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Video Message

**FOR
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GENERAL FOR INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION**

***Strategic Approaches for a Gender- Responsive Global
Compact for Migration***

**Side event at the Tenth Global Forum on Migration and
Development, Common Space**

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Dear Excellencies, colleagues and friends,

I regret that I cannot be with you today to engage on an important issue: addressing women's human rights in the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration.

However, I am happy to provide a short video with some observations and reflections on this topic.

Let me start by thanking UN Women and the Women in Migration Network for the invitation. I would also like to congratulate all experts that contributed to the concrete and important recommendations that you will discuss today.

Women have constituted approximately half of the world's migrants for decades. Indeed, the percentage of women among international migrants has remained very stable throughout recent history, increasing only 2% from 1960 to 2015.

In spite of this long-established reality, the public debate around migration rests on the wrong assumption that most migrants are young men in search for jobs.

The expression "migrants and their families" is commonly misused to mean "male migrants and their wives and children", and it is based on the inaccurate assumption that wives and children passively follow the husbands.

The expression "women and children" is often a way to portray them as vulnerable and in need of protection from men, ignoring the reality that women, men, girls and boys all have specific needs and vulnerabilities.

Changing the lens through which we look at migration is a prerequisite for the success of the global compact.

We should start by elevating the focus on women and girls that have too long been neglected in migration debates.

We need a new narrative that looks at women in migration as rights-holders, agents of development and, most importantly, leaders that bring dynamism, innovation and cultural richness to societies.

At the same time, we must follow, indeed strengthen, best practices for women's empowerment and protection.

The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, adopted by global leaders at the United Nations last September, identified five specific actions to ensure that responses to large movements of refugees and migrants promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls:

- Incorporating a gender perspective into national migration policies;**
- Tackling the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination against migrant women and girls;**
- Combatting sexual and gender-based violence to the greatest extent possible;**
- Providing access to sexual and reproductive health-care services;**

- **Ensuring migrant women's full, equal and meaningful participation in the development of local solutions and opportunities.**

Building on the actions identified in the New York Declaration, the expert recommendations you will discuss today reflect important entry points to address those challenges and discriminations effectively in a global compact that must be both gender-responsive and human rights-based.

In recent developments at the United Nations, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, gender equality and women's empowerment were not only mainstreamed, but also prioritized and clearly visible. Building on these positive steps, it is now time to integrate a strong gender equality perspective into migration governance.

A global compact that addresses the specific needs and vulnerabilities, and equally importantly, the capacities and contributions of migrant women and girls, could have a tremendous impact on millions of women and girls on the move and ensure that no migrant is left-behind.

Thank you very much.