Migrants and Discrimination: Lessons for the future

27 April 2023

Summary Report

Background

In the Progress Declaration of the 2022 International Migration Review Forum (IMRF), Member States committed to eliminating all forms of discrimination, as well as negative stereotyping and misleading narratives that generate negative perceptions on migration and migrants. This follows their commitments to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM)'s objectives and guiding principles.

In support of these efforts, the United Nations Network on Migration (Network) established workstreams on 'Enhancing the application of anti-discrimination dimensions, including against racism, xenophobia and intolerance into the work of the Network' and 'Enhancing the application of anti-discrimination dimensions, including discrimination based on gender' into its workplan.

In 2022, the workstreams jointly developed the Anti-discrimination and COVID-19 advocacy tool through multi-stakeholder and inter-agency leadership. Though emerging from inequalities exposed during the pandemic, the tool addresses structural discrimination and other barriers to equality faced by migrants and provides forward-looking solutions. It contains a regional mapping of discriminatory issues across gender, sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, race, ethnicity and other characteristics that were thrown into stark relief by the pandemic, principally with regards to access to services and measures taken to address the impact of COVID-19.

The Network statement marking the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination also recognizes the urgency of addressing racial discrimination in the context of migration through an intersectional lens.

Intersectionality is a framework for thinking about how people's identities and related social factors impact their lives. Utilizing an intersectional lens "identifies hidden structural barriers and supports an understanding of how individual experiences differ, even within already marginalised or underrepresented groups."[1]

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[1] From Kimberly Crenshaw, 2015 and 'Intersectionality Resource Guide and Toolkit: An Intersectional Approach to Leave No One Behind", UNPRPD and UN Women;

Organization

The 90 minutes GCM Talk was held online. Simultaneous interpretation was provided in English, French and Spanish.

Objective

The objective of this introductory GCM Talk was threefold:

1) To present the Anti-discrimination advocacy tool and to start a discussion on intersectional discrimination towards migrants, both to understand what this means on the ground and to offer advocacy strategies.
2) To discuss ways in which an intersectional lens, considering racial justice, gender, and LGBTQI+ rights, among others, can be taken to strengthen migration policies at all levels.
3) To highlight and explore ways to strengthen a UN system-wide and multi-stakeholder approach to achieving non-discrimination and equality in keeping with the 360-degree vision of the GCM and fulfilling its objectives within the sustainable development framework of 2030 Agenda.

The discussion was based on the following guiding questions:

1) How can an intersectional lens be used in policymaking to better address the multiple intersectional forms of discrimination faced by migrants?
2) What are examples of promising practices and solutions to combat discrimination against migrants?
3) How can the Anti-discrimination advocacy tool be operationalized at country levels by governments and stakeholders to address intersectional discrimination as part of GCM implementation?

Participants

- Registered participants: 426
- Participants: 196, including 16 Member States, and over 100 CSO
- Speakers/Panelists: Jonathan Prentice, UN Network secretariat; Stella Opoku-Owusu, Africa Foundation for Development (AFFORD); Jenna Hennebry, Wilfred Laurier University and Gender+Migration Hub; Stephanie Leung, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and Paola Cyment, Women in Migration Network. The moderator was Rita Izsák-Ndiaye, Senior Advisor on Anti-Racism, Rule of Law, Security and Human Rights UNDP.

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https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/Intersectionality-resource-guide-and-toolkit-en.pdf

Recommendations and key take-aways

The Anti-discrimination advocacy tool was presented by the panelists. The key elements of the tool are the following:

- First, the Anti-discrimination advocacy tool provides a snapshot of issues and challenges that are related to gender and race discrimination as experienced by migrants across regions.
- Secondly, it considers how COVID-19 policies and responses may have interacted with other migration, race, and/or gender-related policies and where these may have impacted social determinants of health.
- Thirdly, it provides examples of promising practices and processes developed by stakeholders that may inform and inspire others.

The interventions highlighted how an intersectional approach towards discrimination, considering compounded and intersecting inequalities faced by people experiencing diverse and compounded forms of discrimination allows to better tackle the many types of discrimination affecting migrants, could strengthen migration policies and provided several good practices and tools to combat the many forms of discrimination and improve the narratives on migration.

Below is a summary of the main challenges, good practices/tools and recommendations mentioned by participants.

Challenges:

- Lack of awareness of discrimination faced by migrants.
- Lack of disaggregated data by race, ethnicity, and migratory status.
- Lack of monitoring tools.
- Lack of trust in officials and institutions.

Good practices/Tools:

- *Gender and Migration:*
  - [Gender + Migration Hub](#) aims to support governments, civil society, and other stakeholders to ensure that migration and other relevant policies are gender-responsive and align with the guiding principles of the GCM.
  - UN Women developed a guide entitled "[Policies and Practice: A Guide to Gender-Responsive Implementation of the GCM](#)".
  - The [Gender-based Analysis Plus](#) (GBA Plus) supports the Canadian government in making sure that considerations of gender and intersectional identity are baked-in the development of government policies and programs.

- o [Women in Migration Network](#) held five regional dialogues in Latin America, Africa, Asia, MENA, and Europe on intersectionality and migration.
- o Moroccan agricultural workers and migrant women working in Southern Spain self-organized to face exploitative conditions through a feminist and anti-racist discourse.
- **Narratives on migration:**
  - o The [Xenophobia Zero community](#) is a space with positive content about migrants, resources to respond respectfully and effectively to hate speech and data to support analyzing the levels of xenophobia in a country.
  - o The [GFMD](#) has an [ad hoc Working Group on Public Narratives on Migration](#) co-chaired by Canada, Ecuador and the GFMD Mayors Mechanism and from which emerged the social media communication campaign [It Takes a Community](#) (ITAC).
  - o Canada is also co-chairing, with the Philippines, a roundtable on improving the perception of migration in public opinion for the GFMD.
  - o Canada developed a campaign entitled [#ImmigrationMatters](#).
  - o OHCHR launched a [Toolbox on migration narrative change](#) in 2020.
- **Other good practices shared:**
  - o Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI) and Instituto para las Mujeres en la Migración (IMUMI) jointly published a [report](#) to document racial discrimination against African migrants at Mexico's southern border.
  - o Canada developed an [Anti-Racism strategy.](#)
  - o The [International Domestic Workers Federation](#) (IDWF), [migrantrights.org](#) and the Anti-Racist Movement are mobilized to abolish the Kafala sponsorship system which ties workers to their employers, limits their mobility and their capacity to claim rights and report violations.
  - o The [United Methodist Committee on Relief](#) developed a small granting system for their churches to start migration projects.

Recommendations:

- **Intersectionality in policies:**
  - o Use an intersectional lens to inform future policymaking and response to crises.
  - o Recognize the intersectional realities of migrant experiences and address their specific needs.
  - o Adopt human rights-based and gender-responsive approaches.
  - o Address and increase visibility in policy of intersectional challenges created by climate change, gender and migration.
  - o Take active measures to eliminate laws and policies that lead to discrimination.

- o Have focused discussion at the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent leading to specific recommendations on migration governance.
- *Meaningful participation of migrants:*
  - o Use the GCM regional reviews to follow up on the IMRF commitment to enhancing meaningful participation of those directly concerned.
  - o Support and advocate at the national level by engaging with migrants.
  - o Focus on migrants' expertise and experiences in discussions to inform effective recommendations.
- *Monitoring:*
  - o Invest in monitoring.
  - o In the regional reviews and during the IMRFs, assess what specific changes in legislation, policies, and practices are being made.
  - o Assess how migrants in situations of vulnerability are being protected, what policies are being put in place, and how race and gender are considered in those specific policies.
  - o Consider and examine historical inequalities and structures, including social and political structures, for evidence of built-in racism and xenophobia.
- *Narratives on migration:*
  - o Challenge dominant discourses on migration and decolonize the discourse on migration policies.
  - o Develop campaigns that promote ending racism and building equality, and combat hate speech.
- *Other recommendations:*
  - o Recognize how government programs and policies impact migrants and governments to take an active role in protecting migrants and fighting against the structural forms of discrimination and racism.
  - o Develop effective mechanisms to recognize and promote the rights and dignity of migrants, to support whole-of-society approaches and to ensure inclusivity in the various approaches.

This summary of the GCM Talk held on 27 April 2023 was prepared by the members of the workstreams and the secretariat of the UN Network on Migration. It does not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Network members. As a summary, it is not a verbatim transcript. Watch the full recording [here](.).