

Informal Dialogue for Civil Society

Format and organizational aspects of the International Migration Review Forums June 20, 2019,

STATEMENT OF SOROPIMIST INTERNATIONAL

Soroptimist International, or SI for short, is an organization of 75,000 women in all regions of the world seeking to educate and empower women and girls. We thank the co-facilitators for convening this informal dialogue. Many of SI's local and regional organizations have been involved with a variety of projects over many years to help and support refugees and migrants who arrive in their countries.

We would like to highlight the need for the inclusion of women's and girls' equality in the organizational aspects of the IMRFs. These issues, as detailed in the Global Compact for Safe Orderly and Regular Migration, should be included in the Plenaries, Round-tables, regional and other meetings of the IMRFs.

SI has followed the 2-year process and negotiations leading to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and we have made interventions where appropriate.

As the co-facilitators recognized in PPT 4 of the Rev. 1, 14 June 2019, the Compact lays out a set of cross-cutting and interdependent guiding principles, which include the principle entitled, "Gender-responsive". It mainstreams a gender perspective, promotes gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, recognizing

their independence, agency and leadership in order to move away from addressing migrant women primarily through a lens of victimhood.

Another principle in the GCM which cannot be overlooked is "Child-sensitive." Most importantly, it sets the standard of treatment for children as the "best interests of the child at all times."

We further note that Para. 5 of the 14 June draft indicates that in the lists of participants to be drawn up by the President of the General Assembly, "due regard must be given to the participation of women."

The Compact lays out a framework of 23 Objectives for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. There are at least 9 Objectives, that directly relate to women and girls. They range from collection of data disaggregated by sex, to reducing vulnerabilities of women and girl migrants at risk, victims of violence, domestic workers and victims of trafficking in persons. At the end of this Statement is a summary of these 9 Objectives.

Given the emphasis on human rights and equality for women and girls throughout the Compact, we maintain that the Plenary sessions, each of the 4 Roundtables and other discussion points, during the IMRFs, as well as the subregional, regional and cross-regional processes should specifically and substantially include the issues of equality for women and girls that are raised in the Compact.

We would like to offer some suggestions for the relevant subjects that might be included in each of the Roundtables:

(Cluster-I): Drivers of migration, pre-departure decision making and increased predictability and certainty of migration. Some drivers of migration are specific to women and girls, such as discrimination on the basis of sex, fear of violence, forced marriage or female genital

mutilation. What, if any, changes have been made in the country of origin to reduce these and other drivers of migration? Is information widely available to all migrants, and especially women and girls, to explain the risks they may face during migration?

(Cluster-II): Migration movements - the journey, arrival, return and reintegration of migrants. Women and girls are vulnerable to forced labor or sexual exploitation and human trafficking during the journey, upon arrival in the host country and upon return. What efforts are being made by these countries of transit, destination and return for the protection of vulnerable women and girls? What services are provided? Is access to justice readily available? What about healthcare, including reproductive health care?

(CLUSTER-III): Inclusion and social cohesion. What roles do States play in assuring inclusion and social cohesion for migrants, especially women and girls? Can migrant women find decent work? Is non-discriminatory education for girls provided? Are life-long learning opportunities available for women? Are migrant women and girls free from discriminatory societal and cultural practices? Does Xenophobia impede inclusion? Are women able to assume leadership roles?

(CLUSTER-IV): Impacts of migration in countries of origin, transit and destination, and the need for international cooperation.

What are the contributions of women and girl migrants? Are there opportunities for women entrepreneurs? What is the impact of remittances that women send back to their countries of origin? Have excessive fees been addressed? What cooperative arrangements have been made among States that relate to the needs of women and girls?

Obviously, there are overlaps and different interpretations of what could be included in each Cluster. The main concern of Soroptimist International is that these important issues that affect women and girl migrants and that were recognized extensively in the

Compact be included in the Plenary session and in each to these four Roundtables, the Regional and other places for discussion and action.

Soroptimist International appreciates the opportunity to highlight to you today some of the challenges that migrant women and girls face and we hope these challenges will be fully included in the IMRFS.

Respectfully submitted,

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Soroptimist International

NGO Committee to Stop Trafficking in Persons
NGO Committee on Migration