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GENDER COORDINATION REPORT 2011

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. 2011 marked the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Triangle factory fire, which occurred in New York on 25 March 1911 and claimed the lives of 146 women garment workers. The women were trapped in the factory because the owners had locked the doors from the outside. While this event took place one hundred years ago, thousands of migrant women workers continue to experience very difficult and unsafe working conditions throughout the world. Contributing to making migration safe for women therefore remains a central objective of IOM through the work of the Gender Coordination Unit.

2. In 2011, the Unit contributed to discussions at the Fifty-fifth Session of the Commission on the Status of Women on “Access and participation of women and girls in education, training and science and technology, including for the promotion of women’s equal access to full employment and decent work” by improving the knowledge base on skilled migrant women’s access to decent jobs or their lack thereof.

3. Throughout the year, the Unit specifically worked in the following thematic areas:

- Violence and discrimination affecting migrant women and girls;
- Gender, migration and development, including women’s labour migration, remittances and capacity-building for women in diaspora associations;
- Female genital mutilation in the context of migration;
- Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.

II. AWARENESS-RAISING ACTIVITIES ON GENDER AND MIGRATION

Information sheets on key gender and migration-related issues

4. The Gender Coordination Unit continued with the preparation of information sheets in order to make key information more accessible to IOM staff, policymakers and practitioners. It has prepared an information sheet on gender, migration and social remittances, which will be released before the end of the year. Other information sheets on gender and labour migration, integration and migrant employment are being developed.

Capacity Building Workshop for Women Leaders of Diaspora Associations

5. For the second year in a row, the Unit co-organized this capacity-building workshop to strengthen the capacity of migrant women based in the North to guide diaspora organizations and mobilize diaspora contributions and human and financial capital for the development of countries and communities of origin. The training took place in Haifa, Israel, from 15 to 24 November 2010 and brought together 21 participants. Through these two workshops, the Unit has trained 50 diaspora women. In 2011, in collaboration with the IOM Office in the United Kingdom and in Germany, the Unit organized follow-up meetings in London and Berlin for 2009 and 2010 participants to meet, network, build on the workshop and strategize for joint efforts in their countries of origin and destination.

Addressing female genital mutilation in the context of migration

6. To mark the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation, the Unit co-organized a press conference at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. The IOM Director General took this opportunity to raise awareness about the impact of migration on the practice and related challenges facing the international community. The Unit also participated in a panel on building bridges to achieve zero tolerance for female genital mutilation, organized by the Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices.

Deskilling of qualified migrant women

7. As a contribution to the discussions of the Fifty-fifth Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, and in order to contribute to a better understanding of how women are affected by brain waste and professional deskilling linked with migration, the Unit worked on the book entitled *Crushed hopes: Underemployment and Deskilling among Skilled Migrant Women* (to be published in early 2012) and also participated in a side event during the session which was held on 25 February 2011. On the occasion of International Women's Day, the Unit was involved in the drafting of a press release and a panel discussion on "When education does not lead to decent work and full employment: the plight of underemployed and deskilled migrant women", held in Geneva. Furthermore, the Unit participated in a ministerial roundtable breakfast on "Mobility of skilled migrants and the problem of de-skilling of migrants", held as a side event during the United Nations Economic and Social Council high-level segment that took place in Geneva. The Unit also worked on a one-day creative workshop in Geneva with deskilled migrant women to provide them with tools to overcome the psychosocial toll caused by their professional situation.

Protecting women migrant domestic workers

8. In collaboration with UN-Women and the European Commission–United Nations Joint Migration and Development Initiative, the Unit organized an e-discussion on "Domestic workers count too: Visibilising and protecting women migrant domestic workers through legal and social protections", launched on 8 March 2011.

Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

9. During the Conference, the IOM Director General participated in the high-level interactive thematic debates as lead discussant on the theme of "Human and social development, gender equality and empowerment of women"; IOM co-hosted a special event chaired by the IOM Director General and the Under-Secretary-General of UN-Women, Ms. Michelle Bachelet, on "Integrating migration and remittances into LDC national and regional development planning, including through a gender perspective"; and IOM organized an exhibition including a roll-up panel display on migrant women and development.

Others

10. During the reporting period, the following activities were also carried out:
- The Unit participated in an expert group meeting on "Gender and migration in Southern and Eastern Mediterranean and Sub-Sahara African countries" organized by the Consortium for Applied Research on International Migration (Italy, 18 and 19 October 2010). This led to joint efforts to better understand the dynamics of women's migration in these regions compared to other regions of the world.

- The Unit produced a background paper “Towards safer channels of female migration: Existing legal framework and gaps” for, and participated in, the CARITAS global conference on “The female face of migration” (Senegal, 30 November to 2 December 2010).
- The Unit, in collaboration with the IOM Office in the United Kingdom, facilitated the visit to the United Kingdom of Ms. Pernille Frahm, Rapporteur of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. The visit, which took place from 8 to 10 February 2011, was part of the preparatory work for her report entitled Protecting migrant women in the labour market. The report led the Parliamentary Assembly to adopt a resolution on 15 April 2011.
- The Unit supported the IOM preparation of the Global Migration Group Symposium on Migration and Youth: Harnessing Opportunities for Development (New York, 17 and 18 May 2011).
- As part of a joint project by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the International Labour Organization and IOM, the Unit contributed to the facilitation of the third training workshop on gender and labour migration (Vienna, 17 and 18 May 2011). The training brought together 24 participants from countries of origin and destination.
- The Unit supported a Global Forum on Migration and Development regional workshop on domestic workers (Jamaica, 7 and 8 September 2011). The workshop was organized by the Government of Jamaica in cooperation with the Swiss Chair, IOM and UN-Women.
- The Unit collaborated with the Women’s Federation for World Peace International, including by supporting IOM’s participation in the fifteenth Women’s Conference for Peace in the Middle East on the theme of “Women in war and reconstruction”.
- The Unit participated in an expert group meeting on gender and remittances organized by Oxfam Novib (Netherlands, 29 and 30 September 2011).

III. INTER-AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality

11. The Gender Coordination Unit continued to be an active member of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality. It also participates in the informal network of Geneva-based United Nations gender advisers and, as mentioned earlier, participated in the joint celebrations for International Women’s Day in Geneva.

UN-Women

12. On two occasions, in November 2010 and July 2011, the Unit took part in informal briefings with the Under-Secretary-General of UN-Women, Ms. Michelle Bachelet, to discuss respective mandates and possible synergies and avenues for collaboration.

Contribution to the reports of the Secretary-General of the United Nations

13. In 2011, the Unit contributed to the reports of the Secretary-General on Women, the girl child and HIV and AIDS, and on Violence against women migrant workers.

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

14. The Unit contributed to the Forty-ninth and Fiftieth Sessions of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women by providing confidential country reports and participating in closed meetings between the Committee and United Nations agencies.

Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

15. The Unit continued to substantially support IOM's participation in the Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

Briefing of the Working Group on discrimination against women in law and in practice

16. In June 2011, the Unit briefed the newly created Working Group on discrimination against women in law and in practice, established by the Human Rights Council, on specific issues faced by migrant women.

Online course on gender and humanitarian action

17. The Unit oversaw the endorsement by the IOM Director General of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's online course on gender and humanitarian action. The course will be included in IOM training offers.

IV. GENDER FOCAL POINT NETWORK

18. The Unit continued to lead and animate the gender focal point network, not only providing bilateral and collective guidance, but also drawing on the network to better understand, use and promote Field work. The network has continued to grow in terms of the total number of focal points, the number of men focal points and geographical coverage.

V. COLLABORATION WITH SERVICE AREAS AND FIELD OFFICES

19. In 2011, the Unit was part of the Resource Group of the Field Implementation Team and contributed to the drafting of structural terms of reference for new entities such as the Regional Offices and Country Offices. The Unit supported the work of the Project Endorsement Working Group by coordinating the new IOM Project Development Handbook. The Gender Coordination Unit and the International Migration Law Unit also facilitated a session on gender and human rights during the Project Development and Implementation training package roll-out in Istanbul in September 2011.

VI. GENDER IN HUMAN RESOURCES

Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse

20. In 2011, a lot of the Unit's resources have been devoted to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA). Following a special senior management meeting on PSEA organized in November 2011, a plan of action was endorsed by the Director General and all departmental Directors. The implementation of the plan of action is overseen by a task force created at Headquarters in which the Unit actively participates. The Unit has also led to the creation and rolling out of a mandatory sensitization session on PSEA for all IOM staff at Headquarters and in the Field.

21. The Unit is actively contributing to the current work led by the Human Resources Management Division to revise the Policy for a Respectful Work Environment and to create a Grievances Guide to facilitate staff access to internal complaints mechanisms.

VII. SENSITIZATION OF STAFF TO GENDER ISSUES

22. Supported by the Gender Coordination Unit, the Director General and Deputy Director General announced, on the occasion of International Women's Day and during a special town hall meeting, nine special measures aimed at accelerating progress in reaching a higher representation of women in all categories and at all levels within the Organization. Progress in the implementation of these measures is being monitored by the Unit and the Human Resources Management Division.

VIII. ONGOING ACTIVITIES

23. The Gender Coordination Unit continues to attend meetings of the Appointments and Postings Board and the Rotation Appointments and Postings Board as a non-voting ex officio member as part of the strategy to ensure that proper attention is given to gender considerations and to assist in achieving a gender balance in the Organization.

24. The IOM *Gender and Migration News* continues to be disseminated to a varied audience, including United Nations organizations, diplomatic corps and academics.