



Side Event to the 62nd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

Maximizing the contribution of rural women migrants

1.15 – 2.30 pm, 13 March 2018 – UNHQ New York, CR 11

Summary of key messages

On 13 March 2018, the Governments of Indonesia, Italy and Mali, in collaboration with the Global Migration Group (GMG) convened a side event to the 62nd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) titled *Maximizing the contribution of rural women migrants*.

The following is a summary of the key messages arising from this event.

Rural women migrants make important contributions to sustainable development

- Women represent almost half of the world's migrants and they are contributing around US\$2.3 trillion to global productivity
- Women increasingly send remittances and support their families in countries of destination and of origin, thus positively altering social and familial dynamics, especially in rural areas where traditional male roles usually prevail
- Migrant women and returnee women contribute substantially to rural economies both as entrepreneurs and as employees
- The contribution of indigenous women in rural areas goes beyond the economic dimension: they have ancestral wisdom, they “give life to life”
- We need a new narrative that looks at rural women in migration as rights-holders, agents of development and, most importantly, leaders that bring dynamism, innovation and cultural richness both to their areas of destination and to their areas of origin upon return

Despite the potential of migration for rural women's empowerment, challenges must be recognized and addressed

- Rural women left behind face challenges, including stigmatization, when their husbands, sons and daughters leave
- Rural migrant women's labour and human rights must be protected at all stages of migration. We must strengthen best practices for the protection and empowerment of rural migrant women. The international community must deal with the fact that desperate women and men on the move are being treated in inhumane ways
- The multiple risks and discrimination that women face before, during and after migration must be addressed. Their vulnerabilities include high exposure to sexual and gender-based violence, forced labor, human trafficking and modern slavery, inadequate access to sexual and reproductive health services, and structural barriers to employment

Any action to address migration in rural areas should be responsive to the specific roles, voices, vulnerabilities and needs of migrant women

- Integration policies must be gender responsive. Young women migrants, particularly from rural areas, face triple forms of discrimination during transit and upon arrival in areas of destination: as women, as young persons and as migrants. Bilateral, multilateral and international cooperation is the key to protecting migrant women's human rights effectively, including by fighting human traffickers. Creating conditions for migrants to either return sustainably or to contribute to the economy at destination and have dignified jobs is crucial
- Policies addressing gender inequalities in terms of access to land, financial services, and markets help ensure that migration of rural women remains a matter of choice rather than of necessity
- We need detailed information and data on rural migrant women to make sure that migrant women and indigenous women count
- The accessibility of gender-responsive legal migration pathways for rural populations is crucial if we are to achieve safe, orderly and regular migration for all
- Programs promoting migrant women's agribusiness entrepreneurship should be implemented. These programs must be designed by and with women, especially indigenous and rural women
- Through a whole-of-government approach, migration policies need to be aligned with efforts towards the formalization of the informal economy, especially in the agricultural sector and in rural areas. In this context, the involvement of ministries dealing with agricultural and rural development as well as with gender equality and the empowerment of women is crucial
- The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular offers a unique opportunity for the international community to integrate strong rural and gender perspectives into the actions taken towards the achievement of the objectives of the compact, ensuring that it reflects the specific roles, voices, vulnerabilities and needs of rural women migrants