
**United Nations
Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW)
Consultative Meeting on
“Migration and Mobility and how
this movement affects Women”
Malmö, Sweden
2 to 4 December 2003**

Women and Migration

Prepared by

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CM/MMW/2003/WP.1

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INTRODUCTION

The General Assembly Resolution A/Res/54/210 on Women in Development adopted by the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly in 1999 “*Requests the Secretary-General to update the World Survey on the Role of Women in Development for the consideration of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session; as in the past, this survey should focus on selective emerging development issues that have an impact on the role of women in the economy at the national, regional and international levels.*”

The World Survey will address a key aspect of globalization analyzed from a gender perspective, namely the increased movement of people, particularly women, within and across national borders. In his report *The Strengthening of the United Nations Organization*¹ the Secretary-General states that the time has come to take a more comprehensive look at various dimensions of the migration issue, with a need to understand better the causes of international flows of people and their complex interrelationship with development.

One of the most significant trends in migration has been the entry of women into migration streams that had heretofore been primarily male. About half of the migrants in the world today are women, as has been the case for several decades (Zlotnick 2003). They include both international migrants, who move to other countries, as well as internal migrants, who relocate in other parts of their own countries. While many women accompany or join family members, increasing numbers of female migrants migrate on their own. They are the principal wage earners for themselves and their families. Most women move voluntarily, but a significant number are forced migrants who have fled conflict, persecution, environmental degradation, natural disasters and other situations that affect their habitat and livelihood.

The mobility of women affects the roles of both female and male migrants, families left behind in the migration process, and source and destination communities and countries of migrants. In particular, migration of women within and from developing countries affects the development process itself for those countries. It also raises a number of challenges to immigration and refugee policies that address such issues as family reunification and formation, labour migration, trafficking and smuggling, and forced migration.

The World Survey will address both the opportunities for empowerment of women and the challenges and vulnerabilities women face in the context of migration and movement nationally as well as internationally. It will highlight possible policy recommendations to improve women’s situation, utilizing relevant UN instruments² and

1 Report of the Secretary-General A/57/387

2 Such as the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees; 1967 Protocol relating to the status of Refugees; the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families; 2000 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in persons, Especially Women and Children; 2000 Protocol Against The Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air; The United Nations Convention against Transnational organized Crime; and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

analysing the application of existing concepts such as citizenship, nationality, refugee, displaced person etc. from a gender perspective.

This conceptual paper raises a number of important issues to be considered by the consultative meeting:

- To what extent has there been a feminisation of migration, particularly related to the growing participation of female migrants in the labour force?
- What are the factors that cause women to migrate internally and internationally?
- What has been the impact of migration and mobility on women's roles and gender relations?
- In what ways does the status accorded to women migrants (e.g., labour migrant, refugee, displaced person, irregular migrant) affect their rights and opportunities?
- How best can women migrants empower themselves to participate meaningfully in decisions about migration and mobility?
- How best can the rights and safety of migrant women be protected, particularly from labour abuses, sexual exploitation, trafficking, involuntary prostitution and other exploitable situations?
- How best can the economic status of migrant women be improved to enable them to support themselves and their families in dignity and safety?
- How best can the health status of migrant women be improved and their access to primary and reproductive health care be increased?
- How best can migrant women contribute to the development of their home countries, particularly through such mechanisms as remittances, temporary and permanent return, and tapping the skills and financial resources of diaspora communities?
- How best can "stay at home" development be promoted so that women can obtain employment opportunities, education, health care and other services in their home communities?
- What statistics, data collection and research are needed to improve understanding of women and migration?

This last question foretells a difficulty in assessing the full implications of migration and mobility for women. Statistics on migration, both internal and international, are notoriously poor. Most data are collected by governments as part of their administrative management of migration flows, although useful surveys do exist in many locations. However, different governments and surveys use different definitions. These derive, in part, from differences in policies. In countries with expansive notions of birthright (*jus solis*) citizenship, such as the United States or Ireland, all children of immigrants born on the territory are granted citizenship. In other countries, citizenship is derived from a parent's nationality (*jus sanguine*), and children of immigrants born in the country may be considered 'foreigners' along with their parents. These differences make it hard to compare data across countries. Data on certain categories of migrants, for example, those who cross borders without the authorisation of host countries, are particularly difficult to collect. Many of these migrants without legal status are fearful of stepping forward for censuses and surveys. For the purpose of this paper, a further difficulty is in obtaining accurate demographic breakdowns of the migrant populations, in order to assess the situation of migrants by gender and age. Finally, the data on emigration from source communities and countries often do not match the data on immigration into destination communities and countries.

This paper begins with a brief discussion of the nexus between migration and development. Keeping the definitional and data issues in mind, it then discusses various forms of migration seen today and their implications for women. The next two sections address issues related to the rights of migrant women and their changing roles and relationships. In conclusion, the paper raises additional questions for discussion.

MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

What is often now called the migration-development nexus incorporates two elements: ways in which migrants can be a resource for the development of their home communities and ways in which development aid and processes can reduce pressures for migration, particularly irregular movements of people. Both are discussed in this section.

Mobile populations can contribute to economic development through their financial resources as well as their skills, entrepreneurial activities, and support for democratization and human rights. For example, associations of migrants often band together to raise and remit funds for infrastructure development and income generation activities in their home communities. Migrant groups as dissimilar as Malians in France and Mexicans in the United States have supported health clinics, built schools, repaired roads, and invested in small business enterprises in their home communities.

Remittances

Individual remittance transfers continue to be an important source of income for many families in developing countries. As of 2002, by conservative IMF estimates,

international remittances to developing countries exceeded \$80 billion per year (IMF 2002). Considering that Official Development Assistance (ODA) seldom exceeds \$60 billion per year, migrants are contributing more financial resources to their home countries than do the wealthy countries' development agencies (OECD 2002).

Women migrants tend to remit more of their income to their families than do male migrants. This appears to be the case for both international migrants and internal migrants. As one study of remitting behaviour in South Africa concluded, "employed migrant men are 25% less likely than employed migrant women to remit (Collinson 2003)." However, women migrants often earn less than their male counterparts so the total revenue available for remittances may be lower. And studies of remitting behaviour of internal migrants show that "a woman's age and marital status are more important in determining whether she migrates or not than a man's, and single female migrants in northern China tend to remit a lower proportion of their income than married male, married female and single male migrants (de Haan 2000)."

Until relatively recently, researchers, economists, and development agencies tended to dismiss the importance of remittances or emphasized only their negative aspects. They often argued that money sent back by foreign workers was spent largely on consumer items, pointing out that it seldom was invested in productive activities that would grow the economies of the developing countries. They also feared that those receiving remittances would become dependent upon them, reducing incentives to invest in their own income-generating activities.

Moreover, what was considered to be excessive consumerism, they argued, would lead to inequities, with remittance-dependent households exceeding the standard of living available to those without family members working abroad. Often, government attempts to encourage or require investment of remittances were heavy-handed and led to few economic improvements. Over time, the critics pointed out, remittances would diminish as the foreign workers settled in their new communities and lost contact with their home communities. Sometimes, wives and children would be left behind, with the all-important remittances no longer contributing to their livelihood.

Many of these problems still exist, but recent work on remittances show a far more complex picture. Perhaps because the scale of remittances has grown so substantially in recent years – about 7-10 percent per year in Latin America alone (IADB 2001) -- experts now recognize that remittances have far greater positive impact on communities in developing countries than previously acknowledged. Such experts as Edward Taylor at the University of California at Davis argue that even consumer use of remittances stimulates economic development, particularly when households spend their remittances locally. The multiplier effects of remittances can be substantial, with each dollar producing additional dollars in economic growth for the businesses that produce and supply the products bought with these resources. A recent World Bank report found that remittance flows are a more stable source of revenue for many countries than foreign trade, foreign direct investment and foreign aid (World Bank 2003).

A sizeable part of remittances flowing to post-conflict and post-disaster countries have been used to reconstruct the countries after years of civil war and more recent hurricanes and earthquakes. Remittances have become so important a part of reconstruction that they have been prominently on the foreign policy agenda. The President of El Salvador, Francisco Flores Perez, used a visit with President George W. Bush to request work permits for Salvadorans in the United States. The increased earnings that legally authorized workers could remit would far outweigh the likely foreign aid that would be forthcoming (Martin 2001).

The cost of remitting money to home communities has been an area of particular concern. These transfer costs can be exceedingly high. One study found that many Mexican migrants lose as much as 25 percent of the value of their remittances through fees and poor exchange rates (US Commission on Immigration Reform 1997). The market appears to be responding to this situation, with greater competition leading to lower transfer costs, but more needs to be done in this area. Immigrants often mention that they use a few well-established companies because of their greater reliance. To date, though, the business is dominated by wire transfer companies rather than financial institutions that offer a wider range of services to customers. The greater entry of banks and credit unions could help reduce costs and abuses even further. To the extent that credit unions, for example, reinvest transfer fees in the remittance receiving communities, the development potential could be increased still further. There are new initiatives in this area. The Inter American Development Bank's Multilateral Investment Fund supports programs to enable the transmission of remittances through financial institutions that work with low-income clients, such as credit unions and micro-finance institutions.

Brain Drain

Brain drain, or the migration of highly skilled individuals, remains a problem as well as an opportunity for many countries. As a study for the International Labour Organization found, "The percentage loss of tertiary skilled persons is far greater than that of secondary schooled persons, while the loss of primary schooled persons is very small (hence not shown). Emigration selects those who can afford it, whose skills are in demand abroad, and who stand to benefit most (the tertiary educated) (Lowell and Findlay 2001)." When the emigration of highly skilled professionals reaches a critical mass—for example, 30 percent of those with graduate degrees—the negative impacts on particular sectors—such as health care and education—can be massive. Overall, the loss of highly educated migrants can also represent a loss in economic growth potential if not offset by other factors.

The impacts are not all negative, however. The prospect of employment in other countries can also stimulate interest in higher education. Because only a portion of the graduates leave, a country may benefit from an increase in educated persons even if emigration of skilled persons continues (Lowell and Findlay 2001).

Return

Migrants returning temporarily or permanently bring needed skills to their home countries. Programs that identify migrants with specific skills needed by their home countries and facilitate return and reintegration contribute to economic development, as does support for return migrants who plan to open small businesses upon reintegration. The skills may be needed for economic development, but they may also be required to help move the source country towards greater democratization and respect for human rights. For example, migrants who have legal training may be helpful in developing new judicial systems and establishing the rule of law.

Many countries hope to build on the human capital of their émigrés. The TOKTEN project (Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals) aims to persuade migrants established abroad to return at least temporarily and contribute to their homeland's development. Operated by the UN Development Program, TOKTEN volunteers can work in a range of technical fields and specializations, such as: agriculture, banking, business management, computer science, economics, environmental sciences, food industry, geophysics, industrial hygiene and safety, marine science, manufacturing processes, medicine and public health, intellectual property law, remote sensing, telecommunications, urban studies, and water management. While the assignments generally range from three weeks to three months, some of the expatriates return permanently to their homelands.

Similar opportunities for migrants to bring their skills home are offered by the International Organization for Migration. For example, the Return for Qualified Afghans Program, which is co-funded by the European Union offers comprehensive assistance packages to qualified and highly qualified Afghans now residing in the European Union who would like to return to their home country to work in the public and private sectors. The program focuses on the development of critical sectors in Afghanistan including: private businesses that provide goods and services in the domestic market, civil and social services, public infrastructure, and rural development. Women migrants are encouraged to participate in the program, and are eligible for additional financial support. The Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) program provides a wider range of activities through which migrants can contribute to the development of their home countries, including virtual return (using information technology to transfer skills), investment, short or sequenced visits and permanent relocation.

France funds an assisted return program as part of its development strategy (Martin et al 2002). About 500 unauthorized Malians in France have agreed to return voluntarily in exchange for CFA 2.5 million (\$3,600). They have opened businesses, most related to agriculture, and also run hair salons, import used auto parts, sew traditional dresses, and dredge sand. They receive weekly visits for one year from the program's offices in Mali, and it was reported that 80 percent of the participants were still in business after two years. This French model helps to re-integrate migrants, but its potential for expansion may be limited. Many of the small businesses begun by returnees

had difficulty obtaining bank loans for expansion, in part because they did not have Malian track records and guarantees.

Diaspora Communities

Diaspora communities can also help stimulate political reforms that improve conditions in home countries. Mexican migrants in the United States have been consistent forces for democratization and better governance in their home country, and Mexican political candidates have responded by campaigning extensively in US communities. The new political leadership in a number of post-conflict countries urged their citizens abroad to provide not only financial resources for rebuilding the country, but also technical expertise as they established new democratic institutions.

This is not to say that the experience of the diaspora is always positive in stimulating respect for democratic values. Some returning migrants appear particularly reluctant to expose women and girls to western values if it means undermining cultural traditions, observing vehemently that they would never allow their wives or daughters to migrate with them to Europe or North America. In some cases, returning migrants appear to have become more socially and religiously conservative as a result of their own migration experience.

Stay at Home Development

Providing the means by which people can stay home and enjoy greater economic opportunities is another aspect of the migration-development nexus. Migration should be voluntary on the part of the migrant and the receiving community, not forced by economic or political conditions in the home community. Similarly, migrants should be able to return voluntarily to home communities that are economically stable and safe. No one strategy is sufficient to overcome the economic and political problems that compel international movements. Rather, a combination of trade, investment, and aid is needed.

Ideally, economically motivated migration will decrease under a global system of free trade because of factor price equalization, that is, the tendency of wages to equalize as workers move from poorer to richer countries. In the terms of economic theory, this means that trade and migration are substitutes--countries that have relatively cheaper labour can export labour-intensive goods or workers. Over time, differences in the prices of goods and the wages of workers should be reduced with freer trade, reducing emigration pressures. The European Union model for the economic integration of new members, prior to permitting free movement for work purposes, attests to the potential benefits of this approach. By the time that the new members from southern Europe with much lower wages - Spain, Portugal, and Greece - were eligible for free movement of labour, few workers took advantage of the opportunity because of high growth rates and job opportunities in their own countries. Such Asian countries as South Korea have also gone through this transition, with levels of emigration declining substantially as trade-based economic opportunities opened up at home.

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) also has the mid to long-term objective of reducing emigration pressures in Mexico, which has far lower wages than its trading partners, although NAFTA does not envision eventual free labour movements. There is broad recognition, however, that in the short term, emigration pressures may well increase as economies integrate and workers from poorer countries see greater opportunities in richer ones. This migration hump appears to be occurring in the Mexican case, but with continued reduction in birth rates and renewed economic growth, wage rates should begin to rise in Mexico and jobs should become more plentiful.

An economy can grow faster if there is foreign direct investment (FDI) in factories, machinery, education, and infrastructure that makes workers more productive. Foreign firms are often attracted by the lower-cost labour in countries of emigration, presumably giving workers economic opportunities at home rather than abroad. However, immigration and FDI can also be complementary. For example, Italian-owned factories in the western Romanian city of Timisoara provide employment for local workers, particularly women, as well as internal migrants coming from the much poorer eastern Romanian province of Moldavia. The number of Romanians in Italy increased as well, from 6,000 in 1998 to 21,000 in 1999. Italian firms have pressed the Italian government to make it easier to admit Romanians, particularly for training. Recognizing the legitimate business interest in opening up this form of migration, an Italian pilot program aims to use recruitment, remittances, and returns to accelerate development in Romania and to ensure that migration is temporary or circular, i.e., that the migrants who come to Italy for training return home. A similar model can be seen in the maquiladoras along the US-Mexico border and in such cities as Guadalajara (Martin et al. 2002).

Official Development Assistance (ODA) is aid granted by one country to assist the development of another. ODA alone is unlikely to stimulate sufficient economic development to deter emigration. Aside from problems caused by inadequate levels and inappropriate use of aid resources, there is the need to target aid more effectively at the causes of migration. Examples of targeted aid include micro-credit for would-be migrants who would prefer to invest in their home communities, income generation opportunities for women left behind by migrating spouses, infrastructure development to create new markets and economic opportunities in emigration centres, and education and health care services for families in such areas.

The French co-development approach seeks to target ODA at emigration areas in all of francophone Africa, with government support supplementing the contributions of migrants discussed above. This is a positive strategy of earmarking ODA to reduce emigration pressures, as distinct from the punitive proposal rejected by the European Union to withdraw ODA from countries that are insufficiently cooperating with destination countries, particularly regarding the return of unauthorized migrants (Martin, et al. 2003).

TRENDS IN MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

Internal migration and movements across borders have increased during the past decades. A number of factors contribute to this increase, particularly of international movements, including:

- economic globalization and integration, which has linked the economies of source and destination countries together;
- trade agreements that contain provisions for mobility of international personnel, particularly but not exclusively in trade in services;
- the growth of multinational corporations that move their personnel across countries and across the globe;
- demographic trends, with many developed countries facing population stagnation and aging while developing countries continue to grow faster than their job markets can absorb new workers;
- the transportation revolution that has made migration affordable to millions of would-be migrants;
- the revolution in communications (internet, cellular phones) that informs would-be migrants of opportunities outside of their home countries and allows them to keep in touch with families and communities left behind; and
- the growth in transnational communities, including growing numbers of persons with dual- and multi-nationality and citizenship, which remain involved in the countries of their birth as well as their countries of destination.

In addition, in the past decade, many countries, particularly those ending years of Communist rule and restrictive emigration policies, have torn down their barriers to the movement of their nationals abroad. The changing geo-political situation has also caused the formation of new States, particularly in the area of the former Soviet Union. Russia has become one of the largest recipients of international migrants, but many of those now counted in this category would have been internal migrants prior to 1990.

One of the most significant trends in migration has been the entry of women into mobility streams that had heretofore been primarily male. About half of the migrants in the world today are women, as has been the case for decades. They include both international migrants, who move to other countries, as well as internal migrants, who relocate in other parts of their own countries. While many women accompany or join family members, increasing numbers of female migrants migrate on their own. They are the principal wage earners for themselves and their families. Most women move voluntarily, but a significant number are forced migrants who have fled conflict, persecution, environmental degradation, natural disasters and other situations that affect their habitat and livelihood.

It has long been recognized that three factors must be present for migration to occur: demand/pull from receiving communities or countries; supply/push from source

communities or countries; and networks to link the supply with the demand. The networks explain why certain migrants move to certain locations. They also explain why the same set of push or pull factors in different countries lead to very different migration experiences. If the networks are not functioning, the supply and demand never find each other.

Networks are often family or community-based although labour recruiters may also stimulate movements. Migrants tend to go to places in which their relatives, friends and community members are already located. Those already settled in the new community or country provide many needed services, not least of which is finding jobs or helping the newcomer obtain other sources of support.

Internal Migration

Although there are four patterns of internal migration (rural to urban, rural to rural, urban to urban, and urban to rural), the rural to urban flows have generally garnered the most attention. Migration from rural to urban areas has long been a major contributor to urban growth in both developed and developing countries. Also long-standing has been the internal movement of women as both primary wage earners and as accompanying family members. During the nineteenth century, U.S. and European towns and cities saw the migration of farm girls taking jobs in the garment industry, as domestic servants, and in retail and other services. Similar patterns of movement from rural to urban areas can now be found in many developing countries, as rural populations leave their lands to find improved economic opportunities in cities. Rural to urban movements of women, in particular, attracted UN attention in an expert consultation in 1993 (United Nations 1993).

Internal movements are also caused by conflicts, violence and human rights abuses. An estimated 25-30 million persons are now internally displaced because of these political events (Global IDP Project 2003). Additional persons are forced to leave their homes because of such development projects as dams that destroy their habitat. Others move because of environmental degradation. Mass migration may result from natural disasters. Man-made disasters also precipitate mass movements.

The situation of internally displaced women who have been forced to move is discussed below, in the section on their refugee counterparts. Suffice it to say here that internally displaced persons, as citizens of their own countries, generally must rely on their governments to provide assistance and protection. Unfortunately, governments are often unable (because they do not have access to the internally displaced persons who may be on territory controlled by a resistance force) or unwilling (because they see the internally displaced persons as opponents) to offer such aid and protection. The UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, which is based on existing international human rights and humanitarian law, sets out the rights of internally displaced persons and the obligations of States towards them.

In an early and seminal work, Thadani and Todaro (1984) described four principal types of female migrants, distinguished by their marital status and their reasons for migrating: 1) married women migrating in search of employment; 2) unmarried women migrating in search of employment; 3) unmarried women migrating for marriage reasons; and 4) married women engaged in associational migration with no thought of employment (Hugo 1993). Women appear to be more likely than men to migrate to join or accompany other family members or because of marriage, but this type of associational migration is not unique to women as was pointed out in early work on women migrants (United Nations 1993); some men move for associational reasons also.

Female internal migration for employment purposes appears to be on the increase. A study of internal migration in Asia describes the lure of employment for many women who migrate internally:

The export-oriented industrialization driven by foreign direct investment has created massive employment opportunities for young women in the textile and garments, electric appliances and electronics industries. The women, usually unmarried, migrate to find employment in the urban industrial sector, often with the explicit goal of supporting their parents in the village, as dutiful and respectful daughters.... Most see their migration as temporary and expect to return to the village to get married; in the meantime, they will save or send home most of their earnings (Economic and Social Commission 2002).

The draw of the export-oriented factories is strong in Latin America and Africa as well. As far as families and households are concerned, the migration of women into these jobs, as well as domestic and service labour, may be an important way to reduce the risks that subsistence agriculture pose. Employers, on the other hand, may be drawn to female migrant workers because they are perceived to be “more docile and cheaper workers than men (Hugo 1993).”

Internal migration can have profound effects on women who move. Vulnerability to exploitation is a key concern, particularly when women migrate into risky, low paid and dangerous jobs. Internal trafficking of women and girls for sexual and other exploitation is a growing problem. In addition, migration to join a husband’s extended family may reinforce traditional marital roles and limit a woman’s access to prior support systems. Other changes may enhance the situation of migrating women, who may find greater independence upon moving, particularly to urban areas. They may find themselves living in nuclear rather than extended family households, providing important economic inputs to their families’ income, and making key economic decisions about themselves and their families—although in some studies, men retained full decision making authority even when women earned money. Less studied is whether migrating women have access to education, health care services and other programs that may be available in urban areas but would have been out of the reach of women in rural communities.

Studies have shown that rural to urban migrants experience a decrease in total fertility upon migration, lower than non-migrant rural women and approaching already resident urban women. Three theories seek to explain the change in fertility: migrants adapt themselves to the norms in their new location; those with lower fertility may self-select for migration, and the act of migration may interrupt normal child bearing because of delays in marriage or separation of spouses (Hugo 1993).

Internal migration also affects women left behind by migrating spouses. Again, both positive and negative impacts may be experienced. A fuller discussion of this impact of migration on source communities appears in the section on migration and development, but for this purpose, suffice it to say that remittances are an important source of income for the families left behind by internal migration. A recent study of internal migration in Asia summarized the prevailing literature on that region in a manner that could be repeated in other regions:

Skeldon also argues that rural-urban migration is particularly beneficial as a means of alleviating poverty in rural areas. He notes that remittances from temporary migrants provide rural families with cash incomes that can be used to sustain their rural way of life. Guest uses data from two linked surveys of migration in Thailand to show that remittances provide an important supplement to household income. The uses of remittances have important multiplier effects on the economy, with many of the major items of expenditure, for example construction materials and labour being obtained locally. Guest also found that remittances had helped reduce the levels of intra-rural household income inequality (Guest 2003).

On the other hand, a study of women left behind in Brazil by the circular migration of their husbands found no improvement in their social status, even though they were de facto heads of household. Their domestic activities increased relative to the wives of non-migrating men and the psychological stress of the separation was significant. The migration did allow the families to remain on the land, however, which was considered a measure of success (Goza et al. 1993).

Internal migration may be a step towards international migration for migrants and their families. In some cases, the phenomenon is voluntary. For example, young women employed in factories in their home countries learn skills that can be transferred to better paying jobs in developed countries. In other cases, it may be because of lost economic opportunities in the home country. Ronald Skeldon (2003) explains the complicated processes at work:

Gender relations in this scenario are particularly important. First, women, as lower paid labour, enter into direct competition with men that may result in increased male unemployment. Second, women as a lowly paid and vulnerable labour force may face dismissal after a few years as younger, less experienced women become available from more recently contacted rural areas to take their place. Both processes lead to a pool of the unemployed that has both the

aspirations and the wherewithal to leave to seek work overseas. Thus, the city or exporting zone becomes a "step" in a hierarchical pattern of migration from village to town and then overseas.

International Migration

The number of long-term international migrants (that is, those residing in foreign countries for more than one year) has grown steadily in the past four decades to an estimated 175 million today (UN Population Division 2002). About 154 million are voluntary migrants, with the remaining 16 million being refugees. Even with the numbers of international migrants large and growing, it is important to keep in mind that only about three percent of the world's population has been living outside of their home countries for a year or longer. The propensity to move internationally, particularly in the absence of compelling reasons such as wars, is limited to a small proportion of humans.

International migrants come from all parts of the world and they go to all parts of the world. In fact, few countries are unaffected by international migration. Many countries are sources of international flows, while others are net receivers and still others are transit countries through which migrants reach receiving countries. Such countries as Mexico experience migration in all three capacities, as source, receiving and transit countries.

Migration tends to be within regions, with migrants often remaining within the same continent. More than half of international migrants traditionally have moved from one developing country to another. In recent years, however, migration from poorer to richer countries has increased significantly. According to the UN Population Division (2002), "sixty per cent of the world's migrants currently reside in the more developed regions and 40 per cent in the less developed regions....Almost one of every 10 persons living in the more developed regions is a migrant. In contrast, nearly one of every 70 persons in developing countries is a migrant." While the traditional immigration countries – the United States, Canada and Australia – continue to see large-scale movements, as a result of labour recruitment that began in the 1960s and 1970s, Europe, the oil rich Persian Gulf states and the "economic tigers" of east and Southeast Asia are now also major destinations for international migrants.

Gender Distribution

Women have been an important component of international migration during the past five decades. As of 2000, about 49 percent of the world's migrants were women, up from 46.6 percent in 1960 (Zlotnick 2003). Significantly, the proportion of migrants who are women has grown to 51 percent in more developed regions. The highest proportions of women are in Europe and the lowest proportions are in Northern Africa. See Table 1.

Many different factors influence whether women will migrate internationally. These may be found at the individual, familial and societal levels:

Individual factors include age, birth order, race/ethnicity, urban/rural origins, marital status (single, married, divorced, widowed), reproductive status (children or no children), role in the family (wife, daughter, mother), position in family (authoritative or subordinate), educational status, occupational skills/training, labour force experience, and class position. Family factors include size, age/sex composition, life-cycle stage, structure (nuclear, extended, etc.), status (single parent, both parents, etc.), and class standing. Societal factors include those community norms and cultural values that determine whether or not women can migrate and, if they can, how (i.e., labour or family reunification) and with whom (alone or with family)(Boyd and Grieco 2003).

These factors influence not only whether a woman moves but they also influence the countries to which women migrate. The gender distribution of international migrants varies substantially by country. The proportion of legal immigrants who are women is particularly high in the traditional immigration countries (United States, Canada and Australia). In 2002, for example, 54 percent of legal immigrants to the United States were women (Office of Immigration Statistics 2002). In places that only permit temporary migration, the proportion of men migrating may be higher, particularly if admission is limited to certain types of occupations typically dominated by men (e.g., miners or information technology workers). Differences can be seen among different emigration countries. While the Philippines has considerably higher proportion of female migrants living abroad (about 60 percent in data collected during the 1990s), Mexico has many more male emigrants (69 percent in a census conducted in 1995) (ILO 1999).

Table 1. Percentage of female migrants among the total number of international migrants, by major area, 1960-2000

Major area	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
World	46.6	47.2	47.4	47.9	48.8
More developed regions	47.9	48.2	49.4	50.8	50.9
Less developed regions	45.7	46.3	45.5	44.7	45.7
Europe	48.5	48.0	48.5	51.7	52.4
Northern America	49.8	51.1	52.6	51.0	51.0
Oceania	44.4	46.5	47.9	49.1	50.5
Northern Africa	49.5	47.7	45.8	44.9	42.8
Sub-Saharan Africa	40.6	42.1	43.8	46.0	47.2
Southern Asia	46.3	46.9	45.9	44.4	44.4
Eastern and South-eastern Asia	46.1	47.6	47.0	48.5	50.1
Western Asia	45.2	46.6	47.2	47.9	48.3
Caribbean	45.3	46.1	46.5	47.7	48.9
Latin America	44.7	46.9	48.4	50.2	50.5

Source: Hania Zlotnik, "The Global Dimensions of Female Migration" in the Migration Information Source, March 1, 2003

Women can be found among all types of migrants. Discussed below are the principal ways that women migrate:

Family Formation and Reunification

Family formation and family reunification are significant reasons for moving internationally as it is internally. Upon marriage, one or both spouses generally move from the family home to a new residence. Usually, this move occurs within the same country, but it can involve relocation to a new country. A spouse may also move internationally for work purposes and then bring family members to reunify in the new area. Or a worker or student may marry a resident of another place and then shift from temporary or circular migrant to permanent resident.

Governments often permit close family members of those already in the country to enter through legal channels although this policy is found more frequently in the traditional immigration countries than in those authorizing contract labourers only. The anchor relative in the host country may have been married and had children at the time of arrival but left his or her family members behind. Having determined to remain in the host country, he or she petitions for family reunification. Alternately, a citizen or international migrant already living in the host country marries a foreign national and seeks his or her admission.

Family reunification and formation programs can invite various abuses unless managed well. If marriage to a citizen or permanent resident is the only or principal route to admission, marriage fraud may result. Companies recruiting mail-order brides tend to be highly successful in countries with poor economies and few economic opportunities for women. While many companies have a legitimate interest in matching spouses, some of these businesses use the lure of immigration as a pretext for trafficking the women into prostitution. To combat the potential for fraud, the United States, for example, offers conditional status to the immigrating spouse in recent marriages and reviews the cases after one year to make sure that the marriage is valid before granting permanent status. The United States also provides vehicles by which women and children who are victims of domestic abuse may become permanent residents without the permission of or remaining with the abusive husband/father.

The willingness of states to authorize family reunification is supported by international human rights law. Article 16(3) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states clearly that: “the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by the society and the state.” Splitting families apart deprives each member of the fundamental right to respect of his or her family life. Since the family unit is often the principal support to its members, separating families also undermines other rights. Children and women, in particular, become vulnerable to exploitation when they are separated from their relatives.

Family reunion is often seen to be a consequence of labour migration. For example, in the years after guest worker programs ended in Europe, most officially sanctioned international migration consisted of family reunion as former guest workers brought their relatives to join them. Similarly, a substantial share of the migration into the United States in the past decade has been the family members of unauthorized migrants who gained legal status through the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986.

Family reunion is also a cause of still further migration. Many would-be labour migrants learn of employment prospects through their family members in other countries and then seek authorized or, in some cases, unauthorized entry to take the jobs. Moreover, once family members obtain residence status in a new country, they are often able to bring in additional relatives through family reunification programs. This process is called chain migration. Although few countries permit legal immigration of extended family members, some migration systems do authorize admission of parents and adult siblings of already resident immigrants. To take one scenario, an international migrant with long-term residence sponsors his new spouse for admission; they then sponsor each of their parents, who in turn, sponsor their other children who enter with their spouses, who in turn sponsor their parents, and the chain continues.

Aside from its strong humanitarian basis and despite the potential for chain migration, host countries value family reunification because it is generally an effective mechanism for helping immigrants adapt to their new society. Already resident family members help new arrivals find jobs, housing, and other needed assistance. New immigrants may add their earnings to augment household income. Parents of immigrants often take care of young grandchildren, thereby allowing both spouses to be gainfully employed.

Families pool their savings to open businesses. At the same time, however, family migration may result in fiscal costs for the host society. Aged parents may require health services or income support that immigrant families cannot afford. Immigrants often have more children than natives and the children may have special need for language or other instruction, increasing costs for public education. These costs may be an investment in the future but they are also a current expenditure.

Eligibility for family reunification is not universal, however. Many contract labour arrangements preclude admission of family members. Admission rules often restrict family reunification for asylum seekers and those granted temporary protection, even in traditional immigration countries.

Migrating spouses are more likely to be women than men. In the United States, for example, almost twice as many women than men immigrate as the spouses of U.S. citizens and permanent residents. These figures are not surprising because family reunification often follows male-dominated labour migration. For example, in the years after guest worker programs ended in Europe, most officially sanctioned international migration consisted of family reunion as former guest workers brought their spouses and children to join them. Although a distinct minority of contract workers was female, the

majority comprised men who then sought the admission of their female spouses and children. Similarly, the wives and dependent children of the mostly male unauthorized migrants who gained legal status through the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 constitute a substantial share of the migration into the United States in the past decade.

Labour Migration

Labour migration is a significant part of voluntary movements. Migration for study purposes is also common. Migration occurs as individuals seek improved economic opportunities away from their home communities. Migrants may move through legal, registered channels or they may move without authorization by government authorities. Migration can be temporary (individuals move for a short period and then return to their home communities), circular (individuals move back and forth between home and work communities), or permanent (individuals relocate themselves and, possibly, their families). Migration is a dynamic process so some individuals move from one type of migrant to another. For example, workers may intend initially to remain only temporarily or to circulate but then become permanent residents of another location.

Several distinct categories of women migrate for work purposes, differentiated by their skills, the permanence of their residence in the host country and their legal status. At the lower end of the skills spectrum, women migrants pick fruits and vegetables, manufacture garments and other items, process meat and poultry, work as nursing home and hospital aides, clean restaurants and hotels, and provide myriad other services. Overseas domestic service is a common occupation for migrant women. Women migrants from a wide range of countries provide domestic services in a wide range of receiving countries in almost all parts of the globe. They may migrate through official contract labour programs that match workers and employers, or they may obtain such employment after migrating, often through informal networks.

At the higher end of the skill spectrum, women migrants engage in equally diverse activities. They fill jobs requiring specialized skills, run multinational corporations, teach in universities, supply research and development expertise to industry and academia, and design, build and program computers, to name only a few activities. Sizeable numbers of migrant women are in the health professions, particularly nursing and physical therapy. Again, they can be found undertaking such assignments throughout the world.

In most countries, international migrants are admitted as temporary workers and they are granted work authorization for specified periods. They have no right to remain in the destination country beyond the period of authorized employment. This is particularly true in the Persian Gulf states and East and Southeast Asia. In some cases, particularly in Europe, if a permit is renewed several times, the international migrant is allowed to remain indefinitely. The traditional immigration countries, the U.S., Canada and

Australia, also have mechanisms for direct admission of foreign workers for permanent settlement.

While many women migrate through legal work programs, female unauthorized workers can be found in almost as diverse a range of jobs and industries as authorized workers—agricultural and food processing jobs, light manufacturing, and service jobs being the most common types of employment. Unauthorized women migrants also are smuggled into countries by professional traffickers, as discussed below. While some migrant women know and accept the expectations of the traffickers, many others have been recruited to work in legitimate occupations and then find themselves trapped into forced prostitution, marriages, domestic work, sweatshops and other forms of exploitation.

Refugees and Displaced Persons

Refugees have a special status in international law. A refugee is defined by the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees as “a person who, owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.” Refugee status has been applied more broadly, however, to include others persons who are outside their country of origin because of armed conflict, generalized violence, foreign aggression or other circumstances which have seriously disturbed public order, and who, therefore, require international protection.

By most estimates, 70-75 percent of the world’s refugee and displaced population is composed of women and their dependent children (Martin 2003). Children account for about half of all refugees, with adult women often outnumbering adult men. This picture varies, however, by countries of origin and refuge. It is particularly true when refugees flee conflict in one developing country and take refuge in another, usually neighbouring country. This distribution does not generally hold for asylum-seekers who seek admission to more developed countries in North America, Europe and Oceania. A higher proportion of male applicants can be found making their way to these more distant places.

Women who are forced migrants present many challenges to the international community. Foremost are their special needs for legal and physical protection. Gender is not included in the international definition of a refugee as a person with a well-founded fear of persecution on the basis of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a social group. Yet, women asylum-seekers may be fleeing such gender-based persecution as rape, widow burnings, honour killings, domestic violence, forced marriages and female genital mutilation from which their home country governments are unwilling or unable to protect them. Such countries as the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom recognize such women as members of a particular social group, but

such countries as Germany and France do not grant asylum if the persecution is at the hands of non-state actors instead of directly by governments.

The protection of refugee and displaced women closer to conflict situations is even more problematic. Civilians are increasingly the targets of attacks in civil conflicts, with rape and sexual violence now a recognized war crime. Rape and sexual assault also occurs during flight at the hands of border guards, government and rebel military units, bandits and others. Women's safety may be no more ensured once in refugee and displaced persons camps. For example, refugee and displaced women have faced serious threat of rape when they pick firewood, often the only source of heating and cooking fuel. Refugee women have been forced to provide sexual favours in exchange for obtaining food rations for themselves and their families. In some cases, only male heads of households receive documentation of their status, leaving their spouses vulnerable to harassment each time they leave their homes.

Such problems do not necessarily stop when the women return home. The conflict may still be continuing and, even if a peace agreement has been signed, political instability, the continued presence of landmines and the destruction of the economy and infrastructure make conditions dangerous for women and their families. Yet, refugee and displaced women are also an important resource for the development of post-conflict countries. They have often learned skills in refugee camps that are in short supply in their home country. For example, many refugee health services train refugee women as community health and outreach workers and traditional birth attendants.

For example, in the refugee camps in Honduras and Mexico, international organizations, local and international non-government organizations and volunteers provided humanitarian assistance, skills training and professional attention for refugees. As a result of international support for the basic needs of the refugee population, women in the refugee camps had more time for community activities and education. Refugee women learned a wide range of new skills, including literacy, Spanish language (in the case of the Guatemalans), and productive trades. They engaged for the first time in community activities, and worked collectively. They made political contributions that were valued by the community as a whole, and in the process, became more self-confident, aware of their rights and more assertive. Today, the lives of the women who experienced empowerment in exile have reverted largely to the conditions of the status quo ante, but with changed attitudes. In both El Salvador and Guatemala, there is evidence that the impacts of their experiences are likely to change the futures of their children. There are already indications in both cases that the younger returnees who came of age in the camps are seeking alternatives to traditional female roles (Fagen and Yudelman 2001).

Some refugees are unable to return or to remain in countries of first asylum. They may be candidates for resettlement to a third country. Resettlement in third countries is generally considered to be the least desirable solution for refugees because it moves them far from their own countries and cultures. In many situations, however, resettlement is

the best solution for the individuals and groups involved, particularly when needed to provide protection or durable solutions for refugees.

Most of the refugee women and children who are resettled in third countries enter as part of a complete family unit. Among some refugee populations, however, a significant number of women-headed households have been resettled. In response to the difficulties faced by women at risk, UNHCR has identified the need for special “Women at Risk” programs for the admission of refugee women who face specific protection problems. The UNHCR Resettlement Handbook (2002) states: “When, despite all possible efforts, it is unlikely that the particular protection problems or related needs of a refugee woman can be adequately addressed in the country of refuge, resettlement should be actively considered.”

More specifically, the Handbook states: “In some instances resettlement may be the preferred and often only solution. This could be the case when women have been raped and when in their society and in their country of refuge a survivor of rape is ostracised. Such a situation could be aggravated when the refugee woman gives birth to a child conceived through rape. In addition to the possible serious consequences of a rape on her physical and mental health, the refugee woman may suffer lifelong rejection by her own family and community.” For purposes of resettlement:

UNHCR considers as women-at-risk those women who have protection problems, and are single heads of families or are accompanied by an adult male who is unable to support and assume the role of the head of the family. They may suffer from a wide range of problems including expulsion, *refoulement* and other security threats, sexual harassment, violence, abuse, torture and different forms of exploitation. Additional problems such women face could derive from persecution as well as from particular hardships sustained either in their country of origin, during their flight or in their country of asylum. The trauma of having been uprooted, deprived of normal family and community support or cultural ties, the abrupt change in roles and status, in addition to the absence of an adult male head of family, renders some women, under certain circumstances, more vulnerable than others (UNHCR 2002).

Some countries have established specific women at risk programs – for example, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Such other resettlement countries as the United States grant resettlement to refugee women at risk under the normal processing modalities. UNHCR also encourages special programs to help the resettled women adjust to their new lives, programs that address some of the special needs that the women at risk may have (Martin 2004).

Smuggling and Trafficking

A particularly troubling trend in recent years has been the emergence of professional smuggling and trafficking operations. Smuggling is defined in international law as: “the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other

material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident.”³ Trafficking is defined as: “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.”⁴ Although the distinctions often blur, as discussed below, generally, persons who are smuggled knowingly agree to the terms under which they will be moved across borders whereas trafficking victims have been coerced or deceived. The smuggling protocol refers only to movement across international borders, but trafficking can take place within countries as well.

Smuggling is, of course, one of the world’s oldest professions. When nation states established borders and sought to regulate traffic across them, they created markets for the smuggling of humans as well as goods. What is new is the scale of smuggling, measured in both numbers smuggled and profits, as well as an emerging pattern of increasing professionalism.

This pattern may vary by the type and location of the smuggling. At the most informal levels, aliens are helped by individuals whom they know to traverse the border. At a slightly more organized level, local agents may be used to link migrants to more formal smuggling operations. The local contacts, who are generally well known to the migrants, tell them who to contact at the border to help them gain entry into the receiving country. Several types of services may be offered: assistance in crossing without inspection; houses in which they can hide from the authorities; transportation to interior locations; links to employers. Smugglers may sell or rent fraudulent documents to be used in obtaining entry and to verify eligibility for lawful employment or receipt of services.

The use of different types of smuggling operations varies by gender and financial resources. On the U.S.-Mexico border, for example, male migrants tend to use “coyotes” to help them cross the border through deserted areas, whereas women migrants are more likely to purchase fraudulent documents to cross through recognized ports of entry. Sometimes, smugglers act like legitimate business people, guaranteeing their services and agreeing to receive final payment when the migrant reaches the final destination. Other smuggling operations are far less benign. Smugglers pack large numbers of migrants into small, unventilated spaces to cross borders or reach ports. Fearing apprehension by border authorities, smugglers have left migrants without water or protection from the hot sun.

³ Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

⁴ Protocol To Prevent, Suppress And Punish Trafficking In Persons, Especially Women And Children, Supplementing The United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime

The most troubling form of smuggling evolves into trafficking, where the smugglers not only bring migrants across borders but exploit and abuse their labour in the process. As smuggling fees increase, and migrants find it difficult to pay all costs at once, smugglers “sell” migrants to businesses which cover the fees in exchange for indentured labour. This debt bondage can amount to virtual slavery, particularly for women and children forced into sexually exploitive occupations.

The trafficking of people for prostitution and forced labour is one of the fastest growing areas of international criminal activity and one that is of increasing concern to the international community. The overwhelming majority of victims of severe forms of trafficking are women and children. The US State Department estimates that 800 thousand people are trafficked each year worldwide for forced labour, domestic servitude, or sexual exploitation (2003).

Generally, the flow of trafficking is from less developed countries to industrialized nations, including the United States, or towards neighbouring countries with marginally higher standards of living. Since trafficking is an underground criminal enterprise, there are no precise statistics on the extent of the problem. But even using conservative estimates, the problem is enormous. The largest number of victims trafficked internationally come from Asia, with over 225,000 victims each year believed to be coming from Southeast Asia and over 150,000 from South Asia. The former Soviet Union is the largest new source of trafficking for prostitution and the sex industry, with over 100,000 persons trafficked each year from that region. An additional 75,000 or more are trafficked from Eastern Europe. Over 100,000 victims are from Latin America and the Caribbean, and over 50,000 victims are from Africa (Congressional Research Service 2000). Trafficking is now considered the third largest source of profits for organized crime, behind only drugs and guns, generating billions of dollars annually. Most of the victims are sent to Asia and the Middle East, Western Europe and North America. They usually end up in large cities, vacation and tourist areas, or near military bases, where the demand is highest.

Traffickers acquire their victims in a number of ways. Sometimes women are kidnapped outright in one country and taken forcibly to another. In other cases, traffickers entice victims to migrate voluntarily with false promises of good paying jobs in foreign countries as au pairs, models, dancers, domestic workers, etc. Traffickers advertise these phony jobs as well as marriage opportunities abroad in local newspapers and use marriage agency databases and matchmaking parties to find their victims. In some instances, traffickers approach women or their families directly with offers of lucrative jobs elsewhere. After providing transportation and false travel documents to get victims to their destinations, they subsequently charge exorbitant fees for those services, creating lifetime debt bondage.

While there is no single victim stereotype, a majority of trafficked women are under the age of 25, with many in their mid to late teens (Trafficking 1996). The fear among customers of HIV and AIDS infection has driven traffickers to recruit younger

women and girls, some as young as seven. Victims of severe forms of trafficking are often subject to cruel mental and physical abuse in order to keep them in servitude, including beating and battering, rape, starvation, forced drug use, confinement, and seclusion. Once victims are brought to their destinations, their passports are often confiscated. Victims are forced to have sex, often unprotected, with large number of partners, and to work unsustainably long hours. Many victims suffer mental breakdowns and are exposed to sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV and AIDS. They are often denied medical care and those who become ill are sometimes killed.

Recognizing the growth of smuggling and trafficking operations, States receiving agreed to the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, both of which supplement the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime. These instruments require international cooperation in combating smuggling and trafficking and encourage States to pass measures for the prevention of those who have been trafficked. The trafficking protocol enters into force on 31 December 2003 and the smuggling protocol enters into force on 28 January 2004.

The entry into force is important because smugglers and traffickers have had the advantage over governments because of the lack of an international migration regime in which governments co-operate to prohibit and prosecute smugglers and traffickers of humans. Smugglers and traffickers can easily exploit the gaps in the institutional structures of international co-operation as well as the fragmentation of domestic government law enforcement efforts. It is also to their advantage that except for the violence they may inflict their basic service of supplying cheap labour for receiving countries is widely tolerated even though illegal. Their advantage over migrants is the migrants' dependence, ignorance and lack of recourse when agreements are not fulfilled.

RIGHTS OF MIGRANT WOMEN

Not surprisingly given the types of migration discussed above, some migrant women are especially vulnerable to deprivation, hardship, discrimination and abuse. They face discrimination both due to their status as migrants and due to their status as women. They have limited access to employment and generally earn less than men and native-born women. Legally, many migrant women are vulnerable if their residence is dependent upon a relationship with a citizen or "primary migrant". Migrant women, particularly forced migrants, face real risks of physical and sexual abuse during travel and in the country of destination. In short, the rights of migrant women are violated frequently, drastically and all too often with impunity.

The rights of migrant workers have been specifically enumerated in various international instruments. In 1990, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. The Convention reaffirms basic human rights norms and embodies them in an instrument applicable to migrant workers and their families. It was

recognized that this group of people is often in a vulnerable and unprotected position, especially given the added problems encountered from clandestine movements and trafficking in workers. The underlying goal of the Convention, therefore, is to guarantee minimum protection for migrant workers and members of their families who are in legal or undocumented/irregular situation. Its implementation could significantly encourage basic humane treatment of all migrant workers. However, the number of states ratifying the convention is still disappointingly small.

Although there is an increasing focus on women's rights and the special needs of migrant women in the international community today, this knowledge has rarely been translated into effective policies. Many migrant women do not have a legal status within their host countries that offers them sufficient protection from abuse. Or, their legal status is so closely tied to their husband's or children's that they are vulnerable to deportation, should their family member leave them or be deported himself, or to domestic abuse.

To move forward, there must be greater awareness and understanding of the conditions and needs specific to migrant women. Countries may need to take steps to ensure that migrant women have equal access to projects and services so that they can fully participate in and benefit from them. In some cases, there is need to design and implement migrant women-specific projects and services because mainstream programs are inappropriate to the needs of this population.

One area that has received attention and support from governments is education to combat trafficking in women (IOM 2000). Accurate, timely information about migration and trafficking that is disseminated to would-be migrants gives them the means to make an informed choice about migrating. Information is thus an important empowerment tool, diminishing the possibility of traffickers being able to exploit a lack of knowledge in potential migrants.

The education campaigns are aimed at preventing the victimization of migrants, but once they do try to enter, governments also grapple with defining the standards that govern the treatment accorded to them. Three issues serve as examples. First are the rights of migrants attempting illegal entry to be protected from physical abuse at the hands of smugglers, other predators, and immigration officials. Second are witness protection and other programs for those who testify against smugglers. Often, successful prosecution of traffickers requires the co-operation of those who have been smuggled into the country. Third are programs for the safe and orderly return of smuggled women to their home countries. Smuggled aliens who are stranded or apprehended often do not have the resources to return home. Abused migrants may need special help to return home.

MIGRATION AND GENDER RELATIONS

International migration profoundly affects gender relations, particularly the role of women in households and communities. The impacts are complex. In many respects,

migration enhances the autonomy and power of women. When women from traditional societies migrate to advanced industrial societies, they become familiar with new norms regarding women's rights and opportunities. If they take outside employment, they may have access to financial resources that had never before compensated their labour. Even if their pay is pooled with other family members, this new wage-earning capacity often gives women greater ability to direct household priorities.

Women who are left at home as their husbands migrate also experience changes in their role. The stay-at-home spouses may now have greater household and economic responsibilities. Although they may be financially dependent on remittances from their overseas relatives, the women may have substantial autonomy over decisions about how the funds will be used. Should their husbands not return home, or stop sending remittances, the women may have to assume even greater responsibility for themselves and their children.

In other respects, migration can serve to reinforce traditional gender roles. This is particularly the case when women are expected to preserve cultural and religious norms that appear to be under attack. This process could be seen, for example, in Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan, where *pardah*, the separation of men and women, was practiced more rigidly than in Afghanistan itself. Upon return to Afghanistan, the Taliban leaders carried the intensified practice back, imposing it on the whole country.

For women who migrate from developing to developed countries, adjustment to the new culture can be a difficult process. Barriers to successful adjustment include those within the host society as well as individual or personal ones. Among the former are racial intolerance and sexual and cultural discrimination aimed against foreign women. Many migrants are of a different race from the majority of the population of their new country. As women, they may face the dual problem of racism and sexism in seeking employment, training or otherwise participating in the activities of the new country.

A further societal factor in adjustment is legal status. The migrant's legal status is an important factor influencing the ease with which she will be able to adjust. Immigrants and refugees who have been admitted legally generally enjoy all the rights of other residents. Asylum seekers are generally in a more insecure position while they await their hearings. They may be ineligible to seek employment or receive services. The procedure may be protracted, leaving them in limbo for long periods of time. Not knowing if they will be able to remain permanently, asylum seekers may not actively seek out adjustment services. Those who enter with no authorisation who are ineligible for any legal status are in the most precarious state, unable to work legally or to access services.

Personal barriers to adjustment include family conflicts, traumas suffered during flight, illiteracy, lack of language skills, religious constraints. Changes in family roles often accompany migration. Some families have experienced long periods of separation. Male roles may change drastically in the new society. If their skills are not readily

transferable to industrialized countries (for example, agricultural skills), the men may find themselves unable to support their families:

"Men often feel neglected and disappointed, which sometimes brings out patriarchal habits and efforts to re- establish traditional roles -- even by force if necessary. In a situation where men are unsure of themselves, they often become skeptical about their wives. Their own feelings of inferiority can lead to their doubting the love or trustworthiness of their wives. When men mistrust their wives, they may restrict them and try to control them in an effort to boost their egos (quoted in Martin 2004)."

The adjustment may be particularly difficult in forced migration situations. Women in refugee camps generally continue to be productive members of their families, responsible for such domestic activities as food, water and firewood collection, preparation of meals and other household chores. By contrast, men often find that they cannot fulfill their traditional productive role in agricultural or other employment. Adolescent boys may believe they have no economic alternatives other than joining military forces or gangs (Turner 1999). The frustrations experienced by men can result in increased family tensions, domestic violence, depression and/or alcoholism.

International migration can lead to generational tensions, as well, particularly when children adapt more quickly than their parents to a new language and social system. Seeing their children adopt unfamiliar practices may prompt some immigrant women to recommit themselves and their families to more traditional, often patriarchal mores. In many cases, the women migrate but must leave their children behind, creating other tensions and dilemmas. Sometimes, the children are left behind because the working conditions for the women preclude them from having accompanying family members or they have no access to child care. At other times, the children are left with grandparents or other relatives because the parents prefer a more traditional environment for the children (Hugo 1994).

Immigration rules can also reinforce traditional roles. Because many migrant women obtain legal residency status through family reunification or formation, their ability to exercise rights may be limited by their spouse's willingness to support their immigration claims. Migrant women who are victims of spousal abuse, for example, may be unwilling to leave the abuser if he controls access to legal status. In recognition that immigration laws can make women and their children vulnerable, some countries have legislation permitting abused women to petition on their own for legal status.

Just as migration can affect gender roles, changing gender roles can influence immigration policies. The growing participation of native-born women in the labour force has helped precipitate programs for admission of foreign workers to undertake childcare, elder care, housekeeping and other services. For example, the United States and Canada have explicit programs for admission of "au pairs" and "live-in caregivers," respectively, who provide such services. Lagging behind but also under consideration are programs that give work permits to the spouses of executives, managers and

professionals, in recognition that many of these highly sought migrants will not move if their spouses are unlikely to carry on their own professions. In announcing a pilot program for spousal work authorization, the Canadian government acknowledged the “modern two-career family” and stated they want “labour market and immigration policy to reflect this reality.” (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 1998)

Discriminatory immigration and citizenship policies are also under review. As discussed above, some countries have instituted special measures to protect the immigration rights of victims of domestic violence. Citizenship laws with gender discriminatory provisions have also been changed in some countries. For example, until 1977 a child born abroad only had a claim to Canadian citizenship if the father was Canadian or if the child was born to an unmarried Canadian mother. The Citizenship Act of 1977 allowed children born abroad to a married Canadian mother to apply for Canadian citizenship. By contrast, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld significantly more stringent requirements for citizenship for children born outside the United States to an out of wedlock father. The children born out of wedlock to US citizen fathers cannot obtain citizenship unless paternity is established before the child is 18 years of age and, if the child is still a minor, the father agrees to provide financial support until the child is 18 years of age. There are no time-limitations or strict financial requirements if the mother is the U.S. citizen.

CONCLUSION

Until the mid-1980s, little research or analysis of migration trends focused on gender issues. With the increasing feminization of internal and international migration, and the changing role of women more generally, significantly more attention is paid today to these issues by both researchers and policymakers. No longer can half of the world’s migrants be ignored.

The increased attention has also shown the many issues that must be addressed in order to protect the rights of migrant women. The research discussed in this paper raise the need for:

- Policies and programs to enable migrant and refugee women to participate actively in decisions that affect them and their families, including through formation of voluntary organizations composed of migrating women as well as women left behind.
- Improvements in the protection of migrant women rights and their safety and security. In particular, what steps can be taken to protect migrant and refugee women from labour abuses, sexual exploitation, trafficking, involuntary prostitution and other exploitable situations? Are current international legal instruments sufficient to secure the rights of migrant and refugee women?

- Improvements in the socio-economic status of migrant and refugee women to enable them to support themselves and their families in dignity and safety. How can access to employment, credit, education and skills training be increased? How can access to adequate and safe housing be ensured?
- Improvements in the access of migrant and refugee women to primary and reproductive health care services, including programs to address gender and sexual based violence, trauma resulting from flight and conflict, and sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS.
- Ensuring that migrant and refugee women are resources for the development of their home communities, for example, by reducing the cost of remittance transfers, facilitating temporary and permanent return of skilled migrants and refugees, encouraging diaspora communities to invest in home countries, and similar programs.
- Identification of ways better to promote “stay at home” development that will provide women with employment opportunities, education, health care and other services in their home communities.
- Improvements in the collection of data on internal and international migration, with particular attention to collecting gender and age disaggregated statistics. Additional research is also needed to expand understanding of the causes of female migration and mobility, the impact of migration and mobility on women, and the impact of female migration and mobility on source and destination countries.

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