

From Origin to Destination: Policy Perspective on Female Migration: Ghana Case Study

Symposium on International Migration and Development

Presented By:
Elizabeth Adjei
Director of Immigration, GHANA
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Introduction

- Female migration has important implications for development.
- Much knowledge has been generated since the 70s on the economic dimensions of female migration.
- Female migration still receives little attention in developing countries including Ghana.

Purpose

- Provide an overview of female migration in Ghana – trends and types, effects and outcomes.
- Review the policy context of female migration in Ghana; - identify strengths and gaps.
- Consider policy options and recommendations.
- Methodology

Country Background

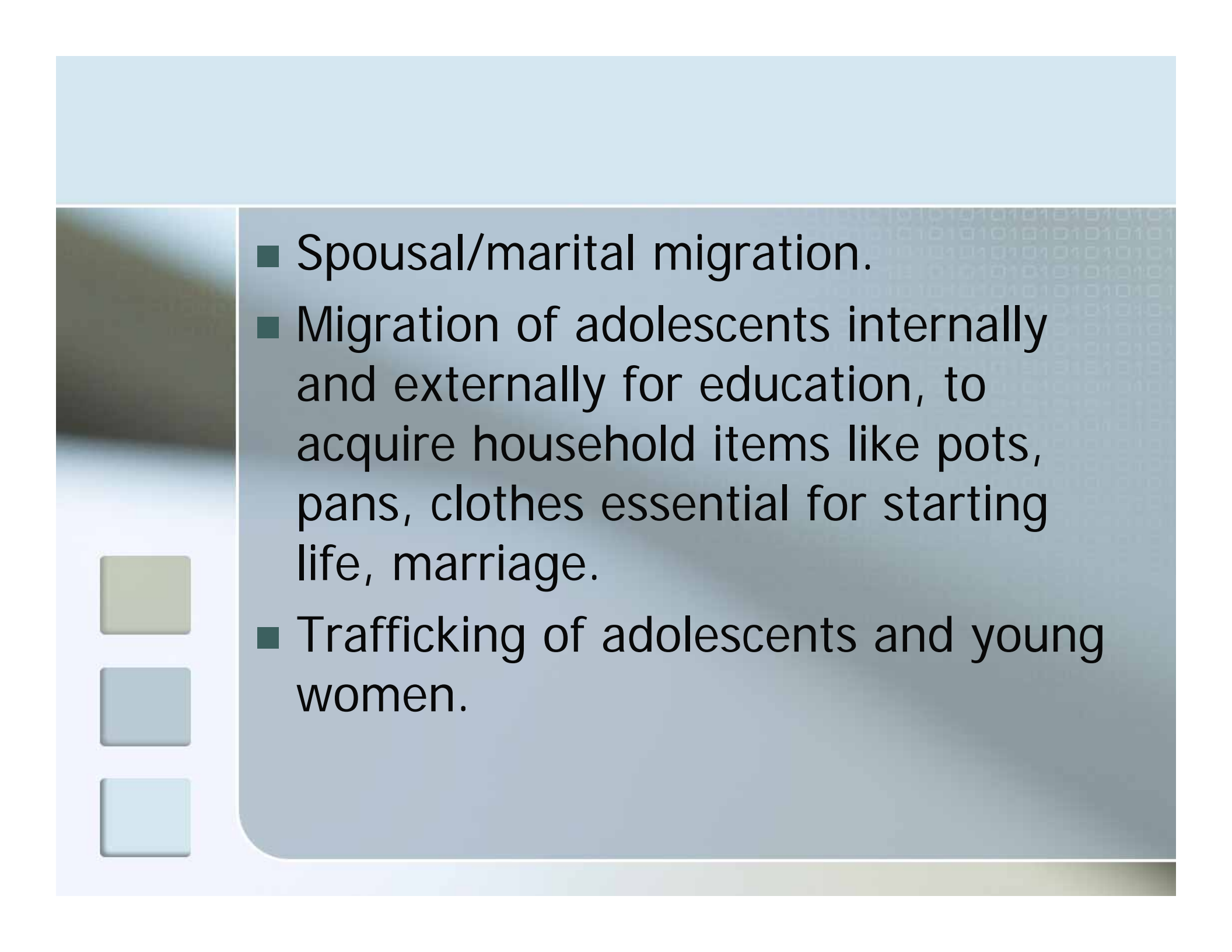
- Ghana is a strategically positioned country in West Africa.
- ECOWAS and freedom of movement in the sub-region
- Relative economic prosperity in the 1960's and consequently destination country for neighbouring countries.

Country Background Cont'd

- By late 1970s and 80's, economic decline and stagnation compelled Ghanaians to move out.
- Aggravated by bad governance under military regimes in particular.
- By 1980's migration had become a coping strategy for individuals and families

Female Migration in Ghana – Trends and Types

- Migration of unskilled and semi-skilled females from rural to urban areas for economic, cultural and social reasons.
- Migration of women traders internally and externally; to the sub-region, the east (Asia) and west (developed countries).
- Migration of skilled professionals and students to Developed Countries particularly Europe and America.

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- Spousal/marital migration.
 - Migration of adolescents internally and externally for education, to acquire household items like pots, pans, clothes essential for starting life, marriage.
 - Trafficking of adolescents and young women.

Determinants of Migration in Ghana include:

- Increasing poverty,
- Deterioration, inadequate social services such as health and education,
- Imbalances in development, distribution of social services and infrastructure.
- Lack of employment opportunities and employable skills,
- Acquisition of assets,
- Other cultural and social benefits.

Some Positive Consequences of Female Migration

- Remittances for families left behind for subsistence, education and health.
- Changes in traditional division of labour and increased burdens for women.
- Greater autonomy through increased incomes
- Break with traditional roles and patterns of dependence.
- Creation of small scale businesses in places of origin for other family members.

Negative Consequences include:

- Dislocation in kinship relationships important for social cohesion.
- Low or invisible status for marital/spousal migrants.
- Increased vulnerabilities due to low incomes for the unskilled in particular as they engage in menial and insecure jobs including sex work.
- International migrants are susceptible to sexual abuse in trying to secure travel documents and visas.

Overview of Policies on Migration of Migration in Ghana


- The Ghana National Population Policy (1994)
- The Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS)
- Anti-trafficking law
- ECOWAS Declaration and Action Plan Against Trafficking in Human Beings.

Policy Overview cont'd

- Dual Citizenship Law (2001)
- Non-Resident Ghanaian Secretariat
- Improving working conditions of doctors and nurses
- Proposed Migration Governing Council


Weaknesses in Policy Context

- Lack of policy attention to of women despite their overwhelming presence and contribution to the migration process.
- Policies on migration are gender neutral and not specific to experiences, needs and expectations of women.
- Lack of adequate protection and security for migrants in places of destination and origin.

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- A number of institutions affect or are affected by migration. However, there is no holistic policy nor mainstreaming of existing policies.
 - There is also little coordination of issues on migration.
 - Absence of gender disaggregated data on migration.
 - No implementation and monitoring framework.

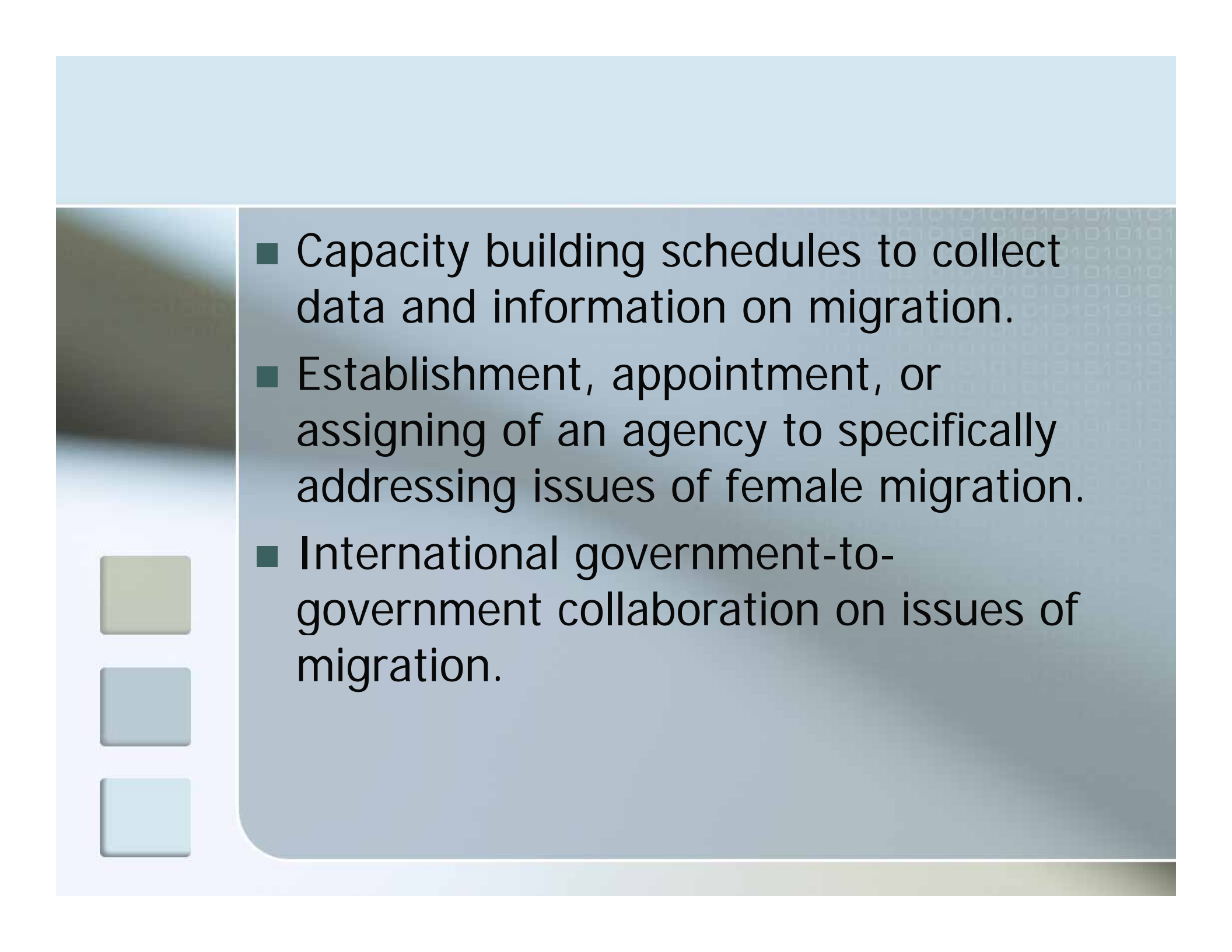
Policy Recommendations

- A comprehensive policy with a gendered approach is needed to improve the decision-making process, address the issue of migrants' rights and welfare in countries of destination, as well as the creation of incentives to return.
- Government policy of pre-departure training and awareness of rights and risks and access to consular services, to make migration more purposeful, need to be instituted.
- Government interventions to set up formidable media campaigns to disseminate information to would-be migrants to enable them make rational and informed choices.
- Deliberate direction of migratory flows to impact on economy.

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- Dissemination of information to out-migrating women on programs and institutional structures which support female migrants abroad; - *critical for female workers to help them move out of unskilled to the skilled category of labor.*
 - Migration must be integrated into Ghana's foreign policy, and foreign mission staff in destination countries should undertake to protect migrant workers in those jurisdictions.
 - Programs and interventions at the national level is required to help steer remittances of female migrants towards investment, by creating facilities for them to save and advancement of credit to them for small-scale enterprises and strengthening their financial management skills.

Way Forward

- Design, develop, and build gender-disaggregated database on migration.
- Commissioning of specific studies on female migration.
- Technical and financial support is required toward building capacity to;
 - Inform and train emigrants to compete in global market;
 - Negotiate fair contracts and cover costs for managing this;
 - Provide families with better access to banking loans and credits
 - Integration policies in receiving countries to have gender bias

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- Capacity building schedules to collect data and information on migration.
 - Establishment, appointment, or assigning of an agency to specifically addressing issues of female migration.
 - International government-to-government collaboration on issues of migration.

The End

■ THANK YOU

