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IOM International Organization for Migration  
OIM Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations  
OIM Organización Internacional para las Migraciones

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**REPORT BY THE WORKING GROUP ON GENDER ISSUES ON  
GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN THE ORGANIZATION**

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### I. INTRODUCTION

1. IOM adopted a policy on migrant women in 1995 and a policy brochure was drafted in 1998 on gender mainstreaming in the Organization. The conditions of migrant women ten years ago warranted a gender-specific policy to better meet their needs and concerns, notably heightened vulnerability and often double discrimination due to their status as foreigners and women during and after their mobility. Efforts have recently been made by the Working Group on Gender issues (WGGI) to update the policy brochure on "*Gender Mainstreaming in IOM*" to reflect a broader and more balanced gender policy. Moreover, a number of issues such as gender-based sexual violence against migrant women, the role of gender inequalities in the HIV/AIDS pandemic, unaccompanied minors, demobilized ex-combatant women and children, and indigenous women, have come to light as needing more attention by the Organization and the WGGI. This policy brochure will be published next year.

2. Gender mainstreaming in IOM continues to make progress thanks to a number of activities set out in the next chapter. The WGGI will continue to focus on training and gender awareness-raising events for staff, on research and publications, and on support to project development.

### II. ACTIVITIES IN 2005

#### Awareness raising

3. The WGGI participated in the organization of a half-day workshop, sponsored by the Staff Association Committee and in cooperation with Staff Development and Learning, on "*Gender Differences in the Relations between Men and Women in the Work Place*" in October. The programme dealt with: (1) gender differences at work (how men and women see themselves in the work place; what is important for men is not necessarily important for women and vice versa); (2) how to work with the opposite sex (teamwork, how to manage the opposite sex; most common mistakes), and (3) how to solve problems together (argument for argument's sake, problem solving, working together in stressful working environments).

4. In November, a film on Female Genital Mutilation was shown on the first day of the international campaign of 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence.

#### New activities

5. In its outreach to staff and migrants, the WGGI carried out or sponsored a number of activities.

- On the occasion of International Women's Day in March, the WGGI organized the following activities:
  - A **fact sheet** was issued on the history of International Women's Day.

- Memorable experiences of IOM female staff working in the field: **“IOM Women on the Front Lines”** were compiled into a publication.
- Staff members were asked to provide ideas on how to improve the lives of women and to achieve gender equality under the title: **“If I had a magic wand...”**: over 300 responses from men and women staff around the world were received. The four best and most original phrases (submitted by two men and two women) received prizes.
- A **photo exhibit** on “IOM Women on the Front Lines” was displayed at Headquarters.
- **Facts and figures posters** were drawn up and prominently posted in Headquarters to draw staff attention to ongoing violence against women.

All documents were posted on IOM’s website.

- In collaboration with the Golda Meir Mount Carmel International Training Centre and other Israeli partners, a Conference on *“Migration and Gender Issues within the Millennium Development Goals”* was held for Women Leaders from 25-28 September in Haifa, Israel. The Conference gathered approximately 50 women leaders including 20 Ministers and parliamentarians, academics, senior representatives from international agencies, and NGO representatives. The discussion ranged widely across gender, migration and development issues. With female migrants accounting for almost half of the world’s migrant population, they have become an economic force for development and poverty reduction. Adopting policies that support greater gender equality can help maximize the development impact of migrants. The Conference resulted in a strong call on governments, academic and relevant international agencies to:
  - Include migration and gender issues in country PRSPs;
  - Collect and analyse sex-disaggregated statistics on migration, diasporas and remittances;
  - Analyse the impact of trafficking on poverty;
  - Ratify and enact international instruments promoting the rights of female migrants;
  - Include migration and gender in planning, implementation and evaluation of development strategies;
  - Demonstrate sensitivity to migrant cultures and eliminate harmful traditional practices that negatively affect the rights of women;
  - Cooperate within and between governments and the private sector on migration, development and gender issues, and
  - Eradicate gender-based discrimination and stereotyping, the latter particularly by the media.

It was further agreed that the Conclusions and Recommendations of the Conference would be brought to the attention of the United Nations High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development in 2006 by the UN Special Adviser on Gender and Advancement of Women who was the Guest of Honour at the Conference.

- New Guidelines for gender mainstreaming in IOM's programme and staff policy on gender issues are in the final stages of preparation.
- A booklet on gender indicators for project development is in the final stages of preparation.

### **Update on Human Resources Initiatives, Projects and Publications**

#### **Ongoing Activities**

- Participation in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Force on Gender and Humanitarian Assistance. Among noteworthy activities of this Task Force is the publication of "*Guidelines for Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings*" – *Focusing on Prevention of and Response to Sexual Violence in Emergencies*. IOM participated in the drafting of the guidelines and the peer review, and ensured the proofreading of the Arabic translation.
- Vacancy notices continue to be circulated to all IOM Gender Focal Points and posted on the United Nations website of "Women Watch" to ensure that more qualified women receive them.
- A non-voting ex-officio WGGI member continues to attend all meetings of the Appointments and Postings Board dealing with candidatures for vacancy notices in an effort to ensure that gender balance is borne in mind.
- Quarterly publication of the Gender and Migration News Bulletin which is posted on IOM's website.
- A number of activities projected for 2005 - such as organizing a conference on indigenous women or on the integration of migrant women, developing a CD Rom and manual on gender and migration - were either postponed or were reconsidered and will be addressed next year.
- A report can be found in the Annex on specific project activities in 2005.

### **III. PROJECTED ACTIVITIES FOR 2006**

6. As in previous years, the WGGI is convinced of the value of its three-pronged approach to gender mainstreaming in the Organization composed of project support, training and outreach events, and research and publications. The WGGI feels these combined activities should have the greatest impact on the largest number of beneficiaries - migrants and staff. Moreover, several activities are proposed next year in an attempt to address information gaps in fields such as

gender and remittances, indigenous peoples and migration, and the links between harmful traditional practices and migration and integration.

- A study on “The Effects of Internal (rural-urban) Migration on Women in Bangladesh” and a study on “Remittances in Colombia from a Gender Perspective”.
- Participation in organizing an inter-agency conference on the Feminization of Migration.
- Participation in the organization of an inter-agency workshop on indigenous peoples.
- Development of a project to address the impact of and links between harmful traditional practices and migration and integration.
- Holding of gender awareness-raising events.

## CONCLUSIONS

7. Gender mainstreaming has proven its value in all environments. While steady progress has been made in the Organization, more efforts are needed to maintain the momentum as well as the interest and concern of all staff while addressing the needs of all migrants. The Working Group on Gender issues will continue to devote increased attention to gender mainstreaming among all its stakeholders: States, migrants, and staff. In order to do so, the continuing support of its leadership and the Member States is needed.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A request for funding from the Council for future project support, ongoing training events and new initiatives can be found in the Programme and Budget for 2006 (MC/2176) – General Programme Support, Chapter VIII.9 – Gender Issues Activities.

Annex

**STATUS REPORT  
ON THE RESULTS OF WGGI-SPONSORED PROJECTS IN 2005**

Full reports can be made available upon request.

**1. “Identification and assessment of rural women in Tunisia: Innovative actions and entrepreneurial success” in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Tunisian Solidarity Bank (BTS) (IOM Tunis)**

**Project Summary:** Certain primarily agricultural but economically depressed areas of Tunisia suffer from an acute rate of unemployment and consequently become strong emigration-prone regions. At the same time, as the men most often leave the household for better opportunities in Europe or beyond, the women are left alone in charge of all family burdens. As it is estimated that the number of single parent families headed by women is particularly high and engenders special socio-economic challenges for women, it is important to address the particular needs that women may have in this context. The target areas of the project are Kasserine, Kairouan, Siliana and Zaghouan and are mainly rural.

IOM Tunis is participating in a joint project with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Tunisian Solidarity Bank (BTS) within the category of Technical Cooperation for Migration, which aims to economically empower women in single-parent families through the provision of micro-credits and the stimulation of micro-enterprises. Special emphasis is also devoted to information and awareness campaigns and the subsequent widespread dissemination of the results.

**Results:** The implementation of the project is in its penultimate stages, pending finalization of the necessary report from one of the partners on a survey of the successful cases of women having benefited from micro-credits for their entrepreneurial activities. Field visits to governorates and focus group meetings with beneficiaries are the next planned steps. Additionally, awareness of and the importance to gender-related issues as a result of migration have been raised within the Tunisian institutions responsible for the project approval and implementation. The BTS has agreed to finance three sensitization workshops and will be responsible for co-financing the presentation of the results. Both the technical report, which is the responsibility of IOM, and the recorded audio-visual material illustrating successful entrepreneurial women under the supervision of IOM will ultimately be made available at an institutional level to development associations and to the donor community.

In conclusion, the project has already shown an impact on practical mainstreaming policies within IOM activities. Its implementation will result in a clearer picture of concrete experiences of women beneficiaries and of the potential for fostering future related projects.

**Constraints:** due to a number of unforeseeable events in carrying out the survey, it is estimated that this project will be fully implemented in early 2006.

**WGGI funding: USD 10,000**

## **2. Support to IOM-Southern African Counter-Trafficking Assistance Programme (SACTAP) Helpline (January-March 2005) (MRF Pretoria):**

**Project Summary:** As part of its Southern African Counter-Trafficking Assistance Programme (SACTAP), IOM Pretoria has established a national trafficking helpline pilot project in South Africa, allowing trafficked persons in the country to make distress calls to IOM, and helping members of the public to report known or suspected cases of trafficking or to request information. The helpline is a partnership between IOM and LifeLine Southern Africa (affiliated to LifeLine International), a regional network of 29 non-governmental centres offering counselling and life-skills training. The service is available toll-free across South Africa seven days a week (following its launch in August 2004, the service was available on a 24-hour basis, including the period during January – March 2005 but has since been restricted to the hours between 7am and 10pm due to a trend indicating low call frequency after 9pm). LifeLine is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the helpline, including the management of a duty-roster, the smooth functioning of the recording equipment, and administrative tasks. IOM's chief responsibility is transcribing and acting on valuable, trafficking-related phone calls and holding regular debriefing sessions with the helpline operators during which time recorded calls are reviewed and analysed for training purposes, with the aim of improving the ability of the operators to respond to a variety of calls.

**Results:** Between January and the end of March 2005, a total of 198 trafficking-related phone calls was made to the helpline. The majority of these were requests from the public for information on human trafficking, the services offered under the SACTAP Programme, and IOM. Eleven phone calls were received over the same period from members of the public wishing to report actual or suspected cases of human trafficking. In three cases, detailed information was reported to the helpline regarding the trafficking of Chinese women to Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni (east of Johannesburg) and Cape Town. Following reports to the helpline of the trafficking of Thai women to Durban during late 2004, one further report was received, involving the alleged captivity of four Thai women on a farm in rural KwaZulu-Natal province. In another two cases, reports were made concerning the suspected trafficking of Mozambican women to South Africa and the prostitution of South African girls by Nigerian nationals residing in a suburb south of Johannesburg.

The overall call rate during the first three months of 2005 was lower than that experienced immediately after the launch of the helpline in August 2004 when it benefited from widespread exposure on national television. In October 2004, the trafficking helpline number was advertised during a local soap opera, "Isidingo", which was featuring a trafficking storyline at the time. This television exposure resulted in a substantial increase in phone calls.

IOM was not able to secure further free advertising on national television between January and March 2005, meaning that publicity for the helpline during that period was reliant on SACTAP's nation-wide poster campaign, dissemination of the helpline number during IOM's law enforcement and NGO training sessions, and word of mouth. No threatening phone calls or calls from potential victims of trafficking were received between January and the end of March 2005. The number of hoax and unrelated phone calls to the helpline remained high.

However, given the value of the information that IOM receives through the helpline, the Organization began negotiating a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on the sharing of human trafficking information with the Directorate of Special Operations (DSO). The DSO is South Africa's elite law enforcement agency charged with investigating and prosecuting high-profile and serious crimes throughout South Africa. The MOU describes a two-way channel of intelligence exchange between IOM and the DSO through which IOM will channel reports received by the helpline to a trafficking focal point within the DSO and through which, in turn, the DSO will provide IOM with general trafficking information for research purposes. Negotiations between the two parties on the MOU were concluded in May 2005, with legal approval for the final text from IOM's legal department in Geneva as well as the South African Departments of Justice and Foreign Affairs. The MOU is set to be signed at the end of June 2005, following which all trafficking intelligence received by the helpline, including the four reports of Thai and Chinese trafficking reported during January – March 2005, will be passed on to the DSO.

**WGFI funding: USD 10,000**

### **3. Research Project on Cross-border Trafficking of Children between Senegal and Mali (MRF Dakar):**

**Project Summary:** The factors leading to the trafficking of children in Central and Western Africa can be found in poverty, absence of educational opportunities, and a migration tradition that pushes the children towards traffickers who take advantage of them. Regarding cross-border trafficking, all the countries of the ECOWAS are simultaneously origin, transit, and receiving countries. Within the framework of the agreement between the Governments of Mali and Senegal to carry out a prospective study on the cross-border trafficking of children, this project aimed at: (a) identifying the itineraries and areas of origin of the children between Mali and Senegal, their points of entry and the means of their mobility; (b) collecting eye-witness testimonies from the trafficked children and their connection to begging; (c) reviewing the legal frameworks in the two countries on the trafficking of children; (d) evaluating the number and the receiving areas of Malian children who were victims of trafficking; (e) studying the means of exploitation of these children and the actors involved, and (f) proposing a basic plan of action to counter the trafficking of the children. A team of three consultants was to be hired for this three-month study.

**Constraints:** In the course of defining the parameters of the study, however, an opportunity arose to transform the project into a documentary on the trafficking of children for Senegalese television. The proposed documentary would focus on the return and reintegration of child victims of trafficking that IOM has been carrying out in partnership in West Africa since 2002. A visual media report would have greater impact to raise awareness on the realities of trafficking in the region. It is envisaged that this documentary should be released in early 2006.

**WGFI funding: USD10,000**



#### **4. Production of an Anglophone Caribbean HIV/AIDS Soap Opera: Reaching Vulnerable Populations (MRF Washington, D.C.)**

**Project summary:** Gender has been shown to be a risk factor for HIV/AIDS. Sexual violence, socio-economic inequalities and unequal access to health information across gender lines have all been shown to contribute to a greater risk for women and girls. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the HIV infection rate is rising faster among women than among men (PAHO, 2003). Studies have also shown that young people are increasingly at risk, with young women becoming infected at younger ages and higher rates than young men (UNAIDS, 2003).

In response to the growing HIV/AIDS epidemic in the Caribbean, and building on the findings of a recent IOM HIV/AIDS study in the region, this project aimed to provide an essential information and awareness-raising tool targeting mobile and vulnerable populations in the Caribbean, particularly young women and girls who are at risk of high rates of infection throughout the region. IOM is committed to helping governments find effective responses to HIV/AIDS for mobile populations that respect the human rights of migrants.

The initial plan for this project was to use radio drama in the region that had proven successful during previous IOM projects in the Caribbean. The strategy would be that: (1) the geographical coverage of the project should be the English-speaking Caribbean, with an awareness tool that could be disseminated as much as possible through local partners, such as the CCNAPC (Caribbean Coalition of National AIDS Programme Coordinators), and (2) the Art Center College of Design, based in California and which had a Department called “International Initiatives”, was interested in participating in the project and would be willing to donate the technical expertise and time of qualified students. The Art Center had worked successfully in the past with the UN System.

**Constraints:** While fine-tuning the strategy, IOM Caribbean staff and other stakeholders suggested that television would have even more impact in spreading messages in the English-speaking Caribbean. Therefore, the project was reformulated to produce a series of TV public service announcements (PSAs) using animated characters that addressed the issues surrounding HIV and AIDS, especially for young women in the Caribbean. The PSAs would be disseminated to a number of English-speaking countries within the region (e.g. Bahamas, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Trinidad and Tobago). The animated characters could also be used in other promotional materials (e.g. posters and pamphlets), to reinforce the message, which could be distributed with the help of partners in the region. This project could also be applied to English-speaking Africa; the only necessary change would be in the voice-over of the PSAs. The PSAs were expected to be broadcast over the summer of 2006.

**WGGI funding: USD 20,000**