



Inter-Parliamentary Union
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133rd IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS

Geneva, 17 - 21 October 2015

Women's experiences as migrants and refugees: human rights and socioeconomic perspectives

Panel debate of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians
as a contribution to the General Debate at the 133rd Assembly

Saturday, 17 October 2015
4:30 – 6 p.m., Room 2, level 0, CICG

The Meeting of Women Parliamentarians will hold a panel discussion on the gender dimensions of migration in order to address the theme of the 133rd IPU Assembly General Debate, "The moral and economic imperative for fairer, smarter and more humane migration". The main conclusions of the discussion will feed into the Assembly's subsequent General Debate and its outcome document.

The discussion will focus on: (a) the gender-specific push and pull factors of women's labour and forced migration, (b) the particular opportunities and challenges migration represents for women and (c) measures to protect women's human rights as migrants, asylum seekers or refugees.

In recent years, women have been increasingly migrating for economic reasons. However they are mainly employed in the informal economy which rarely offers the same guarantees as other types of work. As domestic workers, women are particularly exposed to abuse by recruiters and employers, and may find it difficult to seek protection from the State. Female migrants who work abroad often face separation from their family but can also provide hope by ensuring their relatives' livelihood.

In many instances, women migrate to flee persecution for political or other reasons. They are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence during conflict and as they flee. Other specific threats they face include trafficking, forced marriage and so-called "honour" crimes. These risks and the traumatic experiences of women, either at home or during migration, require specific attention in asylum procedures, as well as in resettlement, reception and integration schemes.

Two panellists will be invited to address the gender dimensions of migration and the best ways to respond to the particular challenges women face as they migrate to work or to seek refuge.

1. *CEDAW and the State's duty to fulfil the human rights of women in forced migration.*
Ms Ismat Jahan, UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
2. *Women's experiences as migrant workers: opportunities and challenges.*
Mr Laurent de Boeck, International Organization for Migration (IOM)

This sitting of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians will be held on Saturday, 17 October, tentatively from 4.30 to 6 p.m.



MPs attending the meeting are invited to address the following questions:

1. What can parliaments do to ensure that migration and asylum-related laws and policies are responsive to the specific needs of women and girls?
2. How can migrant women's contributions to host societies and countries of origin best be highlighted and valued?
3. Which countries of origin, transit and destination provide the best examples of support to migrant women through gender-sensitive social, economic and legal measures?
4. What can parliaments do to foster international cooperation and concerted action on women's migration?