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## Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 18 December 2013

[on the report of the Third Committee (A/68/449 and Corr.1)]

### 68/137. Violence against women migrant workers

*The General Assembly,*

*Recalling* all of its previous resolutions on violence against women migrant workers and those adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission on Human Rights and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women,<sup>1</sup>

*Reaffirming* the provisions concerning women migrant workers contained in the outcome documents of the World Conference on Human Rights,<sup>2</sup> the International Conference on Population and Development,<sup>3</sup> the Fourth World Conference on Women<sup>4</sup> and the World Summit for Social Development<sup>5</sup> and their reviews,

*Reaffirming also* the provisions concerning women migrants contained in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development,<sup>6</sup> and calling upon States to promote and protect effectively the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants regardless of migration status, especially those of women and children, and to encourage their active participation, as appropriate, in processes that contribute to decision-making, planning and implementation of policies and programmes for sustainable development at all levels,

<sup>1</sup> See resolution 48/104.

<sup>2</sup> A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III.

<sup>3</sup> *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5–13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

<sup>4</sup> *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

<sup>5</sup> *Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6–12 March 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

<sup>6</sup> Resolution 66/288, annex.



*Acknowledging* the role of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), including in supporting national efforts, to increase women's access to economic opportunities, including for women migrant workers, and to end violence against them, in the light of the UN-Women strategic plan, 2014–2017,<sup>7</sup> which has among its six goals increasing women's access to economic opportunities, and preventing violence against women and girls and expanding access to services for survivors, and acknowledging the policy and programmatic work of UN-Women on empowering women migrant workers,

*Welcoming* the agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women during its fifty-seventh session,<sup>8</sup> and taking note, in particular, of the commitment, as appropriate, to further adopt and implement measures to ensure the social and legal inclusion and protection of women migrants, including women migrant workers in countries of origin, transit and destination, promote and protect the full realization of their human rights and their protection against violence and exploitation, implement gender-sensitive policies and programmes for women migrant workers and provide safe and legal channels that recognize their skills and education, provide fair labour conditions and, as appropriate, facilitate their productive employment and decent work as well as integration into the labour force,

*Recalling* the declaration of the United Nations High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development,<sup>9</sup> held on 3 and 4 October 2013, which reaffirmed the need to promote and protect effectively the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants, regardless of their migration status, especially those of women and children, and to address international migration through international, regional or bilateral cooperation and dialogue and through a comprehensive and balanced approach, recognizing the roles and responsibilities of countries of origin, transit and destination in promoting and protecting the human rights of all migrants and avoiding approaches that might aggravate their vulnerability,

*Recalling also* that the declaration recognized that women and girls account for almost half of all international migrants at the global level and the need to address the special situation and vulnerability of migrant women and girls by, inter alia, incorporating a gender perspective into policies and strengthening national laws, institutions and programmes to combat gender-based violence, including trafficking in persons and discrimination against them, and emphasized in this regard the need to establish appropriate measures for the protection of women migrant workers in all sectors, including those involved in domestic work,

*Welcoming* the adoption of Convention No. 189 and Recommendation No. 201 on decent work for domestic workers by the International Labour Conference on 16 June 2011, at its 100th session, and the entry of the Convention into force on 5 September 2013, and inviting States to consider ratifying it, encouraging States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women<sup>10</sup> to take note of and consider general recommendation No. 26 on women migrant workers adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination

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<sup>7</sup> UNW/2013/6.

<sup>8</sup> See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2013, Supplement No. 7 (E/2013/27)*, chap. I, sect. A.

<sup>9</sup> Resolution 68/4.

<sup>10</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1249, No. 20378.

against Women in November 2008,<sup>11</sup> and encouraging States parties to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families<sup>12</sup> to take note of and consider general comment No. 1 on migrant domestic workers adopted by the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families in December 2010,<sup>13</sup> acknowledging that they are complementary and mutually reinforcing,

*Recognizing* the increasing participation of women in international migration, driven in large part by socioeconomic factors, and that this feminization of migration requires greater gender sensitivity in all policies and efforts related to the subject of international migration,

*Stressing* the shared responsibility of and need for cooperation among all stakeholders, in particular countries of origin, transit and destination, relevant regional and international organizations, the private sector and civil society, in promoting an environment that prevents and addresses violence against women migrant workers, including in the context of discrimination, through targeted measures, and in this regard recognizing the importance of joint and collaborative approaches and strategies at the national, bilateral, regional and international levels,

*Recognizing* that women migrant workers are important contributors to social and economic development through the economic and social impacts, as a result of their work, on countries of origin and destination, and underlining the value and dignity of their labour, including the labour of domestic workers,

*Recognizing also* the particular vulnerability and needs of women and their children at all stages of the migration process, extending from the moment of deciding to migrate, and including transit, engagement in formal and informal employment and integration into the host society, as well as during their return to and reintegration in their countries of origin,

*Expressing deep concern* at the continuing reports of grave abuses and violence committed against migrant women and girls, including gender-based violence, sexual violence, domestic and family violence, racist and xenophobic acts, discrimination, abusive labour practices, exploitative conditions of work and contemporary forms of slavery, inter alia, all forms of forced labour and trafficking in persons,

*Recognizing* that the intersection of, inter alia, gender, age, class, race and ethnic discrimination and stereotypes can compound the discrimination faced by women migrant workers and that gender-based violence is a form of discrimination,

*Reaffirming* the commitment to protect and promote the human rights of all women, including, without discrimination, indigenous women who migrate for work, and in this regard noting the attention paid in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples<sup>14</sup> to the elimination of all forms of violence and discrimination against indigenous women, as appropriate,

*Noting* that the priority theme of the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women will be “Challenges and achievements in the implementation of

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<sup>11</sup> *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/64/38)*, part one, annex I, decision 42/I.

<sup>12</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2220, No. 39481.

<sup>13</sup> CMW/C/GC/1.

<sup>14</sup> Resolution 61/295, annex.

the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls” and that migration can enable equitable, inclusive and sustainable growth and human development for countries of origin and destination, migrants and their families, and in this regard recognizing the potential role and contribution of women migrant workers towards accelerating progress in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and attaining equitable, inclusive and sustainable growth and human development,

*Concerned* that many migrant women who are employed in the informal economy and in less skilled work are especially vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, underlining in this regard the obligation of States to protect the human rights of migrants so as to prevent and address abuse and exploitation, and observing with concern that many women migrant workers take on jobs for which they may be overqualified and in which, at the same time, they may be more vulnerable because of poor pay and inadequate social protection,

*Emphasizing* the need for objective, comprehensive and broad-based information, including sex- and age-disaggregated data and statistics, and gender-sensitive indicators for research and analysis, and a wide exchange of experience and lessons learned by individual Member States and civil society in the formulation of targeted policies and concrete strategies to specifically address violence against women migrant workers, including in the context of discrimination,

*Realizing* that the movement of a significant number of women migrant workers may be facilitated and made possible by means of fraudulent or irregular documentation and sham marriages with the object of migration, that this may be facilitated through, inter alia, the Internet and that those women migrant workers are more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation,

*Recognizing* the importance of exploring the link between migration and trafficking in persons in order to further efforts towards protecting women migrant workers from violence, discrimination, exploitation and abuse,

*Encouraged* by some measures adopted by some countries of destination to alleviate the plight of women migrant workers residing in their areas of jurisdiction and to promote access to justice, such as the establishment of gender-sensitive protection mechanisms for migrant workers, facilitating their access to mechanisms for reporting complaints or providing assistance during legal proceedings,

*Underlining* the important role of relevant United Nations treaty bodies in monitoring the implementation of human rights conventions and of the relevant special procedures, within their respective mandates, in addressing the problem of violence against women migrant workers and in protecting and promoting their human rights and welfare,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the report of the Secretary-General;<sup>15</sup>
2. *Invites* Member States to consider ratifying relevant International Labour Organization conventions, including Convention No. 189 on decent work for domestic workers, and to consider signing and ratifying or acceding to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families,<sup>12</sup> the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime,<sup>16</sup> the Protocol against

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<sup>15</sup> A/68/178.

<sup>16</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2237, No. 39574.

the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime,<sup>17</sup> the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons<sup>18</sup> and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness,<sup>19</sup> as well as all other human rights treaties that contribute to the protection of the rights of women migrant workers, and also encourages Member States to implement the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons;<sup>20</sup>

3. *Takes note* of the reports of the Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on the human rights of migrants submitted to the Council at its seventeenth and twentieth sessions,<sup>21</sup> in particular their elaboration of the vulnerabilities and challenges faced by irregular migrants, including negative public perceptions and limited access to protection, assistance and justice;

4. *Encourages* all United Nations special rapporteurs on human rights whose mandates touch on the issues of violence against women migrant workers to improve the collection of information on and analysis of those areas within their mandates relating to the current challenges facing women migrant workers, and also encourages Governments to cooperate with the special rapporteurs in this regard;

5. *Calls upon* all Governments to incorporate a human rights, gender-sensitive and people-centred perspective in legislation, policies and programmes on international migration and on labour and employment, consistent with their human rights obligations and commitments under human rights instruments, for the prevention of and protection of migrant women against violence and discrimination, exploitation and abuse, to take effective measures to ensure that such migration and labour policies do not reinforce discrimination, and, where necessary, to conduct impact assessment studies of such legislation, policies and programmes in order to identify the impact of measures taken and the results achieved in regard to women migrant workers;

6. *Calls upon* Governments to adopt or strengthen measures to protect the human rights of women migrant workers, including domestic workers, regardless of their immigration status, including in policies that regulate the recruitment and deployment of women migrant workers, to consider expanding dialogue among States on devising innovative methods to promote legal channels of migration, inter alia, in order to deter irregular migration, to consider incorporating a gender perspective into immigration laws in order to prevent discrimination and violence against women, including in independent, circular and temporary migration, and to consider permitting, in accordance with national legislation, women migrant workers who are victims of violence to apply for residency permits independently of abusive employers or spouses, and to eliminate abusive sponsorship systems;

7. *Urges* Governments to enhance bilateral, regional, interregional and international cooperation to address violence against women migrant workers, fully respecting international law, including international human rights law, as well as to strengthen efforts to reduce the vulnerability of women migrant workers by facilitating effective access to justice and effective action in the areas of law

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., vol. 2241, No. 39574.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., vol. 360, No. 5158.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., vol. 989, No. 14458.

<sup>20</sup> Resolution 64/293.

<sup>21</sup> A/HRC/17/33 and A/HRC/20/24.

enforcement, prosecution, prevention, capacity-building and victim protection and support, by exchanging information and good practices in combating violence and discrimination against women migrant workers and by fostering sustainable development alternatives to migration in countries of origin;

8. *Also urges* Governments to take into account the best interests of the child by adopting or strengthening measures to promote and protect the human rights of migrant girls, including unaccompanied girls, regardless of their immigration status, so as to prevent labour and economic exploitation, discrimination, sexual harassment, violence and sexual abuse in the workplace, including in domestic work;

9. *Further urges* Governments to strongly encourage all stakeholders, especially the private sector, including employment agencies involved in recruiting women migrant workers, to strengthen the focus on and funding support for the prevention of violence against women migrant workers, in particular by promoting the access of women to meaningful and gender-sensitive information and education on, inter alia, the costs and benefits of migration, rights and benefits to which they are entitled in the countries of origin and employment, overall conditions in countries of employment and procedures for legal migration, as well as to ensure that laws and policies governing recruiters, employers and intermediaries promote adherence to and respect for the human rights of migrant workers, particularly women;

10. *Encourages* all States to remove obstacles that may prevent the transparent, safe, unrestricted and expeditious transfer of remittances of migrants to their countries of origin or to any other countries, including, where appropriate, by reducing transaction costs and implementing woman-friendly remittance transfer, savings and investment schemes, including diaspora investment schemes, in conformity with applicable national legislation, and to consider, as appropriate, measures to solve other problems that may impede women migrant workers' access to and management of their economic resources;

11. *Calls upon* States to address the structural and underlying causes of violence against women migrant workers through education, dissemination of information and awareness-raising, by promoting their empowerment and, where relevant, their integration into the formal economy, in particular in economic decision-making, and by promoting their participation in public life, as appropriate;

12. *Calls upon* Governments to recognize the right of women migrant workers, regardless of their immigration status, to have access to emergency health care, and in this regard to ensure that women migrant workers are not discriminated against on the grounds of pregnancy and childbirth and, in accordance with national legislation, to address the vulnerabilities to HIV experienced by migrant populations and support their access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support;

13. *Urges* States that have not yet done so to adopt and implement legislation and policies that protect all women migrant workers, including those in domestic service, to include therein, and improve where necessary, relevant monitoring and inspection measures in line with applicable International Labour Organization conventions and other instruments to ensure compliance with international obligations and to grant women migrant workers in domestic service access to gender-sensitive, transparent mechanisms for bringing complaints against employers, including terminating their contracts in case of labour and economic exploitation, discrimination, sexual harassment, violence and sexual abuse in the workplace, while stressing that such instruments should not punish women migrant

workers, and calls upon States to promptly investigate and punish all violations of their rights;

14. *Calls upon* Governments, in cooperation with international organizations, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and other stakeholders, to provide women migrant workers who are victims of violence, irrespective of their immigration status, in line with domestic legislation, with the full range of emergency assistance and protection and, to the extent possible, gender-sensitive services that are culturally and linguistically appropriate, in accordance with relevant international human rights instruments and applicable conventions;

15. *Also calls upon* Governments to ensure that legislative provisions and judicial processes are in place for women's access to justice, to enhance, develop or maintain legal frameworks and specific gender-sensitive policies to explicitly meet the needs and rights of women migrant workers and to take appropriate steps to reform existing legislation and policies to capture their needs and protect their rights;

16. *Further calls upon* Governments, in particular those of the countries of origin and destination, to put in place penal and criminal sanctions, in order to punish perpetrators of violence against women migrant workers and intermediaries, and gender-sensitive redress and justice mechanisms that victims can access effectively and that allow their views and concerns to be presented and considered at appropriate stages of proceedings, including other measures that will allow victims to be present during the judicial process, when possible, and to protect women migrant workers who are victims of violence from revictimization, including by authorities;

17. *Urges* all States to adopt effective measures to put an end to the arbitrary arrest and detention of women migrant workers and to take action to prevent and punish any form of illegal deprivation of the liberty of women migrant workers by individuals or groups;

18. *Encourages* Governments to formulate and implement training programmes for their law enforcement officials, immigration officers and border officials, diplomatic and consular officials, judiciary, prosecutors, public sector medical staff and other service providers, with a view to sensitizing those public sector workers to the issue of violence against women migrant workers and imparting to them the necessary skills and attitude to ensure the delivery of proper, professional and gender-sensitive interventions;

19. *Also encourages* Governments to promote coherence between migration, labour and anti-trafficking policies and programmes concerning women migrant workers, based on a human rights, gender-sensitive and people-centred perspective, to ensure that the human rights of women migrant workers are protected throughout the migration process and to enhance efforts to prevent violence against women migrant workers, prosecute perpetrators and protect and support victims and their families;

20. *Calls upon* States, in accordance with the provisions of article 36 of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations,<sup>22</sup> to ensure that, if a woman migrant worker is arrested or committed to prison or custody pending trial, or is detained in any other manner, the competent authorities respect her freedom to communicate

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<sup>22</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 596, No. 8638.

with and have access to the consular officials of the country of her nationality and, in this regard, to inform without delay, if that woman migrant worker so requests, the consular post of her State of nationality;

21. *Invites* the United Nations system and other concerned intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to cooperate with Governments, within existing resources, towards a better understanding of the issues concerning women and international migration, and to improve the collection, dissemination and analysis of sex- and age-disaggregated data and information in order to assist in the formulation of migration and labour policies that are, inter alia, gender-sensitive and that protect human rights, as well as to aid in policy assessment and to continue to support national efforts to address violence against women migrant workers in a coordinated way that ensures effective implementation, enhances their impact and strengthens positive outcomes for women migrant workers;

22. *Encourages* Governments to formulate national policies concerning women migrant workers that are based on up-to-date, relevant sex-disaggregated data and analysis, in close consultation with women migrant workers and relevant stakeholders throughout the policy process, and also encourages Governments to ensure that this process is adequately resourced and that the resulting policies have measurable targets and indicators, timetables and monitoring and accountability measures, in particular for employment agencies, employers and public officials, and provide for impact assessments and ensure multi-sector coordination within and between countries of origin, transit and destination through appropriate mechanisms;

23. *Encourages* concerned Governments, in particular those of the countries of origin, transit and destination, to avail themselves of the expertise of the United Nations, including the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), to develop and enhance appropriate sex-disaggregated national data collection, analysis and dissemination methodologies that will generate comparable data, and tracking and reporting systems on violence against women migrant workers and, wherever possible, on violations of their rights at all stages of the migration process, and:

(a) To further study the costs of violence against women, including migrant workers, to the women themselves, their families and their communities;

(b) To analyse the opportunities available to women migrant workers and their impact on development;

(c) To support the improvement of macrodata on remittances, for appropriate policy formulation and implementation;

24. *Requests* Governments and international organizations to take appropriate measures to give due consideration to the declaration of the United Nations High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development,<sup>9</sup> held in New York on 3 and 4 October 2013, in order to ensure that the human rights and human development aspects of women's migration are adequately integrated into national, regional and international development policy and practice, such as poverty reduction strategies and strategies aimed at accelerating progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals;

25. *Encourages* the United Nations system and related entities to continue and step up their efforts and promote partnerships with all stakeholders, including civil society organizations, and to coordinate their work in support, as appropriate,



of effective implementation of relevant international and regional instruments in order to enhance their impact through concrete positive outcomes for the advancement of women migrant workers' rights;

26. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide a comprehensive, analytical and thematic report to the General Assembly at its seventieth session on the problem of violence against women migrant workers and on the implementation of the present resolution, taking into account updated information from the organizations of the United Nations system, in particular the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Development Programme, UN-Women and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, as well as the reports of special rapporteurs that refer to the situation of women migrant workers and other relevant sources, such as the International Organization for Migration, including non-governmental organizations.

*70th plenary meeting  
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