



IOM International Organization for Migration
 OIM Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations
 OIM Organización Internacional para las Migraciones

Check against delivery

**STATEMENT BY MARY LUCY DALY, CALLO PERMANENT OBSERVER OF
 THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION
 SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

General Debate agenda no. 3. "Follow up to the 4th World Conference on Women
 and to the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000:
 Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the 21st Century"

New York, 5 March 2000

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) endorses the topic of today's debate and would like to briefly touch on two main areas: first, a brief survey of the progress of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the outcomes of this twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and the joint commitments of the agenda item from a perspective towards the full realization of the Millennium Development Goals.

Mr. Chairman

Migration cuts across all or most of the Millennium Development Goals as does gender equality. There are two major links between migration and gender equality. On the one hand, migration contributes to the empowerment of women, thereby helping promote gender equality. On the other hand, particular migration situations can pose challenges to gender equality.

An analysis of the MDGs reveals that migration does not occupy a central place in the Millennium Declaration adopted in September 2000. Until relatively recently, the link between migration and development was touched upon only in a cursory way. The link between migration and development was raised by the High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) in its report "Development, Migration and the Role of Women" which was published in 2000. The HLPE report was a landmark document in that it was the first to explicitly link migration and development. The report also highlighted the need for a more comprehensive approach to migration and development. The impact of migration on development can be both positive and negative.

The achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women in developing countries are some of the most significant measures for the process of reducing poverty, because women constitute a critical mass in generating development. Respect for women's rights and the prevention of violence against them are essential to allow women to play this pivotal role.

Migration can contribute to the notion of gender equality in several ways. First, the rights of migrant women or, in a broader context, of all women in the countries of origin: women migrant make a significant economic contribution through their labor both to their countries of destination and to their countries of origin. Second, migration can contribute to the empowerment of women in societies where women's

...to move voluntarily, in order to do so, migration is itself empowering. It stimulates change in women migrants themselves and in the societies which send and receive them. Beyond their own contribution, women migrant workers remain a source of physical and emotional support for their families and communities. Women's voluntary migration is a powerful force for positive change, and that is why no effort must be spared in optimizing its positive effects.

Mr. Chairman,

One second aspect we would like to emphasize is the Secretary General's call for "stronger measures [...] to protect the rights of, and ensure decent work conditions for domestic workers, including migrant women, to ensure fair and equitable conditions and wages, access to health-care services, and to provide them with social and health benefits, as well as to eliminate sexual exploitation and violence".

Almost half of the total number of migrant workers in the world today is women. Over the past decades, ageing societies, increased labour market participation for women in many parts of the world and a decline in the state provision of services have generated a high demand for care services, not only by the state, but also by the private sector. Women play a significant role in migratory movements, particularly in international female labour migration. The lack of recognition of this sector is, including legal regulation, the segmented nature of domestic work and the gendered nature of the work, are characteristics that characterize this category of workers. This group holds a variety of rights for this specific group.

The migration of women to work in domestic and care work often leave female migrant workers in a vulnerable position with their employers. These workers are often under considerable pressure to earn money in order to support their families and/or repay debts in their countries of origin. In many countries, domestic employment is not adequately covered by labour law, employers are more or less free to impose arbitrary rules and working conditions. Under these circumstances, the structure of the work, migrant women workers who live in their employers' households and work long hours have little time and opportunity to interact with people outside the workplace. Besides the pay, working conditions, and social support, this situation also makes it extremely difficult for women to escape exploitation and abuse, to seek legal redress and to file a complaint for legal redress.

As the migration of domestic workers is acknowledged as an important phenomenon, research on domestic migrant workers and their rights is rare. ILO is trying to begin to fill this information gap with an exploratory study of the profile, legal situation, recruitment and migration trends, working and living conditions and services available to migrant domestic workers in a number of countries around the world. Such studies are designed to be a starting point to improve the situation of migrant domestic workers, in particular women and children.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.