



UNFPA

state of world population 2006

A Passage to Hope

Women and International Migration



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United Nations Population Fund
Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, Executive Director



On the cover
Bangladeshi women carrying candles participate in a demonstration to protest against trafficking of women and violence against women in Dhaka on 11 August 2003. More than 1,000 women, including some 200 delegates from Afghanistan, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the Philippines participated in the demonstration.

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Background image:
Truck loaded with about 150 migrants travelling between Agadez and the border, bound for Libya or Algeria. Young men from all over West Africa travel by truck through the Sahara desert to the North African coast, trying to get to Europe. The crossing takes about a week.
 © Sven Torfinn/Panos Pictures



Introduction

Today, women constitute almost half of all international migrants worldwide—95 million. Yet, despite contributions to poverty reduction and struggling economies, it is only recently that the international community has begun to grasp the significance of what migrant women have to offer. And it is only recently that policymakers are acknowledging the particular challenges and risks women confront when venturing into new lands.

Every year millions of women working millions of jobs overseas send hundreds of millions of dollars in remittance funds back to their homes and communities. These funds go to fill hungry bellies, clothe and educate children, provide health care and generally improve living standards for loved ones left behind. For host countries, the labour of migrant women is so embedded into the very fabric of society that it goes virtually unnoticed. Migrant women toil in the households of working families, soothe the sick and comfort the elderly. They contribute their technical and professional expertise, pay taxes and quietly support a quality of life that many take for granted.

For a long time, the issue of women migrants has been low on the international policy agenda. Today, the world has a unique opportunity to change this: For the first time, government representatives from around the globe will be attending a United Nations session specifically devoted to migration. The 2006 High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development offers a critical opportunity to ensure that the voices of migrant women are heard. The explicit recognition of the human rights of women and the need for gender equality is a basic prerequisite of any sound, equitable and effective policy framework that seeks to manage migration in an orderly and humane manner.

Benefits cut both ways. For many women, migration opens doors to a new world of greater equality, relief from oppression and the discrimination that limits freedom and stunts potential. For origin and receiving countries, the contribution of women migrants can quite literally transform quality of life. This dedication, however, comes at a cost—for migration also has its dark side.

◀ Young girls play in a building in Kabul, Afghanistan. It is home to 105 Pakistani refugee families, who struggle daily to find money for food.

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From the modern-day enslavement of trafficking victims to the exploitation of domestic workers, millions of female migrants face hazards that testify to a lack of adequate opportunities to migrate safely and legally. Trafficking is not only one of most horrific manifestations of migration “gone bad”; it also undermines national security and stability.¹ Weak multilateral cooperation and the failure to establish, implement and enforce policies and measures designed to protect migrant women from exploitation and abuse means it is the most vulnerable who will pay—and sometimes with their lives.

The demand for women migrants is on all time

in 2004, the Programme of Action still constituted one of the leading and most comprehensive global governmental agreements ever established on international migration and development.³ Among key commitments, governments agreed to “address the root causes of migration, especially those related to poverty”,⁴ and to “seek to make the option of remaining in one’s country viable for all people”.⁵ Since then, the global community has rallied around the Millennium Development Goals. In 2000, heads of state and government unanimously made a pledge to “make poverty history”⁶ and to end gender discrimination.

预览已结束，完整报告链接和二维

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