

Civil Society Days 2016, 8-9 December, Dhaka, Bangladesh
Special rapporteurs report on women

Special rapporteur	
Name of rapporteur	Roshan Dadoo for Women in Migration Network
1. Women in Migration in Working Sessions	
Across the sessions, how much attention was given to realities of women / children in migration, and in what way? What was missing? Where was their energy? You can either share a general impression, and/or fill in some bullets per thematic track	
General observations	Overall there was a sense that issues of gender and women in migration were not given enough attention in the discussions. However, the energy was most noticeable in sessions where women were facilitating and able to steer discussions towards a gender focus on the theme. Where women were a majority of participants, particularly in smaller breakaway groups, women were more vocal and engaged and felt safer to share experiences such as issues of gender based violence, domestic abuse and the impact of lack of access to services. The importance of access to justice when women's rights have been violated was another experience shared across a number of themes. Regional discussions brought out additional experiences of women in migration, such as that of the mothers of the disappeared in Central America or the need for firewalls so that migrant mothers can access education for their children. An issue of concern that came up under all themes and regions was the extent of sexual and gender based violence faced by women in migration, as a cause of migration, as workers, on the move, and in the context of racism and xenophobia in countries of destination. Examples of engaging with policy processes on this issue came up strongly in the governance theme.
Theme 1: Doing protection of migrant workers	This theme generated some interesting and powerful inputs from women sharing experiences of the challenges facing women migrant workers such as the importance for women migrant workers to have access to sexual and reproductive health and the extremely high numbers of women domestic workers facing violence and abuse from employers. The current global economic model that exploits the labour of migrant women, yet criminalises their presence in destination countries should be questioned by 'development' practitioners. An important point that was raised up was the need to ensure the full realization of labour rights, using existing ILO regulations, the Migrant Workers Convention combined with CEDAW guidelines rather than tinkering with protection for women in the context of temporary work contracts. The need for skills development for women in destination countries, beyond gender-stereotyped labour, should be given a greater emphasis.
Theme 2: Doing protection of migrants on the move	A key message from this theme was that the vulnerability of women comes from a lack of rights based legislation and policies so would like to see more language around protection of women's rights with regard to climate displacement as

	<p>language of women in need of protection often hampers women’s rights and agency. The message that detention is not the solution came out strongly with the implicit understanding that women are made particularly vulnerable through immigration detention and the raft of rights abuses that this engenders. There were some points made about the need for a stronger focus on internally displaced people, particularly in relation to land-grabbing and climate displacement. This particularly affects women in countries of the South who make up the majority of agricultural workers. Whilst a number of contributions referred to the abuses of trafficking, which particularly affects women, it was felt that there was a need to oppose states using anti-trafficking legislation to increase border security and criminalise migration.</p>
Theme 3: Doing inclusive development	<p>The cross cutting nature of xenophobia, racism and gender came out in these discussions. There was consensus that the Compact needs to go beyond a media campaign on xenophobia. It should involve an intersectional analysis of exclusions and ‘othering’ from gender and race perspectives in the context of sustainable development and human rights. Building solidarity between oppressed groups demands that we all challenge our own prejudices, the inequalities and discrimination in our own contexts, and global systems of post-colonial power and privilege that create and foster racism, xenophobia and violence against women. A number of examples were given of projects in countries of origin for returning women workers, often initiated by diaspora communities, to empower women with new skills and education so that they have choices regarding migrating for work and are empowered to insist upon their rights as migrant workers.</p>
Theme 4: Doing global governance better	<p>The discussions under this theme generated some interesting examples of how regional and global policies can have a direct impact on women. It raised up the need to look outside of the ‘migration policy silo’ for innovative ways to ensure women in migration can exercise their rights. It was noted that the adoption of new language of “regardless of migratory status” is great progress and it’s inclusion in regional and national policies can help to ensure undocumented women gain access to services and to justice, an example being the Women’s Shelter Network in Europe. Women in migration are not “vulnerable populations,” in need of “rescue”, they are advocates for their rights and agents of change. Current immigration policies and securitization of borders create the contexts of exclusion, inequality and rights violations, which put women at risk and in a situation of vulnerability.</p>
2. Time for Action	
Did you identify any actions steps coming out of the working or special sessions related to women in migration	
Action 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Language should not be about “protecting” women, which limits autonomy and enjoyment of women’s rights. It should be about protecting <i>women’s rights</i>, to be taken forward in advocacy messaging around the inclusion of human rights framework in migration governance and in interactions with state parties on the Global Compact; - Criminalisation of migration, justified by states through anti-trafficking and people smuggling legislation, anti-terrorism and trans-national crime legislation, and criminalization of the work that women migrants do, needs to be strongly challenged in the Global Compact negotiations as well as at national level; - States must enable family joining and end restrictive policies that cause family separation.

Action 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local and national policies as well as agency guidelines, MoUs etc should integrate gender into a rights based framework for migration management; - Campaigning for the end to immigration detention needs to be stepped up in the current political climate; - Access to justice for women on the move, regardless of migratory status, is key to challenging rights abuses in transit and at borders.
Action 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote local level actions against xenophobia (eg sanctuary cities) and use global space to share and build solidarity; - Commit to holding state parties to account through relevant international mechanisms (eg CERD, National Action Plans, Periodic Reviews, UN Special Mechanisms); - - Criminalization of migrants through policies (migration policies, border controls as well as social and economic policies in origin and destination countries) that are systemically racist and/or xenophobic must be identified and challenged at national levels.
Action 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Human rights, women’s rights, labour rights and decent work must be at the centre of all migration policy and governance, with states ensuring that migrant women experiencing violence, abuse and labour exploitation are not excluded from protection and justice; - Challenging temporary migration regimes and advocating for full labour rights is central to protecting migrant women workers; - Migrant women workers must be seen as holders of full human rights with social and political agency and not as just as a source of exploitable labour (destination countries) or income through remittances (countries of origin).

3. Priority messages to convey to governments by the CSD Chair on 10 December

If you could choose one or **two key messages** to be conveyed by the civil society CSD Chair in his report to states on the 10 December, which would these be? *(feel free to just refer back to any point written out above)*

Women in migration are not “vulnerable populations,” in need of “rescue”. They are advocates for their rights and agents of change. Current immigration policies create the contexts of exclusion, inequality and rights violations, which put women at risk and in a situation of vulnerability.

4. Inspiring quotes

If you like, please provide a few **quotes** that you heard during the sessions that you found inspiring. The sessions follow Chatham House rules, so please either ask for approval to name the speaker/organization or put “anonymous”.

“Women are being told if you want this service you must exchange your body for it” anonymous

5. Other information

You can provide any other information here that you deem relevant

It was notable that taking gender as a cross cutting issues was successful in enabling women's leadership and participation across the range of issues under discussion and not simply confined to issues directly relating to women or children. However, more work needs to be done to ensure that gender and women intersect with discussions on all aspects of migration policy and implementation. It is not just the migration sector that needs to integrate gender and women into their work. We also need to engage with feminist and women's organisations to ensure the inclusion of women in migration as well as with other UN mechanisms such as CSW, UPR etc. Beyond this, and at national level, such as in policy on health or social services, access to justice, security and border controls, climate justice and anti-racist struggles the migration sector needs to engage with a gender focus. This intersectionality is particularly urgent with respect to migration governance in order to broaden civil society engagement with the Global Compact process and to ensure that there is meaningful input on women in migration from the range of role players that will be engaging with the process.