

GENDER-RESPONSIVE APPROACH: ADDRESSING THE GENDERED REALITIES OF ALL MIGRANTS⁸

The implementation of the GCM must be gender-responsive. Gender-responsive migration governance refers to the way in which laws, policies and programmes recognize and address the different realities faced by migrants on the basis of their gender, including in its intersection with factors such as sex, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or race, and at all stages of migration, while upholding their human rights, promoting their empowerment and advancing gender equality. The GCM gender-responsive guiding principle states:

“The Global Compact ensures that the human rights of women, men, girls and boys are respected at all stages of migration, that their specific needs are properly understood and addressed and that they are empowered as agents of change. It mainstreams a gender perspective and promotes gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, recognizing their independence, agency and leadership in order to move away from addressing migrant women primarily through a lens of victimhood (GCM, para. 15 (g)).”

8. This section was developed based on: “Policies and Practice: A Guide to Gender-Responsive Implementation of the Global Compact for Migration” developed by UN Women in consultation with members of the Expert Working Group on Addressing Women’s Human Rights in the GCM.

THE IMPORTANCE OF A GENDER-RESPONSIVE APPROACH

We must address and acknowledge the gendered realities of migration. Every aspect of migration can be influenced by a person's gender: the reasons for migrating, information received before leaving, journeys embarked upon, integration in the country of destination, work performed and challenges faced.

When migration is a choice, it can be an expression of migrants' agency and a vehicle for their empowerment. For many, including migrant women, who account for approximately half of all international migrants and remittance senders⁹, migration can be a positive experience leading to a better life and enhancing their livelihood opportunities, autonomy and empowerment.

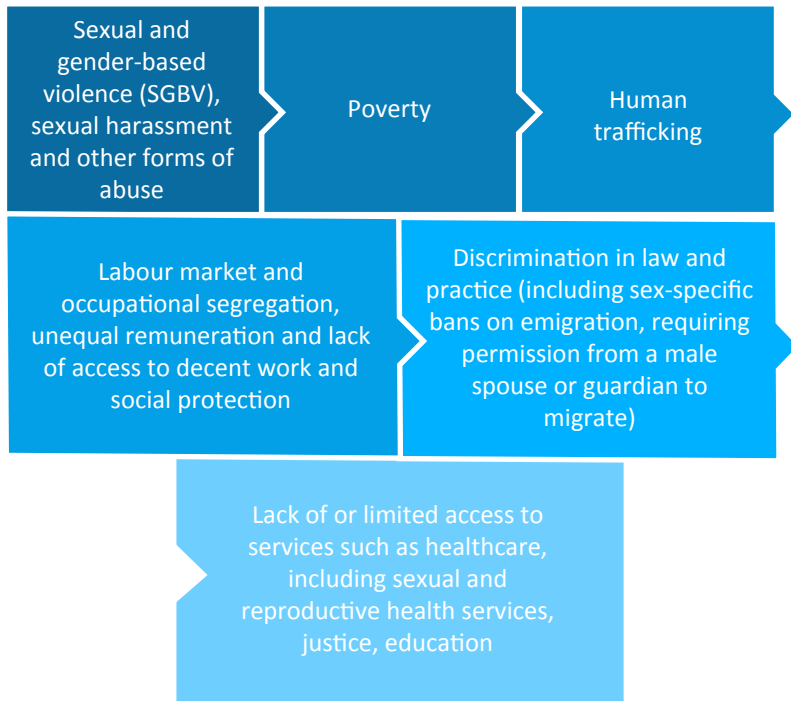
However, migration can also expose many – notably women and girls – to situations of vulnerability and rights violations because of gender-based discrimination in law and practice. Migrants such as women, girls and LGBTI migrants often experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination in addition to racism and xenophobia. Discrimination based on race, ethnicity, cultural particularities, nationality, language, religion or other status may be expressed in gender-specific ways¹⁰. Migrant women, for example, may face greater risks of discrimination because laws and policies often reproduce or reinforce existing inequalities between sexes in countries

9. United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *International Migration 2019* (2019); International Fund for Agricultural Development, *Sending Money Home: Contributing to the SDGs, One Family at a Time* (2017).

10. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), General recommendation No. 26 on women migrant workers (2008).

of origin, transit and destination. Labour markets also remain highly segregated and women often have limited access to information and lack decision-making power and control over resources because of structural gender and sex inequalities.

Migrants may face heightened risks of:



GENDER-RESPONSIVE APPROACH IN PRACTICE

"Policies and practice: A guide to gender-responsive implementation of the GCM" (available at <https://ppguide.unwomen.org>) was developed to provide clear, concrete and practical guidance to governments and other key stakeholders on gender-responsive implementation of the GCM. This guide includes checklists for each of the 23 GCM objectives and offers a comprehensive framework of actions to help guide the development and implementation of migration policies, laws and programmes that fully address the gendered realities of migration. The below comes from this guidance, and stakeholders are encouraged to use its checklists and other materials.

Putting the gender-responsive approach into practice requires an analysis of policies and laws to understand how implementation will impact migrants of different sexes and gender identities and make changes as required.

Some of the overarching issues that need to be addressed to ensure gender-responsiveness are:



Full equality of all enshrined in law and the elimination of gender-based discrimination including in education, employment, political participation, healthcare and economic life.



Eliminate gender-discriminatory provisions, restrictions, bans or exclusions in law and practice that limit opportunities for safe and regular migration.



Expand regular migration pathways for both skilled and lower-skilled migrant workers, including migrant women, and ensure their access to decent work and social protection.



Ensure all employment laws and policies promote decent work, equality of opportunity and treatment in the labour market for all.



Ensure access to services, including healthcare and sexual and gender-based violence services, for all migrants regardless of status.



Collect, analyze and disseminate sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics on migration that adequately reflect the differences and inequalities in the situations of people of different sexes and gender identities.



Provide clear and accessible information for migrants to know and understand their rights and obligations at all stages of migration, including targeted information for migrant women and girls.
