

## **Holistic and sustainable reintegration of Returnee Women Migrant Workers in South Asia**

### **Side-Event at the International Migration Review Forum**

Event Date: 19th May 2022; Time Slot: 8am EDT to 10am EDT; Virtual Event (via Zoom)

#### **Background**

Return and reintegration are the basics of international instrument for the protection of migrant's rights. International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families 1990 obliges states for cooperation for orderly return of the migrant workers. Objective 21 of Global Compact for Migration (GCM) 2018 has mandated its member states to facilitate the safe and dignified return as well as sustainable reintegration of the migrants. But in South Asian context where women have never integrated in their family, society and states obligations due to structural inequality, holistic and sustainable reintegration of women migrant workers has always become a challenge. Hence there is a need to reassess the holistic approach for strengthened and sustainable integration analyzing the accepted three dimensions of reintegration – the economic (asset ownership, employment, job search and satisfaction with economic situation, access to credit, and debt), social (access to education and health, housing and safe drinking water, possession of identification documentation, and access to the justice system), and psychological (sense of belonging and security, support networks and participation in social activities, family relations, distress and source of desire to re-migrate)."<sup>1</sup>

WOREC being a feminist organization has always challenged, the existing power relation perpetuated by strong patriarchal policies of the state and demanded for system change to make the international commitment and constitutional provisions realized. Without Evidences and peoples voice structures holding unequal power relation are difficult to challenge. To meet these challenges WOREC in collaboration with GAATW international has commissioned a Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR)\* to a purpose to bring women's voice in surface and to find out what exactly needs to be done for women to create their own space in their societies. Similar studies were done in different countries of south Asia namely India and Bangladesh.

As suggested by the experiences of 184 returnee women migrants (FPAR participants), migration can be a beneficial experience for women, their families, and communities as it enables women to stabilize the financial position of their families, educate their children, build up confidence, and challenge restrictive social norms. At the same time, many women

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Network on Migration, Ensuring Safe and Dignified Return and Sustainable Reintegration, 2021, [https://migrationnetwork.un.org/sites/g/files/tmzbdl416/files/docs/position\\_paper\\_-\\_ensuring\\_safe\\_and\\_dignified\\_return\\_and\\_sustainable\\_reintegration.pdf](https://migrationnetwork.un.org/sites/g/files/tmzbdl416/files/docs/position_paper_-_ensuring_safe_and_dignified_return_and_sustainable_reintegration.pdf)

returned to the same conditions of socioeconomic deprivation or violence within the home, which they had sought to escape. Many experienced stigma and suspicion about having worked abroad. Women were not aware of government programs for returning migrants or how to access them. States' labor migration policies lack a human rights and gender-transformative approach to migration and work.

### **Description of the Side-event**

As decided in the GCM, the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) is to serve as the primary intergovernmental global platform to discuss and share progress on the implementation of all aspects of the Global Compact, including as it relates to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and with the participation of all relevant stakeholders. As the first IMRF is taking place at the UN Headquarters in New York on 17-20 May 2022, WOREC, an organization working for right to decent work with access to safe, regular and orderly migration and mobility rights for Nepalese women for more than three decades is organizing the side event on "Holistic and sustainable reintegration of returnee women migrant workers in Nepal" on 19 May 2022 to discuss among all stakeholder for the need of dealing with structural causes first to create environment where women migrant workers can get space where they can claim their own space to reconstruct their lives .

### **Objectives**

The main objective of the event is to identify the common gaps and challenges for strengthened and enabled integration of returnee women migrant workers especially those who return with incomplete labor migration and are compelled to go through illegal channel of migration. The specific objectives are:

- 1. Discuss on the strategies for comprehensive and dignified socio-economic reintegration of returnee women migrant workers.*
- 2. Develop a common understanding among stakeholders challenging the structural discrimination against returnee women migrant workers, reducing the social stigma, inequality and lack of access to justice*

### **Format**

The event has been planned for 2 hours which will be in English language. The event, planned in virtual model will be divided into four interactive micro sessions. The organizer will share the situation, key issues, challenges of holistic and sustainable reintegration of Returnees Women Migrant Workers and recommendations in South Asian context. Then three expert speakers will speak on social, economic reintegration and reintegration policies and options. The speaker's session followed by open floor discussion will link the reintegration process to safe and dignified return and readmission. The open discussion session will be for Q&A and opinion sharing of all participants, the event will also allow returnee migrant workers' network which are formed in Nepal for dignified reintegration. The last, concluding session will gather the key take away and strategic directions that include reintegration guidelines based in the local context.

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJEvde2grjqkHNydWu5rUSd--jWmOxGDcBBI>

### Suggested agenda

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10 minutes	<p><b>Opening Remarks</b></p> <p><b>Mr Lubha Raj Neupane:</b> Mr. Lubha Raj Neupane (Executive Director, WOREC, Nepal), who has extensive experience and quite depth expertise in right to work, mobility and any-trafficking in South Asia, will moderate the event. He had already more than 20 years of work experience in the labor rights and migration. He has been involved in dozens of researches, publications and developed seminar papers in the concerned areas.</p>
60 minutes	<p><b>Panel discussion</b></p> <p>Panel discussion with representatives of ... will be discussing good practices; challenges; lessons learnt; and emerging priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Speaker 1:</b> Sister Lissy (Chairperson, NWWT): Lissy will speak about South Asian reintegration scenario and practices for special groups of returnee migrant workers (especially enhancing cooperation to address violence against women migrant workers)</li> <li>• <b>Speaker 2.</b> Alexis Bautista (MFA Secretariat). She will speak about South Asian reintegration plans and policies for returnee women migrant workers in line with relevant obligations under international law and instruments)</li> <li>• <b>Speaker 3.</b> Bandana Pattanaik (International Coordinator, GAATW): Bandana Pattanaik will speak about the safe return, the ways of skills and knowledge use and contribution for sustainable reintegration. Ms. Pattanaik has collected almost 25 years' experience in migration and trafficking nexus focusing in South and South East Asian countries.</li> </ul> <p>Moderator: Dr. Renu Rajbhandari (Founding Chairperson of WOREC): Dr. Rajbhandari who has been involving for right to mobility and decent work movement for migrant workers for last 32 years in Nepal and Asian region, will moderate the event. She has extensive experience and expertise to frame the holistic integration approaches, mechanism and modalities for returnee women migrant workers in regional and global context.</p>
35 minutes	<b>Discussion / Q&amp;A</b>
15 minutes	<p><b>Closing Remarks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speaker: Dr. Renu Rajbhandari (Founding Chairperson of WOREC)</li> </ul>