



CONCEPT NOTE – 2nd Draft

Women and Global Migration: Root Causes and innovative Solutions

Forum 23rd February 2018
Palais des Nations - Geneva

Today we are faced with a daunting situation that strains our social fabric and influences global security. Global displacement is currently estimated at over 244 million people. The migratory flows of those who flee their countries in desperation and hope of a better life are rife with unnecessary and tragic deaths and countless other deplorable human rights violations. Yet there is another, less reported side, the one that reminds us of our common humanity through the empathy and welcome shown to weary travel-worn arrivals or in the evidence of mutual benefit to communities when integration is successful. While problems related to migration are daunting, the creative solutions emerging from the United Nations inter-agency work on the issue (IOM, UNHCR, UNDP, UN Women, UNICEF.), governments, institutions and countless facets of civil society throughout the world are equally astonishing –and need to be communicated and replicated.

This Forum was conceived as an opportunity to bring governments, experts and practitioners together to debate; compare knowledge, evidence and good practices. Differences in regional dynamics and growing complexities make this forum more urgent than ever. Debates will touch different thematic areas, including; the causes of displacement, the relationship between migration and the labor market, remedies for better integration in the host countries, and the influences of radicalization. All will be examined as they cross-cut with migrant women. Recommendations will be compiled and disseminated toward greater clarity, solidarity and commitment to action.

Decisions to leave everything behind and seek a new start in an unknown and foreign state have been precipitated by many circumstances and emotions. While a few of the most dramatic and tragic migrant stories have surfaced in the international media, each personal story is unique and probably unimaginable to someone not having experienced it. To be able to respond effectively in policy at any level, it is necessary to be aware of all the harsh and favorable factors that drive an individual away from his/her country and family. According to IOM, some of the most prevalent factors attributed to this phenomenon are work, violence, religion/culture, hunger and increasingly, climate change.

Such migratory flows inevitably affect the labor market both in the abandoned state and in the newly settled state as the workforce shifts. It is important to analyze this relationship. Some

countries have excess workforce while others are characterized by a demand for workers. Can we find solutions to achieve greater balance, perhaps affecting the current migration paradigm?



Specifically, a foreign workforce may be an opportunity or a burden to the recipient state depending on whether or not it is able to exploit the potential that the subjects entering the country offer. What are the unique challenges and opportunities to women in migration? It is increasingly crucial that instruments, regulations and measures be introduced to promote the recognition of the qualifications specificities and competences, which are now often ignored or neglected.

The terrorist phenomenon, a topic of great relevance today, is oftentimes a phenomenon connected with the shifts which specifically characterize the Middle East, North Africa. In addition to being one of the causes of migration, terrorism and religious extremism are at the same time one of the reasons or justifications behind the reluctance that some states show in welcoming and opening their borders to foreigners. When it comes to migration flows it is therefore also fundamental continue to analyze the solutions to eliminating terrorism and increasing global security.

The final and essential step for all those who change their country is the hope for integration into the country of destination. Effective integration is still far from being achieved while there are good practices models that can be learned. It is therefore vital to highlight the essential factors for integration, adaptation and assimilation in the social system of the country of destination. But even before that, and for integration to be really implemented, attention must be paid to xenophobia and related episodes, which are also present in the most advanced societies.

Opportunities for remedy exist, as never before. World governments and a growing part of civil society have already committed to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, a well-thought out roadmap that holds tangible potential to ending forced migration and increasing prospects for cohesive communities, creating dignified livelihoods and engaging youth for its continuation. This forum is an opportunity to strengthen and broaden this commitment. It is essential that the international community come together to help heal this wound and pledge to defend the human rights and dignity of this very vulnerable and underestimated segment of humanity.



PROGRAM

Women and Global Migration: Root Causes and innovative Solutions

ROOM XI – Palais des Nations (United Nations Geneva)

8:30 Arrival and registration –
Palais des Nations- Pregny Gate
Avenue de la Paix - Geneve

9:30 – 10:00 Official Opening of the Forum

Welcome by the Organisers:

Ms. Simone A. Ovar, Zonta International, Main Representative at the United Nations Geneva and President of the NGO Committee of the Status of Women – Geneva

Opening Remarks:

M. Michael Møller, Director General of the UN Office at Geneva

Amb. Olga Algayerova, Executive Secretary, UN Economic Commission for Europe (invited)

H.E. Mr Olaph Terribile, Ambassador of Malta

H.E. Mr. Hassane Boukili, Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN

10:00 – 11:00 Session 1

Factors affecting migration flows

In the current global context, what are the most recent causes of displacement and how do they overlap? Preventive considerations?

Speakers:

- Ms. **Sonja Hönig Schough**, International President Zonta International and Zonta International Foundation

“Women and Unsafe Migration”

- **Princess Micheline Makou Djouma**, President/Chief Executive of Ocaproce International

“Les facteurs des mouvements migratoires Africains en Europe”

- Ms. **Colette Samoya, Former Ambassador R.P. Burundi**, Founder Bangwe & Dialogue

“The causes of migration in history and in the contemporary context”



Moderator: Simone A. Ovar, Main Representative of Zonta International to the UN Office in Geneva – President of the NGO Committee of the Status of Women - Geneva

11:00 – 12:00: Session 2

Movements and labor force

Given the global shifts and disparities in the labour market, what are the possibilities for remedy and balance? Migrant women and their empowerment in the world of work.

Are the high foreign qualifications fully understood and valued by states? New perspectives for the recognition of skills acquired in the countries of origin.

-Mr. Pierre Martinot-Lagarde, International Labor Organization

-Ms. Madi Sharma, Entrepreneur, European Economic and Social Council, Brussels

-Dr. Brian Grim, President, Religious Freedom & Business Foundation

“What economies have to gain from women migrants and what they have to lose by losing women”.

Moderator: Ms. Carolyn Handschin, Director for UN Relations, International Vice President (rep Europe) Women's Federation for World Peace, International (WFWPI)

12:00 – 13:00: Session 3

Promotion of human rights and innovative solutions

Terrorism and religious extremism are both factors which foster migration flows and are causes of reluctance to welcome migrants in destination countries. How to address those phenomena to reach stable security and healthy integration?

Which are the essential factors for the integration, adaptation and assimilation in the social system? How can programs such as the SDG's be applied to build trust and eradicate xenophobia in the countries of destination?

-Ms. Christine Loew UN Women Director of Geneva Office

-Ms. Melissa Fleming, Head of Communications and Chief Spoke Person for UNHCR (tbc)

Moderator: Ms. Anné Riz, FAWCO Main Representative at the UN Geneva