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United Nations Entity for Gender Equality
and the Empowerment of Women

**Joint ILO-UN Women
Regional workshop on effective social and economic reintegration of women migrant
workers**

19th- 21st August 2014

Kathmandu Nepal

Conclusions and Recommendations

The International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), under the generous support of the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFTAD) and the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC), respectively, jointly organized a regional workshop on Effective Social and Economic Reintegration of Women Migrant Workers, held from 19 to 21 August 2014, in Kathmandu, Nepal.

The workshop responded to the well-recognized fact that Women Migrant Workers in the world, including in Asia, constitute an important social and economic phenomenon in both sending and receiving countries. These women are making important contributions to the economic and social development of their home countries, through the remittances and enhanced skills and knowledge they bring back with them upon their return. However, there is a lack of support to facilitate the effective return and reintegration of migrant workers, including women migrant workers. As a result, some returned migrant workers face social and/or economic challenges upon return, and many decide to re-migrate.

The right to migrate should be an informed and voluntary choice rather than a compulsion. There is an urgent need to promote and facilitate sustainable policies and programs for effective return and reintegration of migrant workers. There is recognition that migration as a voluntary and informed choice is an important factor to enhance women's empowerment.

With this overall objective this regional workshop was organized to:

1. Promote understanding of the conditions faced by returning women migrant workers that influence their opportunities for effective re-integration.
2. Document and share good practices of return and re-integration programs for women migrant workers.
3. Increase knowledge base by sharing data and research on the reintegration of migrants, for adaptation and adoption of strategies for effective reintegration of women migrant workers.
4. Arrive at recommendations for regional partnerships and bilateral cooperation on return and reintegration programs for women migrants between origin and destination countries.
5. To generate incentive to mainstream gender-responsive reintegration strategies for returnee women migrant workers within governments' and their respective National Strategy Framework.



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A synthesis of this workshop's deliberations resulted in the following conclusions and recommendations:

1. Essential conditions in countries of origin to facilitate return and reintegration of migrant workers should include:

- 1.1 Development of legislation, policies and programs on return migration for men and women migrant workers, and establishment of a national machinery for the promotion and management of return and reintegration services.
- 1.2 Active involvement of CSOs, NGOs, Trade Unions, employers' organizations, private sector and return women and men migrant workers' associations and other stakeholders in the formulation of reintegration policies and programs.
- 1.3 Commitment to ensure that reintegration services are gender-responsive and that they are informed by an understanding of the specific circumstances under which women and men migrate and return.
- 1.4 Pursuit of further studies on remittance and savings patterns and behavior of women migrant workers and linking the remittances to reintegration programmes for women and men migrant workers for their empowerment and local development.
- 1.5 Undertaking a mapping of migration stakeholders and develop partnerships to encourage their sustained engagement in reintegration policy and program development.
- 1.6 Provision of advice, training and skills assessment prior to departure and support provision and skills assessment for returning workers, to ensure successful reintegration with maximized use of new skills.
- 1.7 Ensure commitment from all stakeholders to reduce and reverse effects of stigma towards WMWs.

2. Pre-Departure Support:

- 2.1 Preparations for return and reintegration of women and men migrant workers should commence pre-departure for overseas work. Pre-departure orientation should inform participating workers and their spouses/partners and families of opportunities for social and economic reintegration and should include:
 - 2.1.1 Information on opportunities and access to skills recognition through formal certification.
 - 2.1.2 Access to information on employment prospects within the country.
 - 2.1.3 Information on access to credit for housing, self-employment and others including savings and investment advice.



3. On-site support:

3.1 Countries of origin and countries of destination should strengthen the role of their foreign missions, including appointment of labour attachés, to work in consultation/collaboration with migrant and diaspora communities, civil society and Trade Unions to develop and implement services and programmes on-site to support women and men migrant workers towards their return and reintegration. Programmes should include:

- 3.1.1 Information on opportunities and access to skills upgrading and recognition through formal certification.
- 3.1.2 Access to information on employment prospects within the country.
- 3.1.3 Information on access to credit for housing, self-employment and others savings and investment advice.
- 3.1.4 Assistance to cope with social concerns, such as long term separation from family and community and with managing expectations for social and economic development post-return.
- 3.1.5 Provision of multilingual information and materials, including seminars/workshops both post-arrival and pre-return, on preparations for livelihood/business strategy development and financial literacy.
- 3.1.6 Where possible, develop a migrant workers database to list the workers' acquired skills in compliance with competency assessment system while in the country of destination (language, technology, work flow processes, work discipline), in preparation for local or further overseas employment upon return.
- 3.1.7 Participation of employers, recruitment agencies, and related-financial institutions, including Money Transfer Organizations, to support migrants' effective return, potentially through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives.

3.2 Establishment of programmes and services for migrants' families in countries of origin, addressing education and health concerns of children left behind, to mitigate social costs of migration.

3.3 Set-up of emergency relief fund to include:

- 3.3.1 Provision of emergency financial support to provide emergency counselling and access to justice in cases of abuse, and to repatriate migrant workers in emergency situations.
 - 3.3.1.1 Full terms of the fund and its uses, such as defining circumstances for repatriation/financial support and the context, such as in case of abuse, exploitation, accident or death, to be defined.



4. Return of workers to the country of origin should include:

- 4.1 Competency assessment and certification by recognized skills institutions, boards or a technical vocational government agency of the country of origin and country of destination, and a valid certified system to reflect the skills improvement of workers during their employment term, as well as support for acquisition of better jobs upon return.
- 4.2 Enhancement of local employment services to support the economic return and reintegration of returning workers, to include facilitating job matching with local employment services.
- 4.3 Development and maintenance of a registration system and database for returning workers (to include assisted and unassisted return), with mediation support between migrant worker and relevant government agencies and entities.
- 4.4 Business development and livelihood program assistance for workers and family members, including business start-up counseling and linking with private and government low cost credit facilities, including government guarantee funds to financial institutions to lower the borrowing cost for business capital and offset the need for collateral.
- 4.5 Development of capacities of government offices, local community and its leaders, financial intermediaries and NGOs to create a network of support to the returning women and men workers.
- 4.6 Development of a database to document women and men migrants' overseas employment, return, skill development and any formal skills recognition awards/certifications.

5 Good practices in return and reintegration policies and programs to support the social and economic reintegration of women workers:

NOTE: This section incorporates good practices identified during Session 5: Group Work Discussions.

- 5.1 Development of skills training and certification methods, including provision of advanced foreign language lessons.
- 5.2 Provision of social and economic counselling for reintegration, referring to best practices of successful trade unions/civil society/migrant workers' groups, such as Pourakhi.
 - 5.2.1 Provision of emergency support on site such as safe houses and emergency financial aid.
- 5.3 Development of financial literacy for returnee women migrant workers, pre, during and post overseas employment, including modules on savings and investments and entrepreneurialism.
 - 5.3.1 Establishment of partnerships with national banks and private sector lenders to provide soft loans without collateral.



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5.3.2 Provision of personal savings opportunities for women migrants, separate to family/spouse savings accounts.

5.3.3 Provision of housing loans upon return.

5.4 Development of social insurance schemes in partnership with multiple stake holders. Development and provision of advice for employment advancement and access to cooperatives and link to markets.