of poverty and undermines the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment.*

Considering the continuum of migration, the decision of migrants to return home is influenced by gender. For both single and married women this decision may be determined by their family, especially to fulfil expectations to marry, have children, undertake care roles or if there is a family emergency. Policies that restrict female migrants from getting pregnant are also a reason why they may return.¹⁹ Men migrants are often more able to exert their independence over the decision to continue working abroad. A recent IOM study found that migrant return and reintegration outcomes are undermined by the impacts of dangerous and often violent migration journeys, with high risks of gender-based violence (GBV) especially for women violence. While the social services (e.g., health and psychosocial support) to respond to the violence as well as stigma and prejudice upon return, continue to be very limited. Furthermore, return decision were a result of constrained options, which subsequently led to feelings of failure for which returnees are frequently stigmatized and discriminated by their families and local communities. These forms of prejudicial treatment were experienced in gendered ways by returnees due to traditional gender roles (i.e., men not bringing economic gains from their migration, women being perceived as victims of sexual violence). The report highlights increased prejudice towards women because of the perception that they engaged in sex work and other sexually promiscuous behaviours during migration or were victims of sexual violence which significantly affected reintegration outcomes, and therefore, increase the risks of poverty among returnee women.²⁰ Far from leveraging opportunities for development, poverty reduction and gender equality, the experiences of migrant returnees, particularly women, show that the impacts of violence, lack of health and other social services, and social stigma has the potential to compound poverty and gender inequalities. *Discrimination and violence experienced by women, girls, and gender-diverse persons, including persons with diverse sexual orientation and sex characteristics, are drivers of migration, entrench poverty among these groups and negate their potential socio-economic contributions, further undermining efforts towards gender equality upon their return home.* To address this, IOM and UN Women have initiated a collaboration to develop a joint global guidance aimed to improve gender responsive reintegration services for women.

International remittances²² have a strong, statistical impact in reducing poverty. On average, a 10 percent increase in the share of international remittances in a country's GDP will lead to a 1.6 percent decline in the share of people living in poverty²³. The world has seen that remittances have been the largest source of external finance flows to low-and middle-income countries (LMICs) other than China since 2017²⁴. Although remittances are private funds and therefore cannot replace public spending, remittances to LMICs have been about three times the volume of Official Development Assistance (ODA) for more than a decade²⁵. The World Bank²⁶ provides annual estimates of remittances flows globally (and bilaterally), based on national balance of payment statistics produced by central Banks and compiled by the International Monetary Fund (IMF)²⁷. However, it is important to note that IMF and World Bank estimates focus on remittances transferred through official channels, such as banks,

¹⁷ Bleeker, A. Escribano, P. Gonzales, C. Liberati, C. Mawby, B. (2020) Advancing gender equality in environmental migration and disaster displacement in the Caribbean. ECLAC - Studies and Perspectives series-The Caribbean No. 98. Accessed from: <https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd11411/files/documents/Advancing%20gender%20equality%20in%20environmental%20migration%20and%20disaster%20displacement%20in%20the%20Caribbean.pdf>

¹⁸ IOM (2023) Gendered Reintegration Experiences and Gender-Sensitive/Responsive/Transformative Approaches to Reintegration Assistance. IOM, Geneva. Accessed from: https://migrantprotection.iom.int/system/files/resources/8eef7a94-6071-4d0b-bf88-eeedcbfc3b6b/document/Final%20Version_BMZ%20gender%20study.pdf?type=node&id=5156&lang=en

¹⁹ Fair Labour Association (2018) PREVENTING PREGNANCY DISCRIMINATION AMONG TEMPORARY MIGRANT WORKERS. Lessons from Malaysia, Taiwan and Thailand. Accessed from: https://www.fairlabor.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/triple_discrimination_woman_pregnant_and_migrant_march_2018.pdf

²⁰ IOM (2023) Gendered Reintegration Experiences and Gender-Sensitive/Responsive/Transformative Approaches to Reintegration Assistance. IOM, Geneva. Accessed from: https://migrantprotection.iom.int/system/files/resources/8eef7a94-6071-4d0b-bf88-eeedcbfc3b6b/document/Final%20Version_BMZ%20gender%20study.pdf?type=node&id=5156&lang=en

and thus small transactions by migrants conducted via money transfer operators, post offices, mobile transfer companies are not included in all the countries, neither are informal transfers (such as via friends, relatives or transport companies returning to the origin community). As these transfers that are not systematically included the official figures are likely to underreport the phenomenon by as much as 50 per cent²⁸. Furthermore, the data is not collected and thus analysed with disaggregation by senders' sex. There is very little evidence on comparative data of international remittances sent by migrant men and women. Nevertheless, some studies found that, while women typically earn less than, the average amount of remittance that women send are the same as or even greater amounts than those of men. The higher average remittance amounts sent by women implies that they tend to remit a larger portion of their earnings than men. Additional collection and analysis of data on migration and remittances through both formal and informal transaction, with disaggregation by senders' sex are needed to better understand existing gender inequalities in this financial exchange. While reducing financial transfer costs may seem to contribute towards migrant women's economic empowerment as they tend to remit a larger portion of their earnings than men, it is important to note that supporting only migrant women's financial or in-kind transfers may end up perpetuating existing gendered division of labour that it is more likely to be women's responsibility to support their children, family and relatives back in the communities of origin. Encouraging fair and reasonable financial transactions fee for remittances can accelerate economic empowerment of migrants, but it is *necessary to better understand differences in remittance behaviour between migrant men and women, and the support should accompany with active engagement of men for their contributions to reduce poverty or financial challenges back in communities of origins through remittances.*

Beyond remittances, diaspora communities offer the potential to support change in women and gender-diverse person's participation in community-driven poverty reduction, including expansion of services and offer an avenue for advancing progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment in migrant countries of origin. Although additional data are needed to quantify and disaggregate diaspora contributions to development beyond remittances for example in investments, trade, tourism, and philanthropy,²¹ diaspora groups are active often active and influence in community development. Furthermore, although cultural identity may be reinforced as a coping mechanism of diaspora communities, these communities also change because of migration, which offers the potential to challenge gender norms. However, the participation of women, girls, and gender-diverse persons in diaspora groups often mirrors that of the country of origin. A literature review related to diaspora activities reveals diaspora women's agency such as the ability to identify problems, set goals, make choices. However, there is a lack of information on the organization of women in diasporas, and their contributions are not always visible in policies.²² *Engaging in gender-responsive work with diaspora communities has the potential to strengthen women and gender-diverse persons decision-making power within their community, while contributing to community development and poverty reduction within countries of origin.*

The implications of digital gender divide are far-reaching in the context of migration and is one of the multiple vulnerabilities that increase the risk of poverty for migrant women and gender diverse persons, as it disproportionately affects access to information and secure employment opportunities. Mobility constraints, affordability, lack of financial literacy and skills, challenging gender norms, and safety and security are some of key factors that limit women migrant's access to technology, thus impeding their financial inclusion.²³ With the growing volume of migration and accompanied risks, there is an increased need for reliable, gender-sensitive and gender-specific information for prospective migrants

²¹ IOM (2020) Contributions and Counting: Guidance on Measuring the Economic Impact of Your Diaspora Beyond Remittances. Accessed from: <https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/contributions-and-counting.pdf>

²² IOM (2023) Diaspora and transnational identities. An analysis of legal frameworks and policies. (2023). Accessed from: https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/pub2023-043-r-diaspora-transnational-identities1.pdf%22/t%22_blank

²³ EIGE (2020) Beijing + 25: the fifth review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States Area A — Women and poverty: women at greater risk. Accessed from: https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/20190441_mh0119039enn_pdf.pdf#:~:text=Migrants%20from%20outsid e%20the%20EU%20are%20at%20significantly,of%20poverty%20or%20social%20exclusion%20as%20EU-born%20women

to circumvent the risks of poverty, precarious work arrangements, and social isolation.²⁴ Promoting the digital inclusion of migrants, particularly women and girls, is also vital for sustainable and meaningful long-term integration. It enables them to improve their circumstances and life choices by securing access to better jobs, higher wages, or better educational opportunities, all of which contribute to social and financial inclusion and gender equality.²⁵ Globally, many women remain “unbanked” and lack the means to access financial accounts, loans, or insurance services. Access to digital services, including the opportunity to manage finances independently, expand their digital literacy, and connect to online markets and networks, can facilitate the financial integration of women migrants.²⁶ To allow women to benefit from lower cost, secure and convenient digital financial services (including but not limited to remittances), products need to be designed with a gender lens, understanding how women use financial and digital services and the specific barriers they face in adoption. IOM is in early collaboration with other UN agencies (UNCDF) to research this through data, working with service providers to understand how women use these products today and how they can be adapted to further their adoption and decrease the gender gap. ***Strengthening migrant women and gender diverse persons’ digital skills and access to technology within poverty reduction and financing strategies, can accelerate gender equality, women’s empowerment and improve socio-economic contributions to destination countries and countries of origin, especially upon return.***

Women and girls left behind when family member migrate offer the opportunity for increased decision-making opportunities, when programmes to support development and poverty reduction specifically address these gendered household power dynamics. However, both urban and rural development policies continue to overlook the priorities and rights of women. For example, women farmers and migrant women workers employed in agriculture were found to be at greater risk of rising poverty, food insecurity, violence and exclusion in the context of the escalating consequences of the environment and climate emergencies, the lingering impacts of the great recession and the deep persistence of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination including women who are migrants, refugees or internally displaced.²⁷ In the Pacific, a region with some of the lowest rates of gender equality and women’s empowerment, women are less likely to have ownership over land, property and finance, and have limited decision-making power. Consequently, their ability to migrate is also constrained, as well as their ability to adapt to climate change and further risk of poverty. IOM is working on addressing some of these challenges for women staying behind, through climate change adaptation in Shahrituz, Tajikistan. The project is assessing the effectiveness of developing capacities of women staying behind to enhance household-level climate change adaptation to drought and severe water shortage in Tajikistan. The project provides village-level training on financial literacy and climate change adaptation as well as advisory/ extension services to women staying behind. This capacity development will help the women beneficiaries to better manage risks and resources. ***Opportunity to engage women and girls left behind by migrants in income generation, climate change adaption and other skills building to support improved agency and decision-making power.***

An important example of IOM’s work to advance gender equality through poverty-reduction and development focused approach is the *Global Programme on Making Migration Work for Sustainable Development*, jointly implemented with UNDP. IOM has been working on finding practical solutions on harnessing the potential of migration for local and national sustainable development. In partnership with local authorities, civil society organizations, training institutions and businesses, IOM has worked to upscale local initiatives which leveraged human mobility for poverty reduction, promoting inclusive growth and empowering women and youth improve their own livelihoods and skills and become active

²⁴ Melnyk, Leanne (2023) Choosing to Challenge the Digital Gender Divide for Safe Migration. Winrock. Accessed from: <https://winrock.org/choosing-to-challenge-the-digital-gender-divide-for-safe-migration/>

²⁵ OHCHR (2023) Information and communication technologies vital to integration of migrant women: UN committees. Accessed from: [Information and communication technologies vital to integration of migrant women: UN committees | OHCHR](https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/02/information-and-communication-technologies-vital-to-integration-of-migrant-women-un-committees)

²⁶ Bridging the Digital Gender Divide: Include, Upskill, Innovate. (2018). OECD. Accessed from: <https://www.oecd.org/digital/bridging-the-digital-gender-divide.pdf>

²⁷ Review of the implementation of the agreed conclusions of the sixty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women, Report of the Secretary-General [E/CN.6/2023/4].

players in local development and the wellbeing of their communities. As a result, over 6,000 women in Ecuador, Morocco, Senegal, Nepal, and Serbia have been supported with small business startup and expansion, technical trainings, access to health services and finance. The Global Programme has adopted an inclusive approach by developing local services available for all community members, including migrants, returnees and families left behind. In addition to the direct impact on the lives of women and their families, the Global Programme results demonstrate a direct link between the empowerment of women and a larger impact on community. For example, supporting women entrepreneurs in Senegal multiplied the impact on local development by creating a social fund to help communities become more resilient wellbeing and cohesion. When small and medium-sized businesses increased their revenues, the women employees systematically chose to channel this extra income into a communal savings pot rather than receive personal salary increases. These social and solidarity funds are managed in a collective manner to encourage the establishment of positive economic, social, and environmental links within communities.

The risks of poverty are multifaceted, with exclusion from social networks, discrimination, and lack of access to social protection and health services increasing the potential for poverty and reinforcing gender inequality. While social protection is a universal human right and a key element of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, migrant women often remain excluded.²⁸ Migrant women have specific needs in relation to health care and to protection in cases of maternity and to recovery from the effects of violence. They are more likely than non-migrant women to be employed in jobs that lack occupational health and safety, with exposure to harmful chemicals that can affect their reproductive health. Yet, migrant women confront numerous barriers in accessing social protection and public services due to discrimination in policies as well as in practice. As women are often concentrated in informal employment, these jobs are generally excluded from contributory social insurance schemes, such as those that provide maternity protection and health care. Without maternity protection, many migrant women are forced to continue working into the very late stages of pregnancy and/or to return to work prematurely, which may expose them and their children to significant health risks.²⁹ In relation to maternity and parental benefits, many countries continue to restrict the employment of pregnant migrants, requiring them to return home.³⁰ When pregnancy is permitted, maternity rights can be more restrictive for migrants than residents or nationals. Limited access to other social protection benefits can also disproportionately affect women migrant workers, particularly those with children who may have higher requirements for health care (for themselves through maternity or for their children), for child support and for sick leave.³¹ Migrants with diverse SOGIESC also experience reduced access to services, social protection and resources; this often exacerbates existing inequalities and affects their risk of poverty.³² Social protection programs need to be targeted for the different needs of all migrants based on gender across the migration continuum. These need to be part of bilateral agreements and in some countries are already being negotiated. Furthermore, ***rights to social protection and health care need to be embedded within gender-responsive poverty reduction strategies*** as women and gender-diverse migrants in host countries, as well as those who return home as a result of discrimination, are likely more at risk of poverty. IOM is on the frontlines of strengthening migrants' access to gender-responsive and inclusive health services, including activities tailored to support GBV survivors through

²⁸ UN Women (2020) Leaving No One Behind. Access to Social Protection for All Migrant Women. Accessed from: https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2020/Policy%20Brief%202014_Migration%20and%20social%20protection_RND3_WEB_011320.pdf

²⁹ UN Women (2020) Leaving No One Behind. Access to Social Protection for All Migrant Women. Accessed from: https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2020/Policy%20Brief%202014_Migration%20and%20social%20protection_RND3_WEB_011320.pdf

³⁰ Fair Labour Association (2018) PREVENTING PREGNANCY DISCRIMINATION AMONG TEMPORARY MIGRANT WORKERS. Lessons from Malaysia, Taiwan and Thailand. Accessed from: https://www.fairlabor.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/triple_discrimination_woman_pregnant_and_migrant_march_2018.pdf

³¹ Hennebry, Williams and Walton-Roberts (2016) Women Working Worldwide: A Situational Analysis of Women Migrant Workers. UN Women. Accessed from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318402351_Women_Working_Worldwide_A_Situational_Analysis_of_Women_Migrant_Workers

³² See for example: The Edge Effect. N.d. [Impact of COVID-19 on LGBTQI+ people](#); The Edge Effect (2021). [We Don't Do a Lot for Them Specifically](#)

an integrated approach that includes direct health-care services, MHPSS, referrals for specialized support as well as community-based health education and service information for survivors.

The changing climate is a risk multiplier that is increasingly reshaping human mobility patterns. The convergence of climate risks and conflict are having serious humanitarian consequences for food security, unravelling of community social fabric, economic security, amplifying gaps in access to services which reinforce socio-economic, gender disparities, and increase poverty, while weakening the capacity of governance institutions. Disaster displacement can have devastating cascading impacts including the loss of lives, property, livelihoods and increased insecurity that further influences people's mobility decisions, shaping patterns of protracted crises. Disasters, climate change and environmental degradation are also contributing to human trafficking and raise protection issues for girls and women. In many cases, women tend to hold less negotiating power and control over resources than men, which feeds into the lack of access to decision-making and consistently renders them more vulnerable to the impacts of disasters and risk of increase poverty. ***The interconnected nature of these complex factors is actively shaping human mobility and poverty dynamics and must be addressed to accelerate progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment.*** IOM and FAO, with support from the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), partnered to implement a series of interventions to strengthen community-level peace building capacities through natural resources management in Sana'a and Lahj governorates in Yemen. The project was implemented from January 2018 to May 2019 and aimed to reduce conflict over land and water, while also enhancing social cohesion through improving livelihoods and increasing the role of women in natural resource management and conflict resolution mechanisms.

Finally, poverty reduction strategies and plans including the SDGs, do not adequately address human mobility, and potential for migration to accelerate gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. To truly leave no one behind, there is a need to work towards gender equality among migrants, address gender-based violence and vulnerabilities during migration processes as part of poverty reduction strategies and global financial priorities. This includes enhance and diversify the availability of pathways for safe, orderly and regular migration, including in response to demographic and labour market realities and leverage the power of remittances for poverty reduction. On the way forward, the United Nations system launched the Third UN Decade for Poverty Eradication (2018-2027) to support the implementation of an inter-agency, system-wide plan of action from a migration perspective through addressing inequalities, respect for human rights, gender mainstreaming, inclusion, ownership and capacity building, and partnerships to deliver which align with the principles guiding the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM). The intersections between migration, employment, and poverty eradication (related to SDGs 5, 8 and 16), indicate that migration should be mainstreamed in the plan of action to enhance pathways for regular migration, extend guarantees for ethical recruitment and decent work to migrants, and the contribution of social protection to gender equality.

3. Conclusions

It is well recognized that addressing poverty is a key dimension of achieving gender equality, and that both of these goals are fundamental to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for the Sustainable Development. What is inadequately considered and where there is an acute need for increased focus on the power of migration to achieve these goals.

The current trajectory leaves the world collectively falling short of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals – however there remains ample space to leverage the advantages that safe and orderly migration can provide to addressing poverty and achieving gender equality, including the empowerment of women and girls, and gender-diverse persons.

Migration as a topic straddles the humanitarian, development and peace nexus, providing a valuable entry point for addressing imbalances in power, norms and roles that underpin gender-based inequalities. Enhancing gender-responsive approaches policy and programming in relation to conflict,

disasters, climate change, environmental degradation, and the subsequent migration flows, provides a strong basis for creating robust and resilient institutions, structures and systems that economically empower women, girls and persons with diverse genders across the nexus. Moreover, by applying a gender lens to the migration journey, migration policy and programming has the potential to promote and promulgate gender equality through structural, cultural and normative change across borders, including in the places of origin, transit and destination.

While gender-responsive migration is a crucial vehicle for addressing poverty and gender-based inequalities, migration can also present risks and exacerbate poverty and inequalities if gender is not adequately centred in the discussion. The ‘feminization of migration’ trend presents new opportunities for the economic empowerment of migrant women and migrants with diverse genders, though may also entrench traditional gender roles in the labour markets of their country of origin, transit or destination. In this regard, there is a need to focus on diversifying labour migration opportunities for women migrants and migrants with diverse genders, including fields of work, educational and vocational training opportunities, while also ensuring their protection from discrimination and violence.

Likewise, there must be greater consideration of the social factors that dictate how women and persons with diverse genders migrate, and how societal expectations affect their ties and support to their country of origin. This includes incentives and disincentives for migration, and obligations to contribute to home communities such as through remittances. Understanding such expectations is imperative to address poverty and its disproportionate impact on women and girls.

Multistakeholder engagement on gender-responsive migration policy and practice – including governments, private sector actors, host communities, communities of origin, representative organizations of migrant women, girls and gender-diverse migrants – is essential for establishing pathways for safe and orderly migration that can address poverty and empower women, girls and persons with diverse genders. At the intergovernmental level, the Global Compact on Migration and the International Migration Review Forum are effective vehicles to deliver on this, and directly contribute to target 10.7 of the 2030 Agenda. In addition to Member States, the UN system, civil society, private sectors actors, diaspora communities and migrant organizations all play a crucial role.

As the UN leader on Migration, IOM recognizes the pivotal role played by the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in promoting gender equality and the economic empowerment of all women and girls, including those on the move. Over recent years, IOM has made important contributions to its annual deliberations. Through a number of annual high-level flagship events³³ conducted in collaboration with UN Women and attended by Member States, such as the Group of Friends of Migration, the European Union, Germany, academia and civil society, as well as clear institutional messages and policy recommendations, IOM supported Member States in making meaningful progress at this inter-governmental platform and its outcomes.

³³ Previous IOM flagship events held in the margins of the CSW:

- **CSW67 side event:** Leveraging digital inclusion and technological change to enhance equitable and gender-responsive service delivery for all migrants, co-organized by: The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, The Permanent Mission of El Salvador to the United Nations, IOM, UN Women, International Telecommunication Union (ITU), DIESIS Network
- **CSW66 side event:** Protecting and promoting the rights of migrant women in the context of climate change, environmental degradation, and disasters, co-organized by Permanent Mission of Fiji to the United Nations, the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations, IOM, UN Women, and the Women in Migration Network.
- **CSW65 side event:** The importance of eliminating gender-based violence to help ensure migrant women’s effective participation and decision-making in public life, co-organized by European Union, the Friends of Migration Group, IOM, UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF, Women in Migration Network
- **CSW63 side event:** Ensuring Social Protection for Women and Girls on the Move, co-organized by Germany, Mexico, Uganda, IOM, UN Women
- **CSW62 side event:** Maximizing the Contribution of Rural Women Migrants, organized by the Global Migration Group

As CSW67's resounding agreed conclusion [E/CN.6/2023/L.3] urged Member States to "adopt national gender-responsive migration policies and legislation, in line with relevant obligations under international law to protect the human rights of all migrant women and girls, regardless of migration status", and reiterated by the Progress Declaration of the International Migration Review Forum [A/RES/76/266], IOM looks forward to working with all stakeholders in integrating gender-responsive migration policies, which will place the needs and contributions of women, including those who migrate, firmly in the global, regional and national development agendas.