



**ADDRESSING
WOMEN MIGRANT WORKER
VULNERABILITIES
IN INTERNATIONAL
SUPPLY CHAINS**

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INTRODUCTION

The number of women migrating as a result of economic and cultural opportunities is on the rise globally. The lack of jobs in countries of origin coupled with an increase in global demand for workers in largely feminized sectors, such as domestic work, textiles and manufacturing, means that businesses actively look to recruit women workers to address market gaps in international supply chains. Women migrant workers' labour participation contribute significantly to the economic and social development in both countries of origin and destination, and their contributions can be scaled and multiplied if their rights are protected.

Under the [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#) (UNGPs) all types of businesses have a responsibility to prevent, address and remedy human rights abuses committed in business operations. For businesses employing women migrant workers, this includes the specific forms of discrimination, risks and vulnerabilities experienced by women migrant workers. This brief aims to introduce and describe these vulnerabilities¹ and suggest actions that the private sector, employers and recruitment agencies can take to uphold the human and labour rights of women migrant

workers in international supply chains. The brief is divided into the following sections:

- Women migrant vulnerabilities are linked to low-wage business activity
- Discrimination and exploitation of women migrant workers
- International frameworks guiding corporate responsibility in protecting women migrant workers' rights
- How businesses can be gender-responsive and address inequality in their supply chains

Addressing and eliminating gender discrimination in the recruitment and employment of migrant workers contribute to the realization of [the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development](#), with emphasis on the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) [5; Gender Equality](#), [Goal 8; Decent Work and Economic Growth](#), and [Goal 10; Reduced Inequalities](#).

Vulnerabilities of women migrant workers exacerbated by COVID-19

While governments globally try to contain COVID-19, women migrant workers are at the forefront of negative impacts of the global closure. The effects of the pandemic on women migrant workers are compounded as they are generally over-represented in the informal economy. At the same time, women migrant workers have been instrumental in essential services for the COVID-19 response globally.

These impacts also vary across industries - from the services or manufacturing sector workers who have lost their source of income to domestic workers facing increased working hours with no overtime or provisions for rest days - COVID-19 negatively impacts their wellbeing. In addition, women migrant workers may experience additional vulnerabilities such as increased levels of domestic violence or sexual harassment, exclusion from healthcare services, restricted freedom of movement, wage loss or theft, and increased likelihood of becoming irregular migrants with limited options for safe return.

The increase in unemployment also means that more migrant workers have become vulnerable to these types of exploitation. Preparing systems to monitor and address such imbalances should be part of any response to COVID-19, both in immediate relief efforts as well as in the mid- and longer term, when economic demand for a migrant workforce once again rises.

¹While men migrant workers also face risks and vulnerabilities during labour migration, this brief focuses on the specific vulnerabilities that women migrant workers may face.

WOMEN MIGRANT VULNERABILITIES ARE LINKED TO LOW-WAGE BUSINESS ACTIVITY

Almost one in every two international migrants today is a woman. Despite significant gender-based barriers to labour migration, 41.6 per cent of the world's 164 million migrant workers are women.² In Asia and the Pacific, intra-regional migration of women is highly significant both within the region, where women migrant workers constitute 56.1 per cent of migrant workers³, and of the total migration beyond the region⁴.

While labour migration often enhances women's economic opportunities and offer avenues for greater autonomy and empowerment, many women migrant workers – particularly those in low-wage and low-skill occupations – face unique barriers to decent work and social protection. In countries of origin, perpetuated perceptions of women's role in the home and the workplace, and restrictions on women migrants' mobility can result in women using alternative, riskier and more dangerous transit routes. Such restrictions include, e.g., legal requirements of spousal consent for a woman's travel and employment abroad.

During recruitment, gender norms and common perceptions of typical roles of women and men in the division of labour cause discrimination during recruitment and employment. The sectors in which women tend to be employed are within the domestic and care-giving space. Women migrant workers often fill labour demands for informal and precarious low-wage jobs in sectors such as agriculture and domestic work, where there is often already a lack of protective labour legislation, labour standards and no protection policies from discrimination, abuse and exploitation.⁵ These sectors also tend to be under-regulated and less visible, which means the rights of women at work are less likely to be enforced.⁶

In certain contexts, migration and employment laws place further restrictions on potential women migrant workers, for instance if spousal consent is required, or where it is a requirement related to dependent children for employment of the migrant worker.

When migration is well-managed and gender-responsive, returning migrants can bring back valuable skills and experience gained from working abroad. However, those who have been subjected to various forms of gender-based violence, sexual harassment or exploitation often face long-lasting health problems or stigmatization and are likely unable to apply these skills and experience. Further complicating the process of reintegration, women migrant workers returning home may face unique challenges in their community of origin due to, among other things, misperceptions of possible employment during migration or returning to roles they occupied prior to leaving for employment.⁷



² International Labour Organization, ILO Global Estimates on International Migrant Workers (2017). Available from: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_652029.pdf

³ Ibid.

⁴ International Organization for Migration and Migration Policy Institute, Women's Labour Migration from Asia and the Pacific: Opportunities and Challenges (Bangkok and Washington D.C. 2015). Available from: <https://publications.iom.int/books/iom-mpi-issue-brief-no-12-womens-labour-migration-asia-and-pacific-opportunities-and>

⁵ UN Women, Women Migrant Workers' Journey Through the Margins: Labour, Migration and Trafficking (2016). Available from: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/2/women-migrant-workers-journey-through-the-margins>

⁶ Overseas Development Institute. Women on the Move. Available from: <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/10731.pdf>

⁷ International Organization for Migration and Migration Policy Institute, Women's Labour Migration from Asia and the Pacific: Opportunities and Challenges (Bangkok and Washington D.C. 2015). Available from: <https://publications.iom.int/books/iom-mpi-issue-brief-no-12-womens-labour-migration-asia-and-pacific-opportunities-and>

Focus on Returnee Women Migrant Workers in Nepal

In Nepal, research on returnee women migrant workers found that prevailing gender norms create unique barriers and challenges for women migrant workers from the migration decision to the decision to return home.

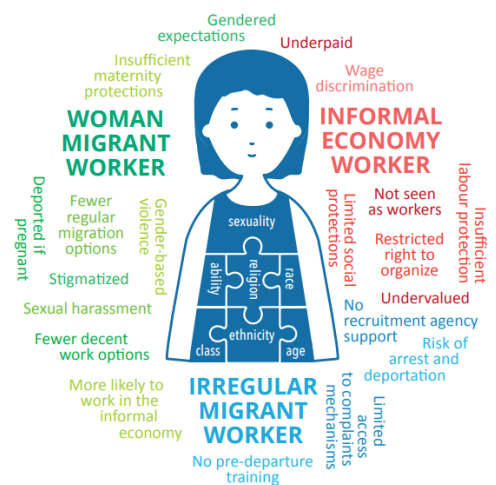
- The decision to migrate is influenced by household factors, mainly economic – 55 per cent of women returnees migrated to improve their economic situation. Women in Nepal often have less access than men to well paid jobs as a result of low education level and skills. 24 per cent of women returnees sought to improve their children's future and 24 per cent went abroad to service debts at home.
- Migration was also found to be an opportunity for women to break free from repressive social norms and stigmas. In some cases, women were documented to be survivors of domestic violence perpetrated by their partners.
- During their employment abroad, 25 per cent of women returnees reported that they changed jobs to escape abusive situations. Most interviewees reported issues such as forced work without days-off (62%), leave denial (58%), long working hours (47%), confiscation of passports (45%), physical and verbal abuse from employers (32%), and sexual abuse (less than 2%). The problems are aggravated by women's lack of means to report, low access to legal aid, and linguistic and cultural barriers.
- The decision to return home is bound by gender norms surrounding division of labour and pressure from families. Many women returnees returned home to resume their domestic and care work in the family once the family's economic condition improved.
- The research also finds that women returnees' migration experience does not help them find better employment upon return due to gendered division of roles and responsibilities in the household and communities; lower access to productive inputs (land and credit); and gender discrimination in the labour markets.

Source: UN Women 2018, Report on "Returning home: challenges and opportunities for women migrant workers in the Nepali labour market"

DISCRIMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF WOMEN MIGRANT WORKERS

Of the 25 million people in forced labour, women and girls account for 71 per cent of victims, with much of this practice occurring in Asia and the Pacific. Further, more women than men are affected by forced labour in the private economy, where half the victims are also subjected to debt bondage, an industry practice where workers must pay for their right to work, due to recruitment fees and costs paid by the worker.⁸ This proportion increases above 70 per cent for those who work in the domestic sector or manufacturing.

Women migrant workers are often exposed to 'triple discrimination' - as women, as unprotected workers and as migrants. Ethnicity and race can be additional factors to exacerbate the discrimination, which impacts women's well-being and participation in the workplace.⁹ Inequality based on ingrained gender norms often determines the types of work that women do.



⁸International Labour Organization, Walk Free Foundation and International Organization for Migration, Global Estimates of Modern Slavery (Geneva, 2017). Available from: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_575479.pdf

For example, in apparel factories, lower-paid stitching and sewing positions tend to be occupied by women while higher-paid positions in maintenance, security, supervision and management are overwhelmingly held by men.¹⁰ The concentration of women in informal or unregulated employment, often at the bottom of labour-intensive global supply chains, means they are more exposed to economic downturns and are most likely first to lose their jobs in a crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic.¹¹

The lack of women's representation in management positions limits safe spaces in the workplace for communication and limits the ability of women to report cases of abuse or sexual harassment. Furthermore, discrimination towards women during the employment lifecycle can contribute to limiting their opportunities in the labour market. Certain events such as pregnancy and childbirth, can result in a loss of income.¹² Workplace insurance policies that fail to respond to such gender discrimination perpetuate gender inequalities. Finally, given the limited freedom to organize or unionize and the additional barriers in accessing grievance mechanisms in the lower tiers of global supply chains, women migrant workers are not protected from exploitation or given the mechanisms, tools, or opportunities to claim their rights.

The reality of the experience of women migrant workers shows the importance of the role of businesses, suppliers,

employers and recruitment agencies in eliminating institutional discrimination and exploitation of women in their supply chains. While pursuing gender equality benefits employers by increasing productivity of their female workforce and decreasing staff turnover¹³, there is a lack of awareness of the barriers of entry and the disproportionate effects of unethical recruitment practices on women.

Businesses and suppliers often overlook mainstreaming gender concerns in their internal business practices including in procurement, recruitment and management. Existing management systems, for example, may not collect gender-disaggregated staff data that may help identify risks and vulnerabilities faced by their women workers.¹⁴ It is also rare to see policies that specifically prohibit gender discrimination, making behavioural change from suppliers and recruiters unlikely.¹⁵

These areas described above illustrate potential entry points where an inclusive management approach, involving the key actors within the supply chain, may contribute to the empowerment of women and improvement of their migration channels and increased respect for their human and labour rights. Adopting a gender-sensitive approach to employing migrant workers will also support employers to comply with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Gender-sensitive due diligence

Due diligence is an on-going, proactive and reactive process through which businesses can identify, prevent, mitigate and account for how they address their actual and potential adverse impacts as an integral part of business decision making and risk management systems.

While due diligence exercises have grown more sophisticated, there is still significant room for improvement in standard risk assessments. Adopting an approach that includes gender-awareness will take into account potential human rights risks that primarily affect women. This leads to appropriate mitigating measures to ensure inclusive migrant worker protection.

Action Aid, Due diligence laws must not leave women behind. Available from: <https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/due-diligence-laws-must-not-leave-women-behind>

⁹Taran, P. (2016) President Global Migration Policy Associates, "Migrant Women, Women Migrant Workers. Crucial challenges for Rights-based Action and Advocacy", statement to the OHCHR-UN Women side event to 64th Session of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Geneva, 21 July 2016. Available from <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CMW/SideEvent2016/PatrickTaran.pdf>

¹⁰Verité, "Women at work in global supply chains", 15 March 2017. Available from <https://www.verite.org/women-work-global-supply-chains/>

¹¹International Labour Organization and Asian Development Bank, Women and labour markets in Asia (Bangkok 2011). Available from: <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/28620/women-labor-markets.pdf>

¹²International Labour Organization, Social Protection Floors and gender equality: A brief overview (Geneva, 2013). Available from <https://www.social-protection.org/gimi/gess/ShowResource.action?ressource.ressourceld=39137>

¹³Ethical Trading Initiative, The majority of workers, yet among the most vulnerable. Available from: <https://www.ethicaltrade.org/issues/gender-equity-global-supply-chains>

¹⁴BSR, Making Women Workers Count (2019).

¹⁵<https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2019/03/gender-responsive-self-assessment>

INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORKS GUIDING CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY IN PROTECTING WOMEN MIGRANT WORKERS' RIGHTS

Translating policies into practical implementation means ensuring that due diligence is migrant-centred and gender-responsive. The labour migration process should entail specific practices and principles that support women in recognizing and exercising their rights through recruitment, deployment, employment and return or remigration.

Several international frameworks outline the responsibilities of businesses and governments in protecting the rights of women migrant workers.

UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs)

Endorsed by the United Nations in 2011, the UNGPs consist of a set of guidelines for governments and companies to prevent, address and remedy human rights abuses committed in their global supply chains. The UNGPs enjoy widespread support and are backed and implemented by governments and businesses on every continent.

Recognizing that women face unique and disproportionate negative impacts from corporate misconduct, a gender framework was developed to provide clarity on how to respond to women's specific experiences in each of the

31 UNGP principles.¹⁶ The framework sets out ways in which states must further integrate and institutionalize women's rights in regulating enterprises through the overall human rights lens, and how businesses can actively implement gender-responsive actions in their operations. For example, the guidance calls on businesses to integrate gender equality policies across all departments and operations, and for states to set progressive targets in monitoring and evaluation systems and actively involve women and women's organizations in the implementation of UNGPs.

The Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs)

The WEPs, established by the UN Global Compact and UN Women, are a set of seven principles that offer guidance to businesses on how to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace. By signing the WEPs, businesses take the first step to transform their organization and demonstrate their commitment to gender equality.

To date, more than 2,000 companies committed to the WEPs.¹⁷ The WEPs Gender Gap Analysis Tool, developed in 2017, supports companies with the implementation of the WEPs by helping companies to identify strengths, gaps and opportunities to improve their performance on gender equality.¹⁸

Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

CEDAW's General Recommendation 26 on Women Migrant Workers (GR26), adopted in 2008 by the United Nation General Assembly, provides specific recommendations for governments on how to protect and fulfill the human rights of women migrant workers throughout the entire migration continuum by developing appropriate migration policies.

This includes, for example, the implementation of gender-responsive pre-departure orientation, to ensure that women have sufficient awareness and are adequately prepared to live and work abroad while taking into account specific vulnerabilities and risks.

¹⁶Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, "New UN Gender Guidance is a reminder that real equality requires tackling discrimination", 25 June 2016. Available from <https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/new-un-gender-guidance-is-a-reminder-that-real-equality-requires-tackling-discrimination>

¹⁷UN Women, "Gender equality is good for business, leaders say at 2018 WEPs Forum", 26 September 2018. Available from <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2018/9/news-2018-weeps-forum>

¹⁸UN Global Compact, "About the WEPs Gender Gap Analysis Tool", Available from <https://weeps-gapanalysis.org/about-the-tool/>

The Dhaka Principles for Migration with Dignity

The Dhaka Principles provide businesses with a roadmap that traces the migrant workers' journey from the moment of recruitment to the place of employment and back again or onwards. Specifically, the implementation of the Dhaka Principles sets out non-discrimination clauses to eliminate

discriminatory practices based on gender including the prohibition of using medical or pregnancy testing as grounds for dismissals, and punitive measures for sexual harassment complaints.¹⁹

Addressing gender-inequalities through the IOM CREST Gender Strategy

The IOM's Corporate Responsibility in Eliminating Slavery and Trafficking Gender Strategy has been developed in response to the challenges described in the brief and in alignment with the international frameworks. The strategy outlines the role of the private sector in promoting gender equality in international supply chains. This requires advocacy and capacity building components that function to mainstream industry thinking around gender responsiveness as well as to equip businesses with sufficient knowledge and practical tools that are responsive to the needs of women migrant workers.

The CREST Gender strategy is based on three outcomes:

Outcome 1: COMMITMENT

Utilize project design, through concept notes, sector analysis, labour supply chain mapping and other components, to explicitly reference gender specific vulnerabilities and inequalities experienced by women migrant workers.

Outcome 2: IMPLEMENTATION

Emphasize gender-sensitive due diligence and access to remedy that examines risks in business from a rights-holder perspective and addresses these specifically through grievance mechanisms that provide safe channels for women to take action on their rights.

Outcome 3: COLLABORATION

Engage business and women migrant workers in the conversation for change and amplifies the voice of women migrant workers through supporting dedicated women migrant worker-led networks and providing platforms for empowerment.

HOW BUSINESSES CAN BE GENDER-RESPONSIVE AND ADDRESS INEQUALITY IN THEIR SUPPLY CHAINS

Based on the principles of the international frameworks and the CREST Gender Strategy, businesses can commit to addressing existing gaps in business performance as it relates to women migrants' human and labour rights:

1. **ALIGN** with international standards on ethical recruitment and decent work
2. **ADVOCATE** proactively for and commit to women migrants' rights and establish the *Employer Pays Principle* and corporate leadership in ethical recruitment
3. **ADOPT** non-discrimination policies and guidelines that mainstream respect for women migrants' rights
4. **CONDUCT** labour supply chain mappings of business operations, including a gender analysis to identify specific risks and barriers to women migrant workers
5. **DEVELOP** gender-responsive approaches, due diligence and tools for adaptation
6. **PROMOTE** women migrant workers' skills development and apply these practices throughout their supply chain
7. **ENGAGE** women migrant workers' voice through participation

¹⁹Institute for Human Rights and Business, "Dhaka Principles", (2019). Available from <https://www.ihrb.org/dhaka-principles/>

8. **DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT** gender-responsive grievance mechanisms for all women migrant workers
9. **MEASURE AND REPORT** publicly on progress in achieving gender equality

Business awareness of gender inequalities and commitment to women migrant workers' rights

To ensure a gender-responsive human rights-based business approach, businesses first need to be aware of potential risks and inequalities taking place in their supply chains. Such awareness can be strengthened through businesses conducting worker-centered vulnerability assessments and labour supply chain mappings with a specific gender and migration focus that includes:

- collection of sex and age disaggregated data;
- identification of roles and responsibilities of men and women migrant workers;
- identification of discriminatory policies and practices taking place during recruitment or employment;
- mainstreaming gender-related vulnerabilities into company policies, operations and monitoring

Knowledge of women migrant workers' vulnerabilities will lead to a more rights-focused approach in the design and implementation of corporate policies. It can also strengthen the advocacy for the interests and needs of women migrant workers and set the tone within management systems, or at the outset of programmes and projects.

Values of expressed commitments

A significant gap in furthering gender equality in international supply chains is the lack of corporate leadership in the ethical recruitment and decent employment of women migrant workers. This is much needed and presents a unique opportunity for innovative and forward-looking businesses:

- First-mover advantage enables businesses to lead the conversation on gender equality, allowing for new market access
- Increased body of knowledge that will improve performance delivery
- Driving key industry shifts towards improved business models and extraction of value as a whole
- Wide sharing and mobilization of relevant gender-responsive instruments towards a "new normal" of industry practice

Mainstreaming gender into company policies

Mainstreaming gender equality begins with the incorporation of gender-responsive policies and guidance into management systems and develop specific business targets. Policies underpin business practices, so must ensure the inclusion of the rights and needs of women migrants in recruitment, deployment, employment and return.

Business policy is often not indifferent to gender; however, gender bias is largely inherent, and specific structural changes should be made to ensure:

- Women are not excluded from migrant recruitment programmes²⁰
- Women are not confined to migrate for work in particular sectors or types of work
- Women are not paid differing wages for jobs of the same value
- Women have the ability to upskill, strengthen capacity and be promoted

²⁰ International Labour Organization, Gender equality in labour migration law, policy and management (2016). Available from: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_524144.pdf

Updating the business policy framework around gender equality also involves mainstreaming principles of gender-equality into business partnerships. Labour recruiters are critical to reducing the vulnerabilities of women migrant workers and promoting equality of opportunity for women migrant workers from the early stages of the labour migration process.

The [Gender-responsive Self-assessment Tool for Recruitment Agencies](#), developed by UN Women and IOM adds to ethical recruitment frameworks by bringing a gender lens to the recruitment process. The tool provides a practical set of principles and actions which can be implemented voluntarily to effectively mainstream gender sensitivity into the

Due diligence

Gender-responsive human rights due diligence is a central tenet of corporate responsibility under the UNGPs in order to establish the duty of businesses to prevent, mitigate, address and remediate adverse human rights impacts in their global supply chains. Due diligence requires businesses to take active steps to prevent and identify risks, abuses and to use their leverage to mitigate negative impacts. This also applies in their relationships with third parties, where brands are responsible to enable their suppliers to implement ethical and gender-sensitive employment practices. Without a gender perspective in this process, attempts to address human rights issues can even exacerbate existing gender inequalities.

migration continuum. Using this tool will improve labour recruiters and employers' capacity to meet women's needs in recruitment.

Another tool that can be customized to business needs is migrant worker employment contracts. For example, the [Gender-Responsive Guidance on Employment Contracts for Migrant Domestic Workers](#) aims to equip and provide a reference for employers seeking to develop employment contracts for migrant domestic workers and make informed decisions about the necessary content that ensures both parties are agreeing to a rights-centric foundation for decent employment.

The due diligence process must look at the specific risks and needs of women migrant workers. A successful risk assessment that responds to women's unique experiences can identify effective preventive actions that address women migrant workers reality, this further allows the business to effectively respond to company risks. Mainstreaming gender throughout the due diligence of the business, in the training of employers and labour recruiters in the business supply chain on any policies as well as national and international human and rights and labour standards is vital. Finally, all involved actors must effectively monitor the efforts and their impact on women migrant workers.

The Levi Strauss Case

Fashion giant Levi Strauss & Co.'s sustainable supply chain program, the Worker Well-being initiative, launched in 2011, seeks to improve workers' rights and foster well-being at third-party supplier factories by promoting gender equality (or, alternatively: "women's well-being"). The company believes that garment factories that focus on investing in women's health education can strengthen their business performance. A report commissioned by Levi Strauss & Co. identified five priority focus areas

for investment:

- Skill development
- Pregnancy and parenthood
- Menstruation
- Wages and work hours
- Harassment and gender-based violence

Investment in such areas can have positive returns as manufacturers can expect reduced absenteeism, turnover, overtime and production errors.

Source: Levi Strauss Foundation 2017, Report on "Improving Business Performance Through Gender Equality. Strategies for the apparel supply chain"

Access to remedy

Any grievance mechanism needs to consider that business-related human rights abuses occur in a gendered context of power. As per the UNGPs, businesses are responsible to put in place credible, confidential and effective grievance mechanisms as an integral part of corporate due diligence. Women face additional barriers in accessing grievance mechanisms compared to men,²¹ and businesses should establish operational—level grievance mechanisms that are gender-sensitive and accessible to women migrant workers. This means that the grievance mechanism needs to allow women workers and other stakeholders to submit complaints in a confidential and anonymous manner. Staff who handle grievances should include women, and all grievance handling staff should be trained specifically on possible issues women migrant workers may face during

Collaboration

Businesses should partner with women migrant workers and women migrant worker-led groups and networks to develop systems and programmes that are based on the needs and interest of women migrant workers. These partnership can further help address the inherent blindness that often occurs in situations where behaviour and practices are rooted in deep-seated norms.

Voices of women, women organizations, women leaders, and gender experts should be included in gender-sensitive human rights due diligence. These partners could also be engaged to support with orientations to workers, monitoring of recruitment process and the establishment of gender-sensitive policies and grievance mechanisms.

The lack of data and best practices on how to address gender-bias in international labour migration poses

recruitment, deployment, employment and return, and on how to investigate a complaint without disclosing elements that can negatively impact on the situation of women migrant workers conveying grievances, e.g., through an anonymous complaints mechanism. This must be supported by clear policies explicitly stating that there will be no reprisals of any complaints submitted. Such grievance mechanisms need to be applied throughout the supply chain and not just for immediate and first-tier settings.

To ensure adequate remedy, remediation plans should be developed in collaboration with affected workers to address cases of violation. Women migrant workers must be included in the process of developing and implementing effective grievance mechanisms.²²

a significant challenge to fostering behavioural change. Businesses should engage in wider collaboration in industry associations and through intergovernmental organizations to foster an environment where knowledge and best practices can be shared, and challenges discussed. This is a necessary step towards addressing the root causes of gender-discrimination in labour migration processes.

The integration of women migrant workers' voices in the region has been instrumental in limiting their vulnerabilities.²³ Enabling women migrant workers to contribute to their own wellbeing by implementing strategies that increase union membership supports the work around reducing gender pay gaps and improving working conditions.

²¹ UN 2017, The Gender lens to the UN Guiding principles on Business and Human rights (link)

²² Report of the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises to the UN General Assembly (July 2017) A/72/162

²³ UN Women: Asia Pacific, EU, ILO and UN Women work to promote women migrant workers' right to organize in workplaces and communities (2018). Available from: <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/stories/2018/10/work-to-promote-women-migrant-workers-right>



Established in 1951, IOM is the leading inter-governmental organization in the field of migration and works closely with governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental partners.

IOM's Corporate Responsibility in Eliminating Slavery and Trafficking (CREST) is a regional partnership initiative that aims to realize the potential of business to uphold the human and labour rights of migrant workers in their operations and supply chains.

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