



IOM International Organization for Migration
OIM Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations
OIM Organización Internacional para las Migraciones

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**STATEMENT
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Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) appreciates the opportunity to address this Committee today in relation *inter alia* to the Secretary General's reports on "Eliminating Violence against women" and "Trafficking of Women and Girls".

Almost half of the 214 million migrants in the world today are women. While women have always migrated as accompanying spouses and family members, contemporary migration dynamics have shown a considerable increase in the number of women migrating independently to pursue opportunities of their own. Labour migration may benefit women through economic as well as socio-cultural empowerment. However, migrating women are also much more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. And it is for this reason that we would like to support the Secretary General in his call for reinforcement of *"information and awareness-raising campaigns, educational programmes and other initiatives aimed at preventing and eliminating violence against women [...] to ensure that they are systematic, sustained and extended throughout all areas of the country, and target particular groups of women, such as immigrants, rural and indigenous women, women from ethnic minorities, and women with disabilities."*

There is a clear continued need to raise the awareness of aspiring migrants and vulnerable groups in origin countries to, *inter alia*, safe migration options, the risks of irregular migration, and mechanisms available to ensure protection of their rights in countries of transit and destination. Due to their dual vulnerability as migrants and as women, women are still disproportionately affected by a range of risks arising from their mobility. During every stage of their migratory experience, women migrants are often more exposed to human rights violations compared to their male counterparts. They frequently have to deal with difficult

living and working conditions, increased health risks, a lack of access to social services and various forms of abuse such as the confiscation of passports by their employers. Women migrant workers often work in gender segregated sectors – such as home and child or elder care – that are largely informal and unregulated therefore offering them little or no protection. These women tend to have limited or no bargaining power and few or no opportunities for establishing networks to receive information and social support. Women migrant workers in an irregular status are particularly vulnerable to harassment, intimidation or threats as well as economic and sexual exploitation including trafficking and racial discrimination. Often times, they face incarceration and/or deportation if they attempt to leave their employer.

It is important to keep in mind that fighting human trafficking is also a labour market-question: in many cases, economic growth has not been matched by the evolution of migration policies that are able to facilitate and satisfy the demand for cheap labour and services in destination countries. It is the tension between the intense demand for labour and services on the one hand, coupled with too few legal migration channels on the other that creates opportunities for intermediaries such as human traffickers to step into the breach. IOM strongly believes that the demand for migrant workers needs to be matched with legal, safe, humane and orderly migration channels, and with migration management policies both within and between origin and destination countries that protect the rights of all migrants.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me briefly turn to the Secretary General's report on Trafficking of women and girls. IOM is pleased that the Secretary-General calls on States to "*continue and strengthen their efforts to improve the collection of data on trafficking in women and girls. Statistical data should be disaggregated by sex, race, age, ethnicity and other relevant characteristics. Methodologies of data collection should be enhanced and harmonized, and qualitative research intensified.*"

IOM manages and operates a global human trafficking database. With over 15,000 trafficking cases recorded, this information management system is the largest source of primary data on human trafficking in the world and serves as an invaluable tool for identifying, analyzing and better understanding causes, processes, trends and consequences of human trafficking.

Building on the expertise and experience developed in this field, IOM is currently strengthening the data collection and analysis capacity of interested governments and NGOs with an overall objective of harmonization of approaches. Examples of this are recent guidelines developed for the European Union on Human Trafficking and cooperation with other actors on development of indicators. IOM is implementing similar evidence-enhancing work in Latin America, the Middle East, Asia and Africa. This work on data collection and analysis, of course, complements the work on assistance to victims of trafficking as well as technical assistance work with governments and other partners on legislation, training of officials and more.

To conclude, Mr. Chairman, IOM is committed to the most vulnerable and remains dedicated to working resourcefully and effectively with governments and other partners.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman