

**A Joint statement by ILO, IOM, UNODC, and UN Women
on International Women's Day 2023**

Migration is an opportunity for women



On this International Women's Day 8 March, 2023, we celebrate African Women Migrant Workers – as 'women on the move'. Feminisation of labour migration is increasing. Migration in Africa increased from 17.2 million in 2010 to 26.3 million in 2019 with women accounting for around 45 per cent throughout the period. Moreover, women migrant workers are seeking better work opportunities independently. While this is a positive development, women also face challenges during the migration journey. Among their many challenges, are gender-based violence and discrimination.

They often find themselves in particularly vulnerable working conditions and are at the risk of being abused, exploited or trafficked. They are more likely to face challenges accessing social protection and adequate healthcare and tend to earn less than men migrant workers. They experience barriers to remitting funds back home and exercising their rights to collective action. On return, their reintegration is made difficult by a clash of gender norms and expectations. Because men and women experience labour migration differently, deliberate actions should be taken to ensure that women migrant workers benefit from labour migration.

A focus on specific priorities of women migrants, such as gender-based occupational segmentation, gender pay gaps, access to health care, sexual and reproductive health, maternity leave, and protection against violence and harassment, including sexual harassment, is critical. Policy and legal measures backed by strong monitoring and enforcement mechanisms will help ensure women migrant workers' rights and equal opportunities during their migration journeys.

We call for special attention and deliberate collective action on the way forward. ILO, IOM, UNODC and UN Women join forces to generate knowledge on the challenges women migrant workers face during their migration journey, and their capacities in responding to them. To this end, we have developed a joint program entitled, 'Women's Economic Empowerment through Access to Decent Work and Socio-economic Services and Protection along South-South Migration Corridors' to address these concerns.