



Domestic Workers at the Interface of Migration & Development: Action to Expand Good Practice

**GFMD Thematic Meeting organized and hosted by the Government of Ghana,
In partnership with the GFMD Swiss Chair-In-Office, UN Women, the African Diaspora Policy
Network and the Migration Policy and Advocacy Network**

Accra, Ghana
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Concept Note

At the invitation of the Swiss GFMD 2011 Chair-In-Office, Ghana will chair a GFMD workshop on “Domestic Workers at the Interface of Migration and Development”, as part of the Swiss GFMD Chair’s program of thematic meetings in various regions of the world, in partnership with UN Women and other international organizations. The workshop will engage policy makers, expert international organizations, and civil society from countries of origin and destination in the Sub-Saharan Africa, European, North American, and Gulf States regions. Regions such as Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East may also participate.

Migrant domestic workers were identified in the 2010 GFMD meeting in Puerto Vallarta as a particularly vulnerable group at the interface of migration and development. The global domestic work industry is growing, and posing increasingly complex policy challenges for labour legislation, human rights, gender, and development. While data remain scarce, ILO estimates suggest that as in other world regions, domestic care work is an important issue in the African region, with official data existing for several countries showing internal migration within countries, intra regional migration within Africa and migration for domestic work out of Africa to North America, Latin America and Europe. In 2005, 248,600 people were employed in domestic work in Ethiopia. In Egypt, the total number of domestic workers in 2007 was 51,600. In 2004, there were 103,900 domestic workers in Mali. In South Africa, the domestic work sector employed more than 1.2 million in 2007 and is the largest single sector of women’s employment. In West Africa, all the major cities in Côte d’Ivoire, Mali, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Ghana, Benin and Togo show that, there are currently young female domestic workers coming from *all* the internal regions of the respective countries and to some extent, girls and young women from all over the sub-region, as well.

In many countries and regions, there are no labour laws to protect domestic workers, many of whom come from economically disadvantaged circumstances. The women who commonly perform this work have often left their own families behind to work in other private households. Despite the important contribution that female migrant workers make to development at both ends, domestic care work has remained peripheral to the development agenda. While the major flows to date have been south-north (e.g. LAC to North America, East Africa to Europe, or Asia to the Middle East),



south-south migration flows are now appearing, as demand for domestic workers rises in middle income countries such as South Africa, Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Singapore, and India, where there are better living standards and increased employment opportunities for women.

The workshop offers a timely opportunity for concrete regional and transnational debate about this important issue in Africa and to identify some exemplary practices by governments, international organizations, and civil society partners to address the development and gender-related challenges in this sector. While recognizing that the fate and rights of migrant domestic workers are inextricably bound up with those of domestic workers in general, this workshop will attempt to draw out the international migration and development perspectives of the topic, complementing and drawing upon the recently adopted Convention and Recommendation on Decent Work for Domestic Workers at the 100th Session of the International Labour Conference (ILC) in June 2011; the CEDAW General Recommendation No. 26 on Women Migrant Workers, including domestic workers, adopted in November 2008; and the Committee on Migrant Workers' General Comment No. 1 on Migrant Domestic Workers, adopted in December 2010.

For African countries of origin, transit and destination, the workshop may explore policies and practices governments have adopted, or can adopt, to protect migrant domestic workers at all stages of migration. Examples of these are pre-departure orientation programmes; gender-sensitive awareness-raising training on migrant domestic workers' rights and responsibilities, and the risks associated with migration; and access to consular services including dedicated labour attachés and shelters for domestic workers fleeing abusive and unsafe situations. Improved provision of information to would-be migrants to help them better utilize available opportunities and the need to improve educational standards of women to enable them compete favorably in the labour market to attract better conditions of service are issues of concern and interest in the African sub-region. Moreover, challenges including HIV/AIDS, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and abuse, discrimination, harassment, and other forms of exploitation such as trafficking, as well as return and reintegration, have arisen as areas of interest for consideration by this workshop.

The **objectives of the workshop** are to:

- *Share good practices* on labour and social protections for migrant domestic workers
- *Develop a gender sensitive checklist for labour laws* recognizing domestic work and for employment contracts for domestic worker, including migrant workers.
- *Develop strategies for implementation of good practices* on social protection for migrant domestic workers.

Participants will be encouraged to interact freely in the spirit of expanding the "Common Space" between governments and civil society.

4 July 2011,

Government of Ghana