



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

*Check against delivery*

**STATEMENT**

**BY**

**MS MICHELE KLEIN SOLOMON  
PERMANENT OBSERVER**

**AT THE 67<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
AGENDA ITEM 28: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN**

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Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Constituting nearly half of the 214 million international migrants in the world today, women increasingly move on their own. They seek a life with security, opportunity, dignity and rights. Migration empowers women, and at the same time these women empower society. Education, work experience and economic independence abroad can enable them to exercise their rights more effectively

At the same time however, it cannot be ignored that migrant women face specific vulnerabilities as well. While on the move, women are more exposed to the risk of exploitation and gender based violence than men. As a result, they face dual vulnerabilities as women and as migrants

The International Organization for Migration, as the principal intergovernmental organization working on migration, believes that migration can be an empowering experience for women. IOM is therefore committed to ensure that the particular needs of all migrant women are identified

Mr. Chairman, the reports of the Secretary General offer a valuable opportunity to take stock of progress made and to draw lessons for the future. In this regard, I would like to take up three points that merit our attention

1 The Human Rights of Migrant Women

First, as is stated very clearly in the reports of the Secretary-General, States have an obligation under international human rights law to protect against human rights abuses within their territory and/or jurisdiction. The universality of human rights makes these rights applicable to every human being, to men and women, to citizens and non-citizens, to nationals and migrants. This means that no one can be left out or ignored. When talking about migrant women, it is important to realize that at all times, migrant women's rights are human rights. Human rights

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**Permanent Observer to the United Nations**

122 East 42<sup>nd</sup> Street • Chanin Building • 48<sup>th</sup> Floor • New York, NY 10168-1610  
Tel (212) 681-7000 • Fax (212) 867-5887 • E-mail [unobserver@iom.int](mailto:unobserver@iom.int) • Internet [www.iom.int](http://www.iom.int)

are critical to our ability to manage migration flows in a manner that best serves the national interests of host and home countries and migrant women themselves, enabling women to empower society.

A human-rights-based approach is also essential in our endeavors to counter human trafficking.

## 2. Countering Trafficking of Women

This brings me to my second point. Due to their dual vulnerability as migrants and as women, *women are still disproportionately affected by a range of risks arising from their mobility* Actions have been taken at all levels to combat trafficking in persons and considerable progress has been made on the legislative front Yet, prosecution rates remain low, while the number of trafficking victims is on the rise. Trafficking in persons remains the world's third most profitable criminal activity.

Of particular concern to IOM is the detaining of victims of trafficking as irregular migrants. We strongly believe that States must protect victims from prosecution for irregular migration, and we therefore welcome this recommendation by the Secretary General.

IOM would also like to underline the recommendation from the Secretary General outlined in both reports on human trafficking This regards the need of States to intensify capacity-building and training of all relevant stakeholders, including immigration officers, border officials, the police, and labour inspectors. International cooperation among States should be increased in identifying victims of human trafficking.

It is important to note however, that not only States bear this responsibility. Increased partnerships between all actors are necessary. The fight in trafficking in persons has been waged for the most part by governments, intergovernmental actors and NGOs. But with the rise in the number of cases of labour trafficking, the proactive involvement of the private sector is essential IOM is working directly with private recruitment agencies, employers and migrant workers associations to establish standards that prevent abuse at all stages of the migration cycle

In conclusion, to manage migration for the benefit of all requires cooperation amongst all. *Migrant women empower society and we should all work together to create an environment in which they are free to do so.*

By putting more efforts in the protection of the human rights of migrant women, in countering human trafficking, and in building partnerships, we can all play a role in the advancement of women, enabling them to use their potential in a way that benefits them and the whole of society.