

CONSIDERING THE GENDER DIMENSION IN CLIMATE CHANGE AND MIGRATION IN ASIA

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*10th Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership Meeting (ASEP 10), Bruxelles 27-28 September
Panel 2: Climate Change and Environment: impact on migration*

Why do we have to consider prospective of gender in climate change and migration?

- Discussion within policy and academics regarding climate change and migration is often gender neutral (WEDO,2008). Consequently important differences in the climate change impacts of women and men are neglected.

- **Environmental impacts are strongly gender specific.**

Within the framework of livelihood climate change may differently shape both migration's cause and consequence by gender.

- Several factors, such as lower socio-economic status, the traditional role of women traditional in society and the use of migration as a coping strategy: all influenced their chance of survival

- Women are not only the victims of climate change, but also part of the solution.

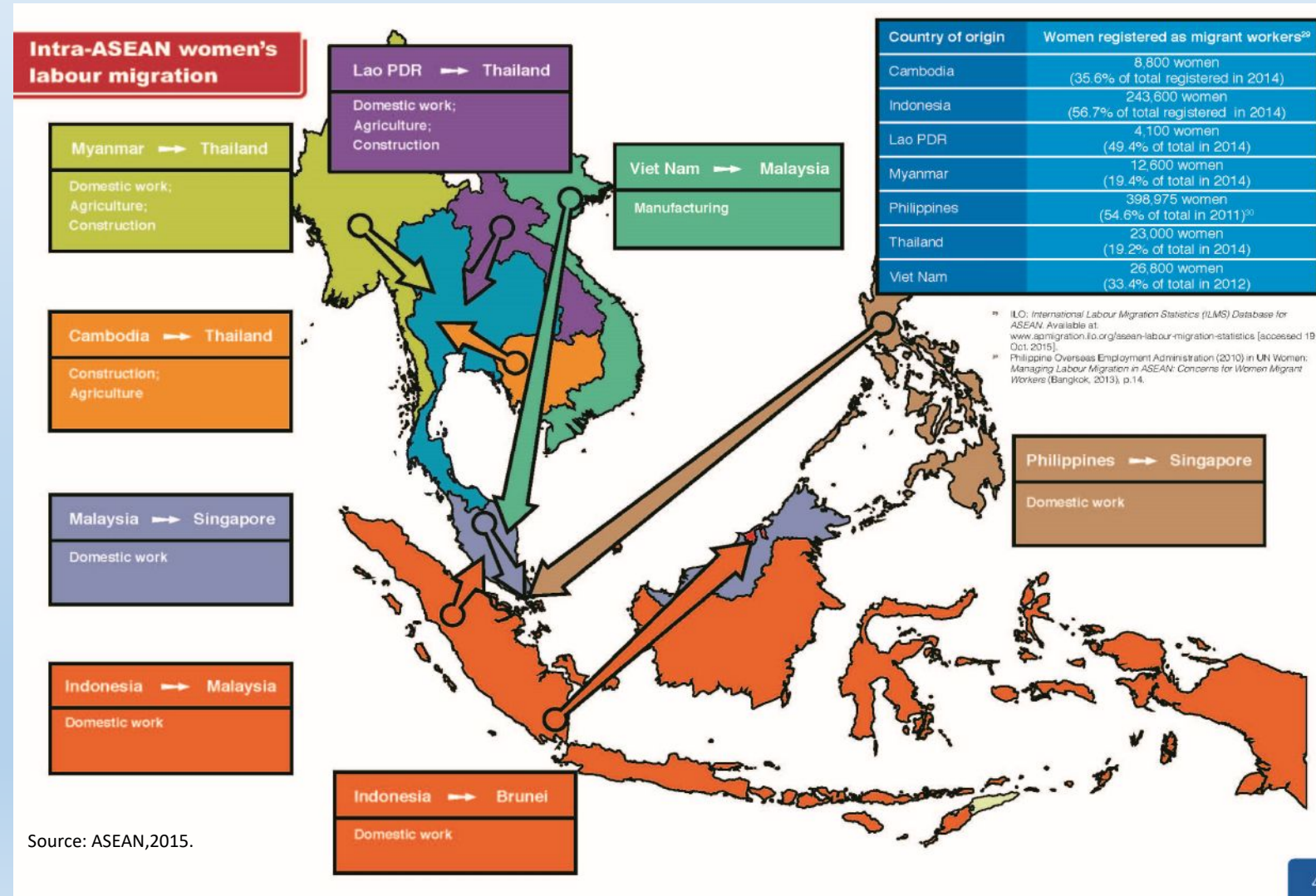
Migration is a way of adaptation to climate change: challenges

- **Migration can be a positive climate change adaptation measure** that creates livelihood opportunities, supports economic development and disaster response through remittances and thus reduces future displacement.
- **Climate-induced migration is a highly complex issue which needs to be understood as a part of global migration dynamics and female migration drivers** (environmental and social-economic factors are interrelated) .
- **Women comprise about half of all international migration, although this differs from country to country.**
- **Women migrations can provide significant benefits to the regions of origin. In this framework remittances can usually complement adaptation funding.**
- ***Globally, the countries that receive the highest number of remittances are on the Asian continent: India, China, Philippines, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Indonesia (these countries in 2016 receive the 37% of the total, around US\$ 217 billion) In the Philippines economy remittances from overseas workers make up about a 10th of the gross domestic product.***

Women's labour migration flows

Female migrants in Asia increasingly move to the Middle East and middle income countries.

- **Philippines, Indonesia and Sri Lanka** are the main countries of origin.
- **Brunei Darussalam, Japan, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, China** are the key destinations.
- **Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand** are the destination of 97% of intra-ASEAN migrants.



Migration is a way of adaptation to climate change: challenges

- Migration can be a positive climate change adaptation measure
- Women often lack adequate support to make migration a positive adaptation strategy.

TABLE 1. MAIN CHALLENGES RELATING TO MIGRATION OF WOMEN

PRE-MIGRATION STAGE	IN TRANSIT	AT DESTINATION
Patriarchal and gender norms and lack of family support	Women are exposed to exploitation and abuses in transit	Women often experience poor living and worked conditions
Lack of information in terms of procedures for seeking employment	They suffer for a lack of proper documentation	They suffer for sexual and phisical abuse
Difficulties in managing the finances to pay for their migration.	They rarely have local contacts, skills or local language knowledge	Often they are underpaid and they suffer for a lack in labour and social protection

Source: IOM, 2015

Migration is a way of adaptation to climate change: challenges and opportunities

Migration as adaptation strategy	Case studies	Environmental drivers	Main consequences for women	Challenges
Female - oriented	Philippines, Sri-Lanka, Indonesia	Cyclone, drought, soil erosion and other climate stresses reduce livelihood conditions in those countries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By sending remittances, women play an important role as agent of development for the countries of origin. • Women remit a higher proportion of their earnings and more frequently (IOM & UN-INSTRAW, 2010). • Remittances improve the adaptive capacity of communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Women are engaged mostly in informal economy and irregular migrant channel</i> • <i>In countries of the Gulf and East Asia, labour laws do not cover domestic workers.</i> • <i>Women need to be protected against exploitation and abuses.</i>

Migration is a way of adaptation to climate change: challenges and opportunities

- Climate change in Asia produces different migration responses that affect women differently:

Migration as adaptation strategy	Case studies	Environmental drivers	Main consequences for women	Challenges
Male-oriented	Nepal, Bangladesh	<p>In Bangladesh 130 million people live on the coast at approximately 1,5 meters above the sea level. Each year an estimated five million people are displaced by cyclone and floods in Bangladesh.</p> <p>In Nepal mountain people and their livelihoods are particularly vulnerable to climate and other drivers of change (UNEPWCMC 2002).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overburden of women responsibilities when partners migrate in search of work and income. • Feminization of economy with women responsible for most economic activities, as well for their households. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>There are still limited options for women to earn income.</i> • <i>Women are excluded from resource management institutional forums.</i> • <i>Threats to educations, especially for girls.</i>

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT & GUIDELINES ON GENDER ORIENTED CLIMATE CHANGE POLICIES

Serena Gianfaldoni, University of Pisa

- Till now, we said that **we need to focus on the female dimension of migration** (Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA)),
- We said that it is necessary to **create a gender-sensitive climate change policy**. How can we realize it?
- **How and why** should we **empower migrant women**?
- What **role** do **Asian immigrant women** have in the **global fight against climate change** and in the **environmental protection policies**?

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Women, Environment, Nature

- To create a gender sensitive climate change policy, we have to **consider the link between Women and Nature**. As showed by many studies (Donini, Eurispes, Swg, Piccardo...):

Women deeply **recognize the need to care for the environment**, the "Οἰκία" (the "house", the ancient Greek concept that brought to the terms of "ecumene" and modern "ecology")

- Women are **culturally ORIENTED to the "CARE"**
- Women **instinctively PROTECT** the land, any kind of resources... **for their family**
- Women tend to **MANAGE RESOURCES** with **intelligence and prudence**
- Women **TRANSMIT the concept of hygiene and waste** to children



When Climate Changes arise,
Women initially **ADAPT** (lack of water, drought, monsoons, pollution, global warming, diseases, natural disasters, overpopulation...)

- They **have a STRONG ADAPTIVE ABILITY**
- They adapt **when the man migrates**. It is an **ADDITIONAL PRESSURE** for the women. They are loaded more, **they have to do the work of man in addition**
- They **seek and find SOLUTIONS** as long as they can as long as the environment allows it
- Then.....**If a woman DECIDES TO MOVE AWAY** it is because she has **NO ALTERNATIVE**
- But...they can **feel forced** in some way



The woman point of view

- The questions are: **What feelings** do they feel? Is it for them a **constraint** or an **opportunity**? **What do they leave behind?**

It is necessary to ask these questions directly to women.... to understand

- **the inner world of immigrant women**
- their strong **attachment to the land**
- the **conflicting feelings** (from the **desire to create a new life** to the **desire to maintain the link** with their land)

A difficult choice

- Their **choice to migrate** is always made **considering the needs of all the members of the family**
- For women **it's always a heavy burden, a painful choice** (even if the only one possible)



Guidelines

- Aware of these fundamental aspects, **WHAT ARE THE GOALS?**
- **WHAT** should be the **CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY (oriented to women who are about to migrate or those who have already migrated)?**
- First of all, we need to **MAP THE RISKS of women**
- Then, we have to **EMPOWER women affected by climate change**, (as the EU Gender Action Plan GAP say).



- **Why?**

- Because women, **besides being victims**, are **POWERFUL AGENTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE**
- Because woman **DEEPLY KNOW the environment.**
- Because women have a **great PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE** (ranging from **agriculture, forestry and fisheries to energy infrastructures...**)
- Because women have a **key role to find EFFICIENT SOLUTIONS** (different from men but really practical)....



- We should **LISTEN** carefully to asian **women facing climate change** and **women involved in migration**.
- We need to **INTEGRATE GENDER CONCERNS and PERSPECTIVES** (Cancun agreement from COP16)
- We must **RESPECT the CULTURAL DIMENSION of women** involved in migration due to climate change. **Far from an up-down perspective**. It is due to respect deeply the history and the cultures of immigrant women





- We must **DISSEMINATE** and **REWARD** the **GOOD PRACTICES** of women to **motivate** other women, to **make visible** the **importance** of women involvement in a gender-sensitive climate policy (as the Goldman Environmental Prize)
- We need to **MONITOR** the **RESULTS** of women involvement. We must **KEEP TRACK OF PROGRESS MADE** in advancing gender-sensitive climate **POLICY**

Perspectives and Opportunities

- These **GENDER ASPECTS of climate change related to migration** mentioned till now, **ARE BEGINNING TO BE RECOGNIZED**
- They can be found **in some policy documents**. (COP15 in Copenhagen)
- However, **THERE IS still A LOT TO DO** concerning the climate change policies.
- We **have to IMPLEMENT concretely THE AGENDA OF INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS** on the **empowerment of immigrant women**. (COP20 in Lima)



- We must **IDENTIFY VALID STRATEGIES** (UN Sustainable development goals SDGs)
- to **SUPPORT “CLIMATE JUSTICE”** (COP15 in Copenhagen)
- to **PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS** of immigrant women
- to **FIGHT against the EXCLUSION** and the **MARGINALIZATION** of weak women (we refer to the work of the Task Force on Displacement under the UNFCCC)

- **IMMEDIATE actions are needed.** Leaders have to **ADOPT A SENSE of URGENCY** to provide a concrete answer to climate change because everyday **immigrants women face difficult decisions.**



- We have the **OPPORTUNITY TO TRANSFORM** this common problem **in fruitful international COOPERATION,** the **CHANCE** for mutual **KNOWLEDGE** and **SHARING**

Thank you for your attention /

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