



Thematic Workshop on Migration for Harmonious Societies
18 May 2016
Geneva

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

UN Women is pleased to address the Global Forum on Migration and Development on behalf of the Global Migration Group as Chair in 2016.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes that national policies that facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration, and protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, in particular women migrants, are beneficial for home and host communities alike.

Access to basic services, including education, language training, health services and affordable housing, decent work and access to the cultural life of the community and the freedom to practice their own culture are instrumental to the full integration of migrants in a society.

Concrete commitments that would promote the effective integration of migrants are contained in the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and include:

- promote and protect effectively the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants, especially those of women and children, regardless of their migration status, drawing on high-quality, timely and reliable data (AAAA para 111 and SDG 17.18)

- promote access to and portability of earned benefits (AAAA para 111)
- enhance the recognition of foreign qualifications, education and skills and facilitating student mobility (AAAA para 111 and SDG 4.b)
- lower the costs of recruitment for migrants and combat unscrupulous recruiters (AAAA para 111 , and SDG 10.7.1)
- implement effective social communication strategies on the contribution of migrants in order to combat xenophobia (AAAA para 111)
- ensure that adequate and affordable financial services are available to migrant men and women as well as their families in host countries (AAAA para 40, SDG targets 1.4, 2.3, 5.a, 8.3, and 8.10), and
- promote financial literacy and inclusion (AAAA para 40, 2030 Agenda para 27).

Women migrants constitute approximately half the 244 million international migrants worldwide. They face gender-specific discrimination and are vulnerable to human rights violations, including trafficking and other forms of violence and exploitation, including in the recruitment process. Policies should therefore address the circumstances and discrimination often faced by migrant women and girls, as well as by youth.

The contributions of young, and of women migrant workers to economic growth and development must be recognized, and reflected in equal working conditions and equal opportunities, including equal pay. Agricultural migrant workers or migrants employed in rural areas require targeted policy attention and support.

GMG is strongly committed to generate evidence and advocate for the essential role that migrants, migration and remittances play in sustainable development and inclusive growth of areas of origin, transit and destination.

Pursuing harmonious societies involves the promotion of inter-cultural understanding and respect. The GMG is concerned about the recent escalation in xenophobia, particularly towards the cultural ‘other’, and the vilification of migration. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes clear commitments to combat xenophobia and facilitate social integration through the promotion of a culture of peace, non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity, as expressed in SDG target 4.7.

The UN Secretary-General’s Report entitled “In Safety and Dignity: Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants”, elaborated in preparation for the High Level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on 19 September, calls for new global commitments in the context of large movements of refugees and migrants. Let me highlight three in the context of harmonious societies:

- The report calls on Member States to develop comprehensive national plans for the inclusion of refugees and those migrants permitted to remain in their countries in order to encourage their full contributions to societies.
- The report calls for greater global responsibility sharing and support for host communities to ensure social cohesion as countries in proximity to conflicts are the first to absorb large influx of refugees and migrants.
- And three, to counter toxic, xenophobic and often racist narratives and discrimination against refugees and migrants, the Secretary-General will initiate a global campaign to counter xenophobia. The GMG encourages Member States to take up this call and support the global campaign.

The GMG looks forward to continuing close collaboration with the GFMD and stands ready to support Member States in their efforts towards promoting harmonious societies founded on human rights and gender equality for the benefit of all.

Thank you very much.