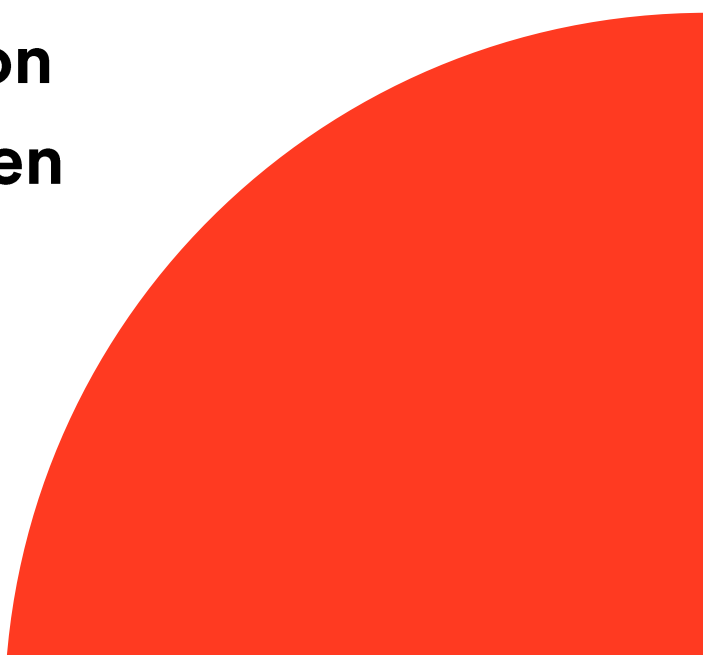




**Spotlight
Initiative**



A Guidance Note to Develop Migration-Sensitive National Action Plans on Violence against Women



“Despite their economic contribution, migrant workers, especially women, still face discriminatory treatment, violence and labour rights violations.

Women migrant workers are particularly vulnerable to violence and trafficking throughout the migration cycle. They are at risk of violence and abuse from intermediaries, employers, partners, and strangers as well as from exploitative labour conditions. But they often have little access to legal protection, justice and support services.”¹

The guidance note was developed by Robin Mauney and Haruka Ishii, independent consultants. We acknowledge and thank the technical inputs and contributions of Melissa Alvarado, Valentina Volpe and Younghwa Choi at the UN Women Regional Office for Asia and Pacific. The guidance note was also reviewed by Deepa Bharathi, Rebecca Napier-Moore (ILO ROAP) Katerine Landuyt and Valentina Beghini (ILO). The guidance note was edited by Dina Deligiorgis and Gihan Hassanein

A Guidance Note to Develop Migration-Sensitive National Action Plans on Violence against Women
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Background

In 2012, UN Women developed the [Handbook for National Action Plans on Violence Against Women \(Handbook\)](#). This publication has served as the guiding document for States to develop National Action Plans on Ending Violence Against Women to meet their obligations to prevent and investigate such acts, to prosecute and punish perpetrators, and to provide redress and relief. The Handbook notes that States have recognized that a coordinated and sustained approach is necessary to address the serious, prevalent and deeply entrenched problem of violence against women. The Handbook underlines that forms of violence against women vary according to social, historical, cultural and political contexts and that manifestations of violence are often multiple, interrelated, and/or recurring. Women's experience of violence is shaped by factors such as race, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, marital status, sexual orientation and gender identity, HIV/AIDS status, migrant or refugee status, age or disability.²

Women constitute approximately half the people who live and work outside their country of origin.³ Women migrant workers are making substantial social and economic contributions to their communities and countries of origin and destination and can significantly increase their agency through the decision to migrate.

Women's experiences when migrating demonstrate that women are at increased risk of multiple forms of discrimination, violence and harassment based on race, ethnicity, nationality, age, migration status or other sex- or gender-associated characteristics. Perpetrators can be employers, community members, state actors, work colleagues, clients or patients, smugglers, traffickers, intimate partners or others. Gender discrimination and the weaker position of many women in most societies are often the root cause of women migrant workers' greater risk for violence and harassment, exploitation and trafficking at all stages of the migration process.

This technical resource builds on the recommendations and guidance in the Handbook and provides specific guidance to ensure the concerns and interests of women migrant workers are incorporated into National Action Plans on Ending Violence Against Women. It is noted that all of the recommendations in the Handbook apply; this document serves only to focus on women migrant workers' rights and needs. As such, in each section, considerations for addressing women migrant workers' needs in national action planning are described. The recommendations in each section are also aligned with the [Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence](#)⁴ and the [16 Essentials for Quality Multisectoral Service Provision to Women Migrant Workers Subject to Violence](#).⁵

¹ Tomoko Nishimoto, Mohammad Naciri, and Jeremy Douglas, (July 2019): *Migration in Southeast Asia should be an opportunity for workers, communities and economies – not traffickers*. ILO, UN Women, and UNODC. accessed 23 September 2019 https://www.ilo.org/asia/media-centre/news/WCMS_716676/lang--en/index.htm

² UN Women (2012): *Handbook for National Action Plans on Violence Against Women*. UN Women: New York.

³ UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2015). *International Migration Report 2015 Highlights*. New York.

⁴ UN Women, UNFPA, WHO, UNDP, UNODC (2015) *Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence*: New York.

⁵ UN Women, ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (2019): *16 Essentials for Quality Multisectoral Service Provision to Women Migrant Workers Subject to Violence*. Spotlight Initiative: Safe and Fair. Bangkok.

Against this backdrop, overall key questions to be asked as National Action Plans on Ending Violence Against Women are developed to ensure inclusion of women migrant workers are:

- Who are the women migrant workers and which countries are they from? Do they have a specific ethno-linguistic and socio-economic profile?
- What are the needs of women migrant workers who have been subject to violence and harassment?
- Do prevention interventions target all types of violence and harassment experienced by women migrant workers, including economic, psychological, physical and sexual?
- Are women migrant workers who have been subject violence and harassment able to access protection such as police, criminal and civil legal processes or protection orders?
- Are women migrant workers who have been subject to violence and harassment able to access services such as 24-hour hotlines, crisis centres, including safe shelter, emergency services, medical care and treatment and psycho-social support to help victims re-enter the labour market, safe, fair and effective reporting, counselling and information services and legal information, in an accessible manner as appropriate?
- Are protections and services available to women migrant workers that meet their needs?
- Who are the first line of service providers for women migrant workers in countries of origin and countries of destination?
- Are service providers knowledgeable about the specific risks, needs, concerns, cultural norms, etc. of women migrant workers?
- How do laws, policies and agreements protect or limit opportunities for employment, services and protection, for women migrant workers who have experienced violence and harassment?
- Are the right key stakeholders engaged to identify, coordinate and improve services? Are linkages made between countries of origin and destination?
- What do we need to know to better understand how to protect the rights and meet the needs of women migrant workers in both countries of origin and destination?
- What other measures (including legal reforms) may be needed to support migrant women in an irregular situation who have been subject to violence and harassment?
- Is data being collected that will help to document and monitor the situation of women migrant workers?

The next sections review key areas in the Handbook and provide guidance for national action planning for ending violence against women with a focus on women migrant workers.

Guiding principles for National Action Plans on Ending Violence Against Women

The guiding principles for developing National Action Plans on Ending Violence Against Women include:

- A Human Rights-Based Approach
- Violence against women as a form of sex discrimination

- Different forms of violence against women
- Root causes and risk factors for victimization and perpetration, prevalence and impact of violence against women
- Multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and disadvantage⁶

All of these principles are crucial for all National Action Plans on Ending Violence Against Women. It is not uncommon, however, that plans focus on intimate partner (domestic) violence and sexual violence as the most common forms of violence. Women migrant workers experience these types of violence, but also experience other forms of violence and harassment and experience them in a range of settings such as the workplace, in public spheres, in the world of work and during conflicts, among others.

Women migrant workers are likely also to experience other forms of discrimination and disadvantage that can increase their risk of violence and or make access to services, justice and support challenging. For example, language or cultural barriers might prevent women from seeking services or protection in destination countries.

To better understand the experiences of violence against women migrant workers, additional research on the nature, prevalence and impacts of violence may be required to identify the gaps for this population of women through the migration cycle so that strategies can be developed to appropriately address these in National Action Plans on Ending Violence Against Women.

A National Action Plan on Ending Violence Against Women, to be inclusive of women migrant workers, must seek to understand the situation of women migrant workers – both what is known and what needs to be known and the practical steps that need to be taken.

A National Action Plan on Ending Violence Against Women should be aligned with the agreed international norms and standards related to violence against women, labour migration and protection of migrant workers.

**Key International Norms and Standards on Violence Against Women,
Labour Migration and Protection of Migrant Workers**

[Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women \(1979\)](#)

[General Recommendation No. 19 \(1992\)](#)

[General Recommendation No. 26 \(2008\)](#)

[General Recommendation No. 35 \(2017\)](#)

[General Assembly Resolution: Violence against Women Migrant Workers \(1995\)](#)

[International Labour Organization Conventions](#)

C97 - [Migration for Employment Convention \(1949\)](#)

C100 - [Equal Remuneration \(1951\)](#)

⁶ UN Women (2012): *Handbook for National Action Plans on Violence Against Women*. UN Women: New York.

- C111 - [Discrimination: Employment and Occupation](#) (1958)
- C118 - [Equality of Treatment: Social Security](#) (1962)
- C143 – [Migrant Workers: Supplementary Provisions](#) (1975)
- C155 – [Occupational Safety and Health](#) (1981)
- C157 – [Maintenance of Social Security Rights](#) (1982)
- C 181- [Private Employment Agencies](#) (1997)
- C 183 - [Maternity Protection](#) (2000)
- C 184 – [Safety and Health in Agriculture](#) (2001)
- C 187 – [Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health](#) (2006)
- C 189 – [Domestic Workers](#) (2011)
- C 190 – [Violence and Harassment](#) (2019)
- R 205 – [Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience](#) (2017)
- R 206 - [Violence and Harassment](#) (2019)

Process for the development of migration sensitive National Action Plans on Ending Violence Against Women

The development of a National Action Plan on Ending Violence Against Women must be multi-sectoral, setting up structures and engaging the stakeholders necessary for its effective implementation. This requires engagement, cooperation and advocacy among government, employers' and workers' organizations, migrant recruitment agencies and non-government organizations (NGOs). The development phase for a National Action Plan on Ending Violence Against Women is a critical period during which structures should be set up or strengthened to ensure the formulation and later implementation of a coherent, comprehensive and sustained programme of activities to address violence against women.⁷

To ensure inclusion of the relevant stakeholders related to women migrant workers, this is an opportunity to expand the stakeholders engaged in the development process of a National Action Plan on Ending Violence Against Women. Traditionally, government stakeholders such as the ministries of Women's and Children's Affairs, Justice, Social Affairs and Health, the police and NGOs providing social services, legal support and other services, participate in the process. These are all critical and must continue. These stakeholders are equally important to include in the process of developing National Action Plans on Migration, ensuring expertise on violence against women is adequately reflected.

Additional key stakeholders for engagement in the development process to ensure women migrant workers' rights and needs are addressed are ministries of Labour (and labour migration where these might be handled by other ministries), Trafficking in Persons, International Cooperation, and Customs and Border Control, for example. Others to be considered are labour recruitment agencies, workers' and employers' organizations, the private sector, NGOs working with women migrant workers, and if

⁷ UN Women (2012): *Handbook for National Action Plans on Violence Against Women*. UN Women: New York.

appropriate, women migrant workers who have been subject to violence and harassment themselves (based on safety, informed consent and understanding of the risks of participation).

Bringing relevant stakeholders into the development process will ensure that the differing experiences, needs and rights of women migrant workers are included in the strategies to prevent and respond to violence and harassment against them.

Cross-cutting structures and actions

Governance structures

Building on the process of expanding the participation of key stakeholders in the process of development of the National Action Plans on Ending Violence Against Women, the governance structure designed to implement and monitor the plan can include stakeholders from the government, the social partners or civil society that represent or respond to women migrant workers (noted above).

Legislation and policy reviews

To ensure a coherent, comprehensive and consistent approach to violence and harassment against women in and through legislation, National Action Plans on Ending Violence Against Women often include law and policy reviews.

To ensure the rights and needs of women migrant workers are addressed, the reviews must include legislation beyond laws on violence against women and children, and beyond laws that focus on one form of violence alone, such as domestic violence/intimate partner violence. This is an opportunity to promote the harmonization of laws for women migrant workers including cross-border agreements, linkages with anti-trafficking laws, social security and labour laws (including on non-discrimination and occupational safety and health), and (labour) migration laws or policies, and alignment with international commitments, conventions and agreements, for example the International Labour Organization (ILO), [Violence and Harassment Convention No. 190](#) and [Recommendation No. 206](#) (2019), led by the ILO. This will also require a review of bilateral labour migration agreements (BLMAs). Addressing violence and harassment against migrant workers, requires the adoption, taking into account the national circumstances, an inclusive, integrated and gender-responsive approach for the prevention and elimination

A world of work free from violence and harassment: a right and an obligation

In June 2019, at the Centenary Conference of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Violence and Harassment Convention (No. 190) and its accompanying Recommendation (No. 206) were adopted. The global community has made it clear that violence and harassment in the world of work will not be tolerated and must end. Convention No. 190 and Recommendation No. 206 are the first international labour standards to provide a clear and common framework to prevent, remedy and eliminate violence and harassment in the world of work. The Convention includes the specific recognition, for the first time in international law, of the right of everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment, and sets out the obligation to respect, promote and realize this right (Art. 4(1)).

of violence and harassment in the world of work. Such an approach should take into account violence and harassment involving third parties, where applicable, and should be developed in consultation with representative employers' and workers' organizations.

A key consideration is to ensure that any revisions, or recommendations for revisions, are rights-based and do not limit opportunities for women to migrate or to work, but in fact offer protections, ensure equal opportunities and treatment, and prevent and protect against discrimination. For example, it is common to limit women's opportunities for work as a means of attempting to protect women from abuse or trafficking by bans on types of work. This effort to protect women instead may limit opportunities for work and may force women into even higher risk situations where they migrate anyway, and is not rights-based.

Capacity-building of workforces and organizations

A common strategy included in National Action Plans on Ending Violence Against Women is to strengthen and standardize accredited training for actors working across different sectors and jurisdictions. This includes approaches for those who work in the health, social services, police and justice sectors, as well as those active in the world of work (workers' and employers' organizations), and others.

Generally, the needs and rights of women migrant workers are not addressed in capacity building efforts in National Action Plans on Ending Violence Against Women. To address this gap, it is crucial for key duty bearers to understand the particular vulnerabilities to different types of violence and harassment women experience during the migration cycle; the varied risks to women migrant workers in seeking services and redress (e.g. fear of deportation, if the employer is the abuser, not being eligible for services, documentation status, legal fees); the differing needs for services in the country of destination, and upon return (interpretation, legal support, knowledge of available services and effective mechanisms for redress, as well as safe, fair and effective reporting and dispute resolution, etc.).

Development of capacity building strategies should include identifying and building capacity not just of social services but of all actors involved in labour migration governance, to address these issues specific to women migrant workers with government and non-government service providers.

Improving research and data

Research and data help to provide an understanding of the incidence and prevalence of violence and harassment against women, the factors that put them at risk and the consequences of that violence in the short, medium and longer-term. Data sources can include both administrative data and prevalence studies, while broader research can take many forms, including qualitative assessments to support a better understanding of the context and situation. It is important to clarify that the only way to know how many women in a population are experiencing violence, is to do a prevalence study, which involves interviewing many women through rigorous methodologies that can only be executed by highly skilled researchers. This type of research related to violence against women is both risky and sensitive. If not done according to the highest ethical and safety standards, asking women questions about their experiences of violence can do harm, and can expose women to more violence (especially if the

perpetrator of violence believes that the victim has spoken to others, including researchers, about the violence). There can also be a danger for interviewers and researchers.

Administrative data is the data collected by agencies that help women. This may be health providers and clinics, police, social service providers, hotlines, legal and justice agencies, shelters, etc. In the case of women migrants who experience violence, data may be collected by employers, trade unions and migrant workers' organizations, recruitment agencies, embassies/consulates, government departments, labour inspectors, civil society organizations that support women migrant workers. As with any data on violence against women, protecting the privacy of victims and their confidentiality is extremely important, as not doing so can result in harm to women and put them at greater risk of violence. Many perpetrators are very afraid that the violence they have committed will become publicly known, or that they will be charged with a crime, and they will often threaten victims to ensure violence is not reported. All data on violence and harassment against women migrant workers must be held safely and carefully protected. Only a small set of people that have had training about how to handle data on violence against women should have access to such data.

While this may be contrary to common thinking, a rise in reported cases of violence is generally understood to be a positive sign that survivors are coming forward to seek help. Low reporting rates may indicate a lack of safe, fair and effective reporting systems or mechanisms of redress, as well as a lack of awareness and knowledge among migrant women of these, or about violence and harassment more generally. Sometimes a rise in reported cases of violence is thought to indicate a rise in actual rates of violence against women, however that is not necessarily the case. Only a prevalence study can determine the overall rate of violence against women at any time. Administrative data can only show the cases that were documented by service providers, which is well known to be only a small percentage of actual cases of violence that happen.

There is limited administrative and prevalence data to help understand the experiences and situation of women migrant workers who have experienced violence. As new research opportunities arise, specific questions must be added to document their experiences of violence and identify the gaps and challenges in response.

Administrative data collection systems must include information to understand the migration status and type of violence, while protecting the woman migrant worker who has experienced violence (for example, from deportation). This should also include linkages with trafficking as a form of violence against women.

In all research on violence against women, including violence against women migrant workers, the primary importance should be safety of the woman who has experienced violence, to allow for a better understanding of her situation, needs and how to access her rights. All data collection and research about violence against women migrant workers should be led by highly skilled researchers with expertise about violence against women, and the specific research methods for studying violence against women.⁸

⁸ <http://www.endvawnow.org/>

Primary prevention

Primary prevention strategies refer to actions focused on preventing violence before it happens. Prevention strategies build an understanding that violence against women is a violation of women's human rights and a manifestation of inequality between those who perpetrate it and those who are subjected to it. With regard to women migrant workers, prevention strategies should challenge gender stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes related broadly to women's work, as well as women migrants' work, promoting a world of work based on dignity and respect for all workers. Prevention strategies should include policies and programmes to change social norms that accept or justify gender and other inequalities as well as those that condone violence and harassment, including in the world of work. All perpetrators of violence against women must also be held accountable for violations committed.

National Action Plans on Ending Violence Against Women should include ways to prevent violence against women migrant workers based on the specific factors that put them at risk. This will require including employers and workers and their respective organizations, community members, families and others to address the barriers that limit women's opportunities and increase their risks of violence and trafficking. Identifying measures that protect migrant women without limiting their options for work is critical.

Essential services

The [Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence](#), a joint tool developed globally by UN Women, UNFPA, WHO, UNODC and UNDP, identifies a core set of principles of care and services provided by the health, social services, police and justice sectors, and coordination actors to guide a multi-sectoral response to violence against women. The [16 Essentials for Quality Multisectoral Service Provision to Women Migrant Workers Subject to Violence](#) identifies essential services that need to be in place to ensure quality response to women migrant workers. Below are considerations for ensuring these 16 essential services are inclusive of women migrant workers in National Action Plans on Ending Violence Against Women.⁹

Health

Many victims/survivors of violence access primary health care services. This can be a key point of entry for women who face violence into a system of support. Quality essential services include protocols for identifying, providing care for immediate physical and mental health needs, forensic examinations and referral to other services based on the needs of the victim/survivor.

As National Action Plans on Ending Violence Against Women are developed, the unique challenges women migrant workers face to obtain health care in destination countries should be identified and strategies developed to respond. Some considerations are ensuring that migrant women are eligible for health services and will not be put at risk of negative consequences for seeking help. Women migrant workers who have experienced violence commonly do not seek help for fear of the consequences (deportation, loss of employment or others). International human rights and labour standards call for equality of

⁹ UN Women, UNFPA, WHO, UNDP, UNODC (2015) *Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence*: New York.

treatment between migrant workers and nationals with respect to social security and regarding access to health care.

The best ways to reach women migrant workers to provide health care should be identified. This includes provision of interpretation services at health centres, outreach clinics into migrant communities so that migrant women that have experienced violence can be reached. Health care providers must be also be trained on the specific needs, vulnerabilities, and challenges of women migrant workers along with cultural differences to ensure that quality care is provided.

A key element of improved health services is the ability of health workers to refer victims/survivors to services based on their needs. This will require that health care providers link with traditional services for women who have experienced violence, but also with NGOs or other key actors that provide services for women migrant workers. It is very important to have a clear understanding of the risks and benefits of referral for the victim/survivor so that she can make an informed decision (for example about prosecution, if her legal status is tied to her employer).

Police and justice

A quality police and justice response is crucial in ensuring that relevant laws on violence against women are enforced and keep women safe from violence and hold perpetrators accountable for serious crimes. Commonly, few cases of violence against women are prosecuted, revealing gaps in the justice continuum. While these challenges are true for all women, women migrant workers face unique challenges.

When developing National Action Plans on Ending Violence Against Women, the unique challenges of women migrant workers seeking justice must be documented and addressed. One common challenge is the issue of legal standing of the migrant worker. If she is in another country, she might not have the same rights in that country as citizens. National Action Plans on Ending Violence Against Women should identify these gaps and develop strategies to address them. Some examples include access to legal information, legal advice, legal assistance and representation in criminal matters. Others are legal assistance on payment of wages and other benefits due, legal documentation, or other concerns in addition to civil or criminal remedies addressing the violence. Support must be continued even if she returns home to finalize any legal processes.

Victims/survivors should be made aware of legal options, justice processes such as the process of filing a complaint, and any differences for women who are non-residents. If there are legal implications to reporting violence that could negatively impact the survivor (deportation, work status), she should be told in advance. Another is to ensure that a victim of trafficking or exploitation has the legal status to receive services until her case is resolved. Support must be continued even if she returns home to finalize any legal processes.

If the women migrant worker has to leave the country of employment she should be entitled, irrespective of the legality of her stay to certain rights arising out of past employment. According to ILO standards these include (a) any outstanding remuneration for work performed, including severance payments normally due; (b) benefits which may be due in respect of any employment injury suffered; and (c) in accordance with national practice certain social security entitlements. In case of a dispute regarding the

above, the women migrant worker should be able to have her interests represented before the competent body and enjoy equal treatment with national workers as regards legal assistance¹⁰.

A migrant women who loses her jobs due to violence and harassment should not have her residence permit or work permit be withdrawn, and countries of destination should refrain from removing her from their territory on the account of lack of means. She should be allowed sufficient time to obtain a decision in case she has filed an appeal against termination, the authorization of residence should be extended accordingly. If it is established that the termination of employment was not justified, the migrant worker should be entitled, on the same terms as national workers, to reinstatement, to compensation for loss of wages or of other payment which results from unjustified termination, or to access a new job with a right to indemnification. If she is not reinstated, she should be allowed sufficient time to find alternative employment.¹¹

Essential social services

Social services provide a range of support to improve the general safety, well-being and recovery of women subject to violence. Services are designed to provide protection, recovery from violence, promote empowerment and prevent the recurrence of violence. Services include, but are not limited to, providing psychosocial support, safe accommodation and shelter, crisis counselling, financial support, legal information and advocacy, housing and employment services, among others.

The World of Work and Domestic Violence

The world of work is an important entry point for addressing domestic violence, which can affect employment, productivity, and health and safety. Governments, employers' and workers' organizations and labour market institutions can help, as part of other measures, to recognize, respond to and address the impacts of domestic violence ([ILO Convention 190](#) and [Recommendation 206](#)). National Action Plans on Ending Violence against Women should integrate considerations for the world of work. For more detailed information, see the ILO and UN Women [Handbook Addressing Violence and Harassment against Women in the World of Work](#).

The development of National Action Plans on Ending Violence Against Women should assess the needs of women who have experienced violence and the available services in the country and identify gaps and strategies to address them. To ensure that the needs of women migrant workers are met in this process, it is necessary to explore their specific experiences and needs.

Some key areas that have been identified as important for services to women migrant workers who have experienced violence are: 1) service providers should maintain a professional awareness on how to

¹⁰ Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143), Article 9 (1)-(3) and Migrant Workers Recommendation, 1975 (No. 151), Paragraph 34.

¹¹ See Migrant Workers Recommendation, 1975 (No. 151), paragraphs 30-32.

respond sensitively to women who have migrated and experienced violence; 2) services must be available in locations and diverse settings so that women migrant workers can access them; 3) compensating for the lack of traditional support network for women migrant workers who are far from home and may experience stigma and discrimination in the migrant community; 4) ensuring safety and considering the need for secure accommodation, as the perpetrator is likely her employer or part of her community/family; 5) a temporary need for economic support, noting additional issues if the employer is the perpetrator; and 5) permitting a support person to accompany her to alleviate stress due to unfamiliarity when seeking services.

When accessing the services, issues of interpretation, safety, and legal status should be considered, and the victim/survivor made aware. National Action Plans on Ending Violence Against Women can identify these areas and ensure that women migrant workers are protected.

Coordination and governance of coordination

Coordination and governance of coordination is the foundation of a sustained, smooth and coordinated response to keeping victims/survivors safe from violence and holding perpetrators accountable. A coordinated response places the victims/survivor at the centre of any intervention. In the development of National Action Plans on Ending Violence Against Women, the coordinated response mechanism should include key actors coming together to enhance inter-agency relationships, work together to change policies and practice and to increase access to and improve services. In many countries, service delivery protocols that establish roles and responsibilities, expectations, and means of coordination have been extremely helpful in ensuring long-standing cooperation among various ministries, sectors and agencies to work together to support women survivors of violence.

International coordination and cooperation between countries of origin and destination is also important and a key principle of good labour migration practice. Coordination and cooperation can play a role in preventing and protecting women migrants from violence and harassment; and can support effective enforcement of existing bi-lateral agreements, national laws and policies that pertain to women migrant workers. Linkages between countries of origin and destination should be promoted through bilateral agreements. Linkages with relevant embassies should also be considered to ensure essential services are available and coordinated in the destination country and upon return to the home country, and that survivors have easy access to the services and mechanisms of redress available to them. A National Action Plan on Ending Violence Against Women provides an opportunity to identify any gaps and plan for future agreements.

The national action planning process can also promote service linkages among sectors (related to trafficking, violence against women, employment, and migration), ensuring common principles are applied and essential services are available, accessible and coordinated. Cross-sector training and capacity development is a good practice that has shown positive results in many settings related to responding to and preventing violence against women and girls.

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

National Action Plans on Violence Against Women should provide a framework for effective monitoring of the strategies. This includes the development of a performance monitoring framework that identifies

targets and indicators linked with the goals of the National Action Plan on Ending Violence Against Women. Good practice to ensure effective implementation is the practice of costing the implementation of the National Action Plan on Ending Violence Against Women and identifying resources.

To ensure the needs and rights of women migrant workers are monitored, where strategies are designed to specifically meet their needs, specific indicators should be set. Regular evaluation of the National Action Plan on Ending Violence Against Women implementation, resourcing and progress is essential to understand if the Plan is being implemented as intended or as needed, and to make adjustments based on new evidence or information.

Data collection systems for administrative data must be reviewed to ensure they are collecting data on women migrant workers' experiences of violence to build understanding of their help-seeking behaviour. At the same time, protections should be considered that prevent data from being collected that could negatively impact the worker, such as their migration status.

Multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms serve as an institutional mechanism to monitor implementation of the National Action Plan on Ending Violence Against Women. Inclusion of stakeholders that represent or are accountable to women migrant workers should be included in these mechanisms. For example, civil society organizations working with women migrant workers, labour ministries, including labour inspectorates, trade unions, and/or recruitment agencies.

Good practice is to include (on a fully informed and voluntary basis) women survivors of violence, in this case, women migrant workers who have experienced violence, in reviews, monitoring and evaluation of National Action Plans on Ending Violence Against Women to determine if the measures and responses are meeting their needs.





Photo: UN Women/Staton Winter



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The programme “Safe and Fair: Realizing women migrant workers’ rights and opportunities in the ASEAN region (2018-2022)” is implemented by the ILO and UN Women, under the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to Eliminate Violence against Women and Girls. Safe and Fair delivers technical assistance and support with the overall objective of making labour migration safe and fair for all women in the ASEAN region.

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