



Concept Note

“Social Protection for Migrant Women, Girls and Adolescents”

DATE: 15 de marzo

TIME: 15:00- 16:15hs

VENUE: ROOM CR-11, UN HQ

Aim

To make visible the challenges and share good practices of States and Civil Society in relation to the social protection of migrant women, girls and adolescents.

Introduction

Since the beginning of humankind, human beings have mobilized in search of survival. Migration has a long tradition in our countries, whether between states in the same region or to and from countries in the North. However, in the last decade we have seen the growth of a new trend: that of girls and adolescents migrating alone; either fleeing violence; seeking to join family members who have already migrated; or seeking a better future.

Contexts

There are several factors behind the intensification and increased complexity of migration. Some are global in nature, such as financial crises and neoliberal economic models that push millions of people into poverty.

Other factors are related to environmental disasters (hurricanes, earthquakes, droughts) that affect the subsistence of millions of people. Family reunification and networks in transit and destination



countries are also contributing factors, given that a high percentage of Latin American migrants have relatives in the United States or Europe. Violence and insecurity are other causes of migration.

On the other hand, there is a growing feminization of migrations. According to data from the Report on Migration in the World (United Nations, 2018), the number of international migrants is estimated at 258 million. According to this report for the year 2000, 49% of the migrants were women and for the year 2017 they represent 48%. According to CELADE of ECLAC, 35 million migrants were born in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Migration has advantages and disadvantages for women, since their condition as such marks each stage of the migratory experience, from the reasons that boosts them to migrate; the trip to the final destination, until the return to the home, in cases that this occurs. Many women migrate in search of financial independence and empowerment, to escape poverty, expand their knowledge or reunite with loved ones. Unfortunately, in these contexts, many migrants face difficult situations due to a lack of information, connections, influences and resources.

One element that makes the migration landscape more complex is the unaccompanied migrant, girls, boys and adolescents, especially in the migratory corridor between Central America, Mexico and the United States. Many States and social organizations in the region that worked with migrant children served boys of all ages who moved alone or in groups. In general, it was a male phenomenon. But the last decade has seen an increase in the number of girls and adolescents migrating unaccompanied. According to the data published in the Atlas of migration in the countries of northern Central America (ECLAC, 2018), the average age of unaccompanied migrant girls is 15.5 years, while that of boys is 14.3 years. In turn, the migration of unaccompanied girls increased by 72% in 2017 compared to 2016.

One of the main causes why girls and adolescents migrate is the violence and insecurity they suffer as girls and women. In many situations, violence against girls and adolescents drives them to flee their homes and face the risks of a long road, which they will do without adequate protection. The dangers of those who flee will also appear in transit countries, as evidenced by the dozens of migrant deaths and the incalculable number of victims of violence along the way.



Violence against women is a frequent risk, adding to the other challenges faced by women along migration routes. Many women and girls experience sexual violence, harassment and exploitation by complete strangers, government officials, migrant partners and even family members. The lack of documents is often a factor that contributes to anonymity, as women or girls who have been assaulted fear being detained by migration authorities and deported to their countries of origin. In general, this factor hinders, prevents or delays the filing of complaints and therefore the investigation of the facts, punishment of those responsible and reparation for the victims.

Other risks for migrant women and girls are death, extortion, xenophobia, trafficking and smuggling, separation of families, forced return to the country of origin, and violence by organized crime. In turn, migrant women and girls face barriers to accessing social protection, health services and education in countries of transit and destination.

It is urgent to intervene in this complex panorama, trying to analyze and confront the causes why girls and adolescents leave their homes; preventing risks and acts of violence both in the country of origin and during transit; and guaranteeing social protection both in the country of origin, as well as in transit and destination countries.

Participants:

Uruguay: National Women's Institute, S. A. Mariella Mazzotti.

CLADEM: Cladem Regional Coordinator, Ms. Julia Escalante; member of the Cladem Consultative Committee, Ms. Susana Chiarotti and member of the CEVI Expert Committee, Director of INSGENAR (Instituto de Género, República Argentina, Rosario and National Coordinator of the Cladem Uruguay, Ms. Ana Lima.

ECLAC: Senior Economic Affairs Officer of the Division of Gender Affairs, Mr. Mario Castillo.