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Commission on the Status of Women

Fiftieth session

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Agenda item 3 (b)

Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”: emerging issues, trends and new approaches to issues affecting the situation of women or equality between women and men

High-level panel discussion on the gender dimensions of international migration

4. The linkages between migration and development were identified as critical. A holistic and comprehensive approach is required to address the multidimensional aspects of international migration. Poverty and lack of access to economic resources were identified as main factors influencing the propensity of women to migrate. Increased socio-economic development, including through investments in the health sector, may lead to disincentives for migration. Increased gender equality within

were recommended. The key role of non-governmental organizations in promoting the rights of migrant women was highlighted.

10. In some countries, evidence suggests that men migrants remit more than women because their earnings are higher. In other cases, however, women tend to remit more because the ratio of migrant women to men is higher. Women tend to be the main receivers of remittances and generally invest in education and health care for their children. Both senders and recipients of remittances face major constraints in having access to financial institutions. Banks and other financial institutions should improve their services. Further research on gender and remittances is needed.

11. Both countries of origin and countries of destination share responsibility for the welfare of migrant women. The need for awareness-raising on the contributions of women migrants in destination countries was highlighted. The contributions, while significant, often remain invisible because of the concentration of female migrant workers in the private sphere. The importance of fostering greater sensitivity to the diversity of cultures among migrants was also raised.

12. Attention was drawn to the need to address the social challenges related to migration in countries of destination, and the need to link the social and economic aspects of migration. Migrant women themselves can play a key role in addressing social challenges. The important contribution of diaspora communities in providing support to migrant women, including in relation to integration into destination countries, was highlighted. Migrant associations and migrant non-governmental organizations could play an important role in addressing the challenges of migration.

13. Trafficking was recognized as a development issue that cuts across the Millennium Development Goals, particularly the goals on poverty eradication and gender equality and empowerment of women. The majority of trafficked women come from low-income, socially deprived circumstances, mostly in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. In countries without comprehensive social security systems, women become vulnerable to trafficking and often end up in unregulated labour sectors.

14. The forced absence of women through trafficking leads to the breakdown of families, the neglect of children and the elderly and negative impacts on health and education. Trafficking can force children into work, denying them education and reinforcing the illiteracy and poverty cycles that hinder development efforts. It can have a negative impact on public health services, including upon the return of victims of trafficking. It was noted that such impacts of trafficking have been inadequately researched and indicators to effectively measure impacts on families are lacking.

15. It was recommended that organizations focusing on migration, including the International Organization for Migration, investigate the causes of trafficking and develop comprehensive indicators for cross-country analyses. Models for assessing trafficking flows, identifying early warning signals and assessing the impact of trafficking on countries of origin, including costs to public health systems, are needed. Evaluations of counter-trafficking programmes should include analyses of labour market factors and the role of recruiters. The need for effective legal measures to address trafficking in women and girls, as well as for cross-border collaboration, including on monitoring and prosecution, was also highlighted.

