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Women's empowerment
and migration in the Caribbean

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UNITED NATIONS

ECLAC

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

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Contents

Abstract

Women worldwide are on the move as much as men. In 2015, almost half (48 per cent) of 244 million international migrants were women.[1] The implications of female migration, whether independent or with their families, are diverse and complex on the individual, household and community levels. Therefore, it is crucial to improve our understanding of the links and interrelations between migration, women's empowerment and development, including the role of gender inequalities in defining the nature and the results of individual migration pathways, as well as the impact that migration may have on the empowerment of women and girls that are either moving themselves or staying in the country of origin and coping with migration of their family members. This would allow for the development and implementation of gender-sensitive and rights-based migration policies, which will place the needs and contributions of women, including female migrants, firmly in the global, regional and national development agendas.

This paper presents a contextual analysis of the mutual relations between migration and women's empowerment with the aim to facilitate the debate among stakeholders, including policymakers, practitioners and civil society in the Caribbean subregion on the role of migration as a means of empowerment for women. When contextualized in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, this debate should inform practical actions for the formulation of the Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular migration that will be adopted in 2018, and more broadly for sustainable development that will ensure that no one is left behind as Member States and other stakeholders strive towards achieving inclusive, fairer, and sustainable societies.

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[1] UN DESA (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division) (2016), "International Migration Report 2015 Highlights", ST/ESA/SER.A/375. p. 1. http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/migrationreport/docs/MigrationReport2015_Highlights.pdf.

Introduction

Gender equality and women's empowerment feature prominently in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They outline a comprehensive framework to advance global development by 2030.[2] The 17 SDGs and the associated 169 targets that guide the implementation of each goal recognize gender equality and women's empowerment as an objective and as part of the solution. The standalone Goal 5 on the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls emphasizes the recognition of the interconnections between gender inequality and the economic, political and social aspects of sustainable development.

As emphasized by the United Nations General Assembly in its Resolution 70/1, the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls would make a crucial contribution to progress across all goals and targets. In this regard, ECLAC (2017) highlighted specific goals and targets to be of particular relevance. These goals and targets are presented in Box 1.

In relation to migration, Target 10.7 aims "to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies". Furthermore, migration and migrant rights are relevant to several Goals, such as Goal 8 on growth and decent work, Goal 10 on reducing inequalities, Goal 16 on peaceful and inclusive societies and access to justice for all, and Goal 17 on global partnership on sustainable development, which includes improving data. The standalone Goal 5 on gender equality and empowering all women and girls includes the following targets of particular importance to female migrants:

•   Target 5.2: Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation;

•   Target 5.3: Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation;

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[2]   UN DESA (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs), Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, A/RES/70/1 - Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index .php?page=view&type=111&nr=8496&menu=35.

- Target 5.4: Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies, and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.

Box 1
Sustainable Development Goals and Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Target 4.4 aims to substantially increase, by 2030, the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.

Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

Target 8.3 calls for the promotion of development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-small-and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services; and

Target 8.5 strives to achieve by 2030, full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.

Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries.

Target 10.2 calls for the empowerment and promotion of the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, origin, religion or economic or other status;

Target 10.3 strives to ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including elimination of discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action to this effect.

Target 10.4 focuses on the policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressive achievement of greater equality.

Source: ECLAC (2017). Advancing the Economic Empowerment and Autonomy of Women in the Caribbean through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), September 2017.

Gender equality and the empowerment of women have thus been recognized in the 2030 Agenda as catalysts for accelerating the achievement of SDGs and multiplying their impact. In turn, this new road map also presents a historic opportunity for States and other stakeholders to prioritize and to determine the means for implementing their commitments to achieve gender equality in all of its dimensions as well as to address the challenges faced by women, including those who are migrants, to effectively exercise and enjoy their human rights. The urgency of this conclusion is reflected in the persisting global gender inequalities produced and reproduced by social norms, institutions and policies. Gender inequality shapes livelihoods and opportunities for women and men, including when they move within their country, or across international borders. Socially constructed norms and power relations between genders exist at various levels, including couple and family relations, parenting, community and institutions, such as the school or labour market, and extend internationally to define both patterns of migration and its consequences for migrants, their families and communities at origin and destination (IOM, 2013).

The recent United Nations (UN) New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (2016) urges the UN Member States to ensure that the "responses to large movements of refugees and migrants

mainstream a gender perspective, promote gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and fully respect and protect the human rights of women and girls".[3] The Declaration also commits to take into consideration the different needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of women, girls, boys, and men, and to address the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination against refugee and migrant women and girls. The Declaration recognizes the contribution of women in refugee and migrant communities, and the need to ensure women's full, equal and meaningful participation in the development of local solutions and opportunities. Furthermore, it launched a process of intergovernmental negotiations that will lead to the adoption of a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration in 2018, aimed at comprehensively addressing migration and protecting the safety, dignity and human rights, and fundamental freedoms of all migrants, regardless of their migratory status (UNGA, 2016). At the regional level, preparatory regional events for the global compact for migration are being organized; the first one for Latin America and the Caribbean took place at the ECLAC headquarters in Santiago, Chile, in August 2017.[4] There are also regional agreements, including the Montevideo Consensus on population and development (2013), in which Member States have expressed concern at the evident and systematic human rights violations suffered by migrants in the region as a result of racism, xenophobia and homophobia, as well as the lack of guarantee of due process and specific problems, such as discrimination, abuse, trafficking in persons, exploitation and violence, that affect different groups, especially women, girls, boys and adolescents. It also recommends a series of measures to protect their human rights, with a gender perspective, paying attention to women and other vulnerable groups in the migration cycle.[5] The Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030 also pays attention to specific situation of female migrants, trafficking and smuggling and urges the harmonization of regional norms consistent with the human rights framework.[6] Though gender-sensitive approach is evolving in policy-making on migration and development, crucial evidence is often missing or does not go beyond the presentation of sex-disaggregated statistics. Thus the essential role of gender relations in the migration context is not fully understood. As a result, migration is assumed to have the same impact in different societies and for different migrants, without placing this process properly in the context of related structural inequalities, power relations and household and community organization.

Empowerment in particular is a challenging concept to define, contextualize and measure, including for the purpose of assessing the impact of migration. According to the UN, women's empowerment has five components: women's sense of self-worth; their right to have and to determine choices; their right to have access to opportunities and resources; their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home; and their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally[7]. Furthermore, ECLAC deems women's autonomy as fundamental to ensuring that they can exercise and enjoy the full spectrum of their human rights under conditions of full equality, and identifies three pillars of autonomy, including women's control over their own bodies (physical autonomy); income generation and ownership of their personal and financial resources (economic autonomy); and full participation in decision-making that affect their lives, individually and as a group (autonomy in decision making).[8] Given the multidimensional nature of sustainable development, ECLAC emphasizes the interrelation and interdependence between the autonomies in order to establish sustainable sectoral and cross-cutting policies aimed at eliminating gender inequalities and guaranteeing the effective enjoyment of human rights by all women, without discrimination of any kind.

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[3]   UN New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, 2016, pp. 5 http://www.un.org/pga/70/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2015/08/ HLM-on-addressing-large-movements-of-refugees-and-migrants-Draft-Declaration-5-August-2016.pdf.

[4]   https://www.cepal.org/en/events/latin-american-and-caribbean-regional-preparatory-meeting-international-migration-experts

[5]   Montevideo Consensus on population and development (2013), pp. 23-28. http://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream /handle/11362 /21860/4/S20131039_en.pdf.

[6]   Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030, 8.1. http://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/40716/S1601131_en.pdf.

[7]   Guidelines on Women's empowerment for the UN Resident Coordinator System http://www.un.org/popin/unfpa/taskforce/guide /iatfwemp.gdl.html.

[8]   ECLAC, Equality and women's autonomy in the sustainable development agenda, December 2016, LC/G.2686/Rev.1 http://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/40675/4/S1601247_en.pdf.

Undoubtedly, migration can have an impact on women's empowerment and autonomy and vice versa. However, measuring and comparing the impacts is highly contextual.[9] For example, in some societies women's participation in household decisions is a norm, while in others it would be assessed as empowerment. Moreover, women who decide to migrate independently may already be more empowered, leading to selectivity bias in assessing the impact of migration. Generally, there is a lack of relevant longitudinal studies on female migrants that takes the life cycle approach, and gaps persist in sex- and age-disaggregated data collection in countries of origin, transit and destination on various aspects of social, economic and political participation of women and men.

Overall, the evidence on the impact of migration on women's empowerment is mixed (see Figure 1). Depending on the individual characteristics and conditions that shape women's lives in the countries of origin, transit and destination, and the nature of the migration process, impacts can be positive (e.g., higher income, asset ownership, self-esteem, decision-making power and so on) or negative (e.g., further disempowerment and increased vulnerability in the conditions of multiple forms of discrimination including as women and as migrants, exploitation, deskilling, and stigmatization). Regarding the latter pathway it has been suggested that "gender acts as a basic organizing principle of labour markets in destination countries, reproducing and reinforcing pre-existing gender patterns".[10]

Diagram 1
Empowerment in the balance: weighing the impact of women's migration on gender equality
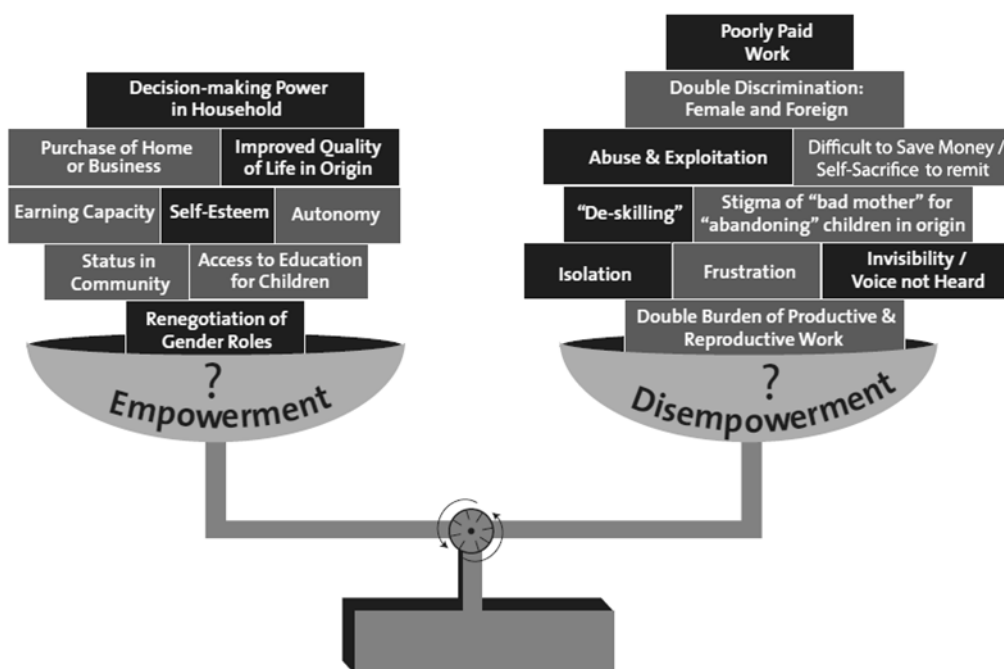
Source: United Nations Women (UN WOMEN), Gender on the Move: Working on the Migration-Development Nexus from a Gender Perspective, 2013.

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9   See Malhotra (2003), cited in Gaye and Jha (2011).
10 United Nations INSTRAW (2007), "Gender, Remittances and Development Series", Feminization of Migration 2007. Working Paper 1. http://www.renate-europe.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Feminization_of_Migration-INSTRAW2007.pdf.

Mobility and employment abroad thus create opportunities for female migrants, but gender norms (and other structural conditions) also create vulnerabilities, as do institutional failures to address gender inequality and discrimination. Gender norms, prevalent in all countries, are a root cause of the gendered division of labour, violence against women and girls, and women's lack of decision-making power all of which have particular consequences for female migrants. It is important to improve the quality of the debate and data collection on these issues in the Caribbean to ensure appropriate contextualization of migration processes and identification of relevant policy solutions.

I.   Situation of migration in the Caribbean

In the past decades, the feminization of international migration resulted not only in increased numbers of women on the move, but also higher levels of independent female migrants in search of employment rather than for family reunification. Some of the factors contributing to these trends include changes in the demographic structure in developed countries that increased the demand for cheaper services of caregivers and health workers, more visible inequalities in wealth and opportunities between countries, globalization, and aggressive policies of private recruitment agencies (UN INSTRAW, 2007). These phenomena have been particularly evident in the Caribbean, with its geographical proximity to North America and post-colonial ties with some European countries, as well as predominant linguistic compatibility with key destination countries.

In 2013, almost half (48 per cent) of international migrants originating in the Caribbean were female. The United States is the main destination for Caribbean nationals globally, hosting more than 60 per cent of the six million Caribbean migrants worldwide. In relation to migrant women, among some 4 million Caribbean migrants residing in the United States, 55 per cent were female in 2013. Notable populations of the Caribbean migrants also reside in Canada (365,000), the Dominican Republic (334,000), and Spain (280,000).[11] As a proportion of the population, Dominica, Antigua and Barbuda, Guyana, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Grenada were among the top ten emigration countries globally in 2013 (World Bank, 2015). More specifically, the Caribbean has one of the highest emigration rates of skilled/tertiary-educated individuals in the world. Data for 2010/2011 indicate emigration rates of tertiary education population at 93 per cent for Guyana, 75 per cent for Haiti, 68 per cent for Trinidad and Tobago, 66 per cent for Barbados, and 48 per cent for Jamaica (World Bank, 2015).

More than 90 per cent of all Caribbean immigrants in the United States came from five countries: Cuba, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Haiti, and Trinidad and Tobago. Around 232,000 Caribbean migrants residing in the United States between 2010 and 2014 were undocumented, mainly originating from the Dominican Republic (98,000), Jamaica (59,000) and Haiti (7,000). Broader Caribbean diaspora population in the United States counts some 6.7 million individuals who were either born in the

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[11]   UN DESA (2016), "International Migration Report 2015 Highlights" p. 1. http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/ migration /publications/migrationreport/docs/MigrationReport2015_Highlights.pdf.

Caribbean or selected a U.S. Census-designated Caribbean country or "West Indian" in response to questions on ancestry (Zong and Batalova, 2016).

Data suggests that the three main pathways to lawful permanent residence of the Caribbean migrants in the United States are: 1) as immediate relatives of the U.S. citizens, 2) through family-sponsored preferences, or 3) as refugees and asylum-seekers. Compared to the total foreign-born population in the United States, Caribbean immigrants have lower educational attainment, lower median incomes, and higher poverty rates. They are more likely to work in services (30 per cent), management, business, science, and arts occupations (25 per cent), and sales and office jobs (21 per cent but less likely to be employed in natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations (9 per cent). Immigrants from Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago were more likely than Caribbean immigrants in general to be in management, business, science, and arts occupations (32 per cent and 37 per cent, respectively).[12]

Table 1
Caribbean migrants in the United States of America by country of origin.

Country	Number of immigrants	Total Caribbean migrants in the United States of America (percentage)	Population of country of origin (percentage)
Bahamas	32 000	0.8	8.36
Barbados	51 000	1.3	18.02
Cuba	1 173 000	29.3	10.3
Dominica	28 000	0.7	38.89
Dominican Republic	998 000	24.9	9.59
Grenada	34 000	0.9	32.08
Haiti	628 000	15.7	5.94
Jamaica	706 000	17.6	25.37
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	23 000	0.6	21.10
Trinidad and Tobago	220 000	5.5	16.25
Other Caribbean	107 000	2.6	-
Total Caribbean	4 000 000	100	9.32

Source: Tabulation of data based on U.S. Census Bureau 2014 American Community Survey (by MPI, 2016) and World Population Prospects United Nations Population Division (2015 revision).

Many Caribbean countries are yet to publish the results of the last round of population and housing censuses, hence recent data on intra-regional migration in the Caribbean is lacking, making recent trends in migration difficult to establish. Freedom of movement regime for skilled professionals within the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) seeks to facilitate the mobility of nurses, teachers, as well as that of the domestic workers. The Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) has liberalized mobility, settlement and access to the labour markets within the integration blocs. Many other Caribbean nationals move and work within the subregion outside of such mobility facilitation arrangements.

IOM (2013) highlights that Barbados is a major final destination for migrants from Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, and Member States of the OECS. Workforce shortages in that country's health sector have led to a high intake of trained nurses from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for example.

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[12]   Zong, Jie and Jeanne Batalova (2016), "Caribbean Immigrants in the United States", Migration Policy Institute (MPI). http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/caribbean-immigrants-united-states.

Furthermore, Trinidad and Tobago has historically received migrant workers from other parts of the Caribbean, Venezuela and more recently, Colombia. Based on data from the World Bank (2011), in 2010, Trinidad and Tobago's immigrant population stock was 34,000 or 2.6 per cent of the population.[13]

Dominican, Saint Lucian and Haitian nationals work seasonally in Martinique and Guadeloupe in the harvesting of the sugar cane crop in the French Antilles. Vincentian, Grenadian and Guyanese hagglers sell their agricultural produce in Trinidad. This type of migration, which is primarily circular, is particularly hard to document as migrants are largely transient and use informal systems to move back and forth. There has also been an influx of migrants from the Dominican Republic to the Eastern Caribbean and to the Dutch territories. Haitians are present in significant numbers in the Dominican Republic, the Bahamas, Turks and Caicos and Dominica. Little data are available with regard to the specific characteristics of migrants, in particular relating to gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic background and educational levels, and so forth (IOM, 2013).

In addition to economic migration, student mobility is evident in the Caribbean, not least due to the existence of principal campuses of the University of West Indies in Barbados, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago. Migrants also move with dependents that are enrolled in primary and secondary schools in the Caribbean destination countries.

In Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Grenada, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago, females account for more than 50 per cent of migrants, and women make up more than 60 per cent of the migrant population in Barbados. Male migrants tended to outnumber females in the Dominican Republic and Cuba (IOM, 2013).

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[13]　Kairi Consultants Ltd. (2013), "Human Mobility in the Caribbean: Circulation of skills an dimmigration from the South", Research Report, ACPOBS/2013/PUB16. p. 11 http://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/human_mobility.pdf.

II.   Women's empowerment in the migration cycle

A.   Before migration

IOM has identified several drivers of global migration to include: 1) demography; 2) demand for labour (and segmentation of this demand by gender and other lines); 3) distance-shrinking transportation; 4) digital revolution; 5) degradation of the environment; 6) desperation of persons fleeing abject poverty, political persecution and hopelessness; 7) disparities – socio-economic inequalities within and between countries, including gender inequalities; and 8) disasters – natural, armed conflict, internal turmoil and political instability.[14]

Structural conditions defining pre-migration social, economic and political roles of potential migrants and their motivation to move are crucial to shaping the migration journey and its future impact. In the analysis of women economic empowerment and autonomy, ECLACECLAC (2017) reports that in comparison with other regions, the presence of women in the Caribbean labour market is relatively strong, albeit largely at the lower end of labour market hierarchy and without realizing full entrepreneurial potential of the Caribbean women. Still, female labour market participation rates remain lower than those of Caribbean males with higher incidence of unemployment and poverty (CDB, 2010).

To illustrate, available data on labour force participation rates in the Caribbean reveal gender disparity in the labour market, showing that males were more active in the labour force than females despite the fact that in most countries females comprised over 50 percent of the population. Based on data for the period 2011-2015 the labour force participation rate for females ranged between 41.6 to 69.1 per cent compared to a range of 56 to 84 per cent for males (ECLAC, 2017). As ECLAC (2017) indicated, many women perform menial jobs, often without access to social protection, and predominantly as providers of unpaid domestic and caregiving work. Moreover, when in paid employment, women not only earn less than men, they tend to work longer hours. At the same time, the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap index suggests that women are better educated than men in

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[14]   ECLAC (Economic Commission of Latin America and the Caribbean) (2017). Report of the Caribbean Seminar on Women's Empowerment and Migration in the Caribbean. p. 7 http://www.cepal.org/sites/ default/files/news/files/womens_empowerment_event_-_report.pdf.

Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Dominica Republic, Guyana, Jamaica, and Suriname, among other countries (WEF, 2016).

Country Poverty Assessments (CPAs) in the Caribbean indicate that households headed by women are more likely to become susceptible to poverty, although these patterns vary from country to country and the subregion has high incidence of single female-headed households. Female-headed households are more likely to have more occupants and hence, higher dependency ratios implying that women's already lower income often needs to be spent to cover the needs of immediate and extended family members (ECLAC, 2017). For example, in its Country Strategy Paper for the Bahamas (2013-2017), the CDB concludes that "access to decent work remains a limiting factor to the sustained social mobility of women".[15]

Some narrowing of the gender gap in labour force participation in the past decade can be explained by higher demand for cheap (female) labour, the pressure on women to seek paid employment to support the earnings of the household following the lingering effect of 2008/09 economic crisis, and the rise in women seeking salaried jobs due to higher education levels, lower fertility rates and changing aspirations (UNRISD, 2012). Gender inequality in the Caribbean is exacerbated by the unequal sharing of responsibility and reproductive work between women and men in the often unpaid domestic work and care sector.

Caribbean women are concentrated in the services sector, especially in tourism where female workers comprise 42.9 per cent of employees in service provision (low status, low paid and precarious) and 67.3 per cent of those working in clerical areas. The earnings of females were reported to be between 10 to 15 per cent less than their male colleagues (UNWTO and UN WOMEN, 2010). Data on the level of education of women employed in the tourism sector suggests that many were graduates (50.3 per cent) or had completed tertiary level education (66.2 per cent) thus pointing at deskilling and underemployment (UNWTO and UN WOMEN, 2010). CDB (2013) emphasizes the segregation patterns by industry and occupational groupings as the reason for a narrower range of employment opportunities for women in the labour market, and consequently their lower participation rate.

Access to financial capital, as identified earlier, and lack of appropriate education remain crucial barriers to the growth and development of women-owned businesses in the Caribbean (ECLAC, 2017). The Caribbean has notably fewer female than male entrepreneurs, partly also due to the prevalence of traditional gender roles that restrict female participation to the reproductive sector and low revenue economic sectors. A recent study by Compete Caribbean found that more than 50 per cent of firms in many Caribbean countries are owned by men. Furthermore, only Grenada, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Jamaica have at least 20 per cent of their firms being owned predominantly by women. However, firms that are mostly owned by women in the Caribbean tend to operate in sectors characterized by low productivity and low growth, such as textile, food, retail and restaurants (Compete Caribbean, 2017). World Bank's 2010 Enterprise surveys show that the ownership of small firms was uneven in terms of female share with ranges from 76 per cent in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; 58 per cent in the Bahamas and Guyana; 38 per cent in Jamaica; 32 per cent in Dominica; to 12 per cent of adult women in the economy in Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada and Saint Kitts and Nevis.

Barriers presented by labour market segmentation, lack of decent work and societal discrimination also make female-headed households more vulnerable to natural disasters and effects of climate change, as IOM research in the Caribbean indicates.[16]

Furthermore, violence against women is pervasive in the subregion. UNODC and the World Bank (2007) calculate that three of the top ten recorded rape rates in the world occur in the Caribbean. Compared to the worldwide average rate for rape of 15 per 100,000, the Bahamas had an average of 133, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines 112, Jamaica 51, Dominica 34, Barbados 25, and Trinidad and Tobago 18. The UNDP Caribbean Human Development Report (2016) shows that between 20 and 35 per cent of

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[15] Caribbean Development Bank 2013. Country Strategy Paper, Bahamas 2013-2017 p. 1 http://www.caribank.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/BD25_13_CSP_Bahamas_FINAL-1.pdf.

[16] IOM MECLEP reports for Haiti (2015) and the Dominican Republic (2016).

women in the Caribbean are subjected to different types of violence, including physical, sexual, psychological or a combination of them.[17]

Overall, the current socio-economic position of women in the Caribbean subregion may make many of potential female migrants vulnerable before they even start the journey. Mobility thus can be an act of sacrifice for the well-being of the household, not necessarily an act of empowerment (although both scenarios may co-exist in the same migration journey). For poor women, even more so than for women in general, the decision to migrate is often highly influenced by intra-household gender relations and hierarchies. Women may have a limited role in decision-making even when it results in their perceived independent migration for economic reasons. The decision to migrate is often caused by fundamental concerns about poverty and done in an attempt to ensure household survival by maximizing and diversifying the household income through remittances. Migration of women can increasingly appear as the best option for the entire family, as the global demand for labour rises in highly gendered niches such as domestic work, health, child and elderly care, and the entertainment industries (IOM, 2012).

For example, many women participating in the Canadian Seasonal Agricultural Work Program (SAWP), including from Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, are single mothers who have few economic opportunities in their home country, and are the main breadwinners for their households and extended families. The wages they earn in Canada are significantly higher than what they could make in the few income-generating activities available to women in their country, such as petty commerce, domestic labour or work in export processing zones (Grez, 2011).

On the other hand, the very poorest often do not have the resources to move, as in the global evidence, education levels and current employment are positively associated with migration. In other words, women with some resources at home have better opportunities to migrate than those who have very little. Rural women living in remote and isolated areas, for instance, may lack identity documents and have difficulties in accessing transport and information. In general, women that are already marginalized in the home community may lack proper information on the migration process and employment opportunities, as well as be excluded from formal recruitment networks and pre-departure services, and therefore be unable to cover the expenses of migration. This makes female migrants more vulnerable to irregular and exploitative situations both at home and abroad.

Discrimination and violence in the private and public sphere can act as important motivation for a woman to migrate, although in many instances it would not be registered as such. For example, prejudice against certain categories of women, such as single mothers, widows, those with disabilities, and LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex) individuals can act as a push factor (IOM, 2013). Unfortunately, some Caribbean countries (see Table 2) still maintain some legal restrictions with respect to women's mobility and autonomy (World Bank Group, 2015).

Table 2: Caribbean countries with restrictions on women's mobility

Action	Countries where married women are unable to act in the same way as married men
Apply for a passport	Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Haiti, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago
Choose where to live	Haiti
Confer citizenship to children	The Bahamas, Barbados
Register a business	Suriname

Source: World Bank Group, Women, Business and the Law 2016. Getting to Equal, 2015, p.9 http://wbl.worldbank.org/~/media/WBG/WBL/Documents/Reports/2016/Women-Business-and-the-Law-2016.pdf.

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[17] UNDP, Caribbean Human Development Report (2016), p. 62. http://www.bb.undp.org/content/barbados/en/home/presscenter /articles/2016/09 /13/caribbean-human-development-report-2016-launched.html.

B.   On the move

Though migration policies are often gender-blind in language, it is relevant to inquire whether parameters of migrant admission policies and international recruitment practices have differential effects on female and male migrants, and to what extent.

Clearly, as discussed in the previous section, gendered labour market segmentation and differences in skill development opportunities in the national labour market also play a role in defining regular pathways of migration opportunities for female and male workers. In particular, in lower skilled immigration channels, migrant selection and admission *de facto* perpetuates the gendered perception of different occupations as "masculine" (construction, agriculture) and "feminine" (caregiving, domestic work). On the other hand, at least when legal channels for immigration in these in-demand occupations exist, they offer female migrants an opportunity to enter the destination labour market legally and access social services, even though still within the limitations of gendered employment.

Beyond family migration opportunities to North America and Europe, Caribbean nationals are also eligible to participate in various temporary admission schemes for low-skilled workers in the United States and Canada, including H2A[18] and H2B visas in the United States and the Canadian Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP). Barbados, Belize, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Haiti, and Jamaica participate in the U.S. H2A (agricultural) and H2B (non-agricultural) visa programmes.

Furthermore, Barbados, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and the nine countries of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States are eligible to send workers to Canada within the SAWP. Workers may participate in SAWP more than once, but they are usually ineligible to stay in Canada on a more permanent basis once their contracts end. The SAWP operates according to bilateral agreements between Canada and the participating countries. The agreements outline the role of these foreign governments, which is to recruit and select the workers; make sure workers have the necessary documents; maintain a pool of qualified workers; and appoint representatives to assist workers in Canada. It was reported that Jamaica is a major source of workers for the programme with almost 30,000 Jamaican SAWP workers coming to Canada annually.[19]

Employer bias is present in recruitment, which creates in particular a very competitive environment for migrant women in agriculture, which at time leads them to accept more exploitative and discriminatory conditions. Though no evidence has been collected for the Caribbean, some Mexican women participating in the SAWP reported that they had to sign contracts stipulating that they would not engage in romantic relationships with men while in Canada and that they would refrain from seeking support from advocacy groups (Grez, 2011).

Formal and informal recruitment networks also facilitate emigration of skilled professionals, including nurses from the Caribbean. The World Bank (2010) reports that between 2002 and 2006, more than 1,800 nurses left the Caribbean for higher paying jobs abroad, mostly in the United States, Canada and Great Britain. In Jamaica, about three out of every four nurses trained there have migrated to developed countries due to poor remuneration, lack of opportunities in education and training, violence and stressful working conditions. In the United States, 17 per cent of foreign-born healthcare workers residing in the country in 2010 came from the Caribbean (MPI, 2012). The Caribbean-born health workers were more likely than immigrant health care workers born in other regions to work as nursing, psychiatric, or home health aides (52 per cent of the Caribbean-born health workers). Similarly, there are several programmes through which Caribbean teachers are employed to teach overseas, mostly at the secondary school level, including in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Japan and China. For example, the U.S. J-1 visa exchange visitor program is for foreign teachers to teach in accredited

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[18]   An H2A visa is a temporary work visa for foreign agricultural workers with a job offer for seasonal agricultural work in the US. The H2A visa program is open to nationals of countries that the United States Secretary of Homeland Security has designated as eligible to participate and is revised annually.

[19]   CBC News: Canada (2016), "Migrant worker program called 'worse than slavery' after injured participants sent home without treatment". http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/jamaican-farm-worker-sent-home-in-a-casket-1.3577643.

primary and secondary schools in the United States. However, several concerns have been raised by Caribbean governments, especially Jamaica, about the migration of specialist teachers, particularly in the areas of mathematics and science which has created a skills deficit in the national educational system. It was reported that in 2016, 494 mathematics and science teachers left the public education sector in Jamaica to pursue overseas employment forcing the government to develop incentives and a protocol to prevent teachers from suddenly leaving the classrooms for overseas jobs[20]. In parallel, cases of discriminatory practices against Caribbean teachers in New York City have been reported from civil society organizations, including the Association of International Educators (AIE) in terms of educational opportunities and access to permanent residency.[21]

International recruitment is thus often the first step in the labour migration process for either higher or lower skilled workers, and it sets in motion a variety of outcomes that can either contribute or detract from the benefits of labour migration. Unscrupulous intermediaries who exploit workers and employers have been responsible for a wide number of negative outcomes, including labour trafficking and forced labour in the extreme but also skills mismatching, the erosion of immigration programmes, a "race to the bottom" for domestic labour markets and the creation of a vulnerable and inefficient underclass of workers. Many challenges remain, including lack of recruitment regulations, inadequate enforcement of existing laws, inconsistency among legal frameworks, and jurisdictional gaps due to the cross-border nature of international recruitment activities that create "loopholes" in regulatory systems (IOM, 2014).

Women in the Caribbean are particularly at risk of becoming victims of trafficking in human beings both to North America and within the subregion due to several factors. These include: 1) the high global demand for domestic servants, agricultural labourers, sex workers, and factory labor; 2) political, social, or economic crises, as well as natural disasters; 3) lingering machismo (chauvinistic attitudes and practices) that tends to lead to discrimination against women and girls; 4) existence of established trafficking networks with sophisticated recruitment methods; 5) public corruption, especially complicity between law enforcement and border agents with traffickers and smugglers; 6) restrictive immigration policies in some destination countries that have limited the opportunities for regular pathways of migration flows to occur; 7) government disinterest in the issue of human trafficking; and 8) limited economic opportunities for women in the subregion (Seelke, 2015).

Challenges have been identified with respect to the governance of migration corridors between the Caribbean and destinations in the United States and Canada. Similar issues may exist with respect to other destinations, but data are lacking at the moment to make an assessment of the situation. Some recruiters in the United States have been prosecuted under human trafficking laws. Often, recruiters and recruitment agencies are tried under laws related to fraud, including visa, health care, and mail fraud, including in recruitment from Jamaica and the Dominican Republic. Unethical international recruitment has also been identified as a problem by the Government of Canada, linking such practices to the exploitation of temporary foreign workers and criminal and labour offences, which in turn have negative impacts on the Canadian labour market. As a result, the Canadian Ministry of Employment and Social Development has called upon the Canadian provinces to strengthen regulatory efforts to govern recruitment intermediaries. For instance, the Temporary Foreign Worker program was made public in April 2017 to introduce new requirements for employers seeking to hire foreign workers which include onsite inspections and reinforcement of the workers' rights and protections in Canada.[22] However, because of extraterritorial elements of the offences, regulators are often unable to investigate and prosecute offences when these activities occur in countries of origin.

Further challenges certainly exist with regard to mobility within the Caribbean, where violations are yet more difficult to uncover. Agencies throughout the Caribbean advertise and promote

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[20] http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/news/New-protocol-coming-for-overseas-recruitment-of-teachers-------_48975

[21] http://nationbuilder.s3.amazonaws.com/theblackinstitute/pages/66/attachments/original/brokenpromises.pdf?1308529431

[22] Government of Canada, Employment and Social Development (EDSC). (2017), "Government of Canada strengthens Temporary Foreign Worker Program through Budget 2017". https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/news/2017/04/government_of_canadastrengthenstemporaryforeignworkerprogramthro.html.

opportunities for work as cashiers, bartenders, waitresses, domestic workers, salesclerks, baby-sitters, manual labourers, dancers and masseuses. While these recruitment mechanisms are not used purely for human trafficking, they are methods that human traffickers use to recruit those searching for employment and opportunity. Haitian migration to the Bahamas and Guyanese migration to Barbados is believed to be perpetuated by advertisements from agencies promising opportunities for employment. Some Jamaican newspapers carry telephone numbers that a person can call to arrange a trip out of country. The recruitment process in the Caribbean context is not limited to the use of advertisements and agencies. Informal channels, such as word of mouth, are commonly used throughout the subregion. Attempting to delineate legitimate opportunities from those that are not is an extremely daunting task.

At the transportation stage, women may experience additional violence, and be forced to exchange sex for transportation, food or accommodation, thus further contributing to their vulnerability in the process of migration.

Human trafficking in the Caribbean is often linked to the demand for cheap domestic labour. Domestic workers are considered some of the most underpaid and overworked of those employed as cheap labour, and are in a vulnerable position already at the stage of recruitment, as they are entering the sector that is unregulated in the labour law in many countries (IOM, 2010). The 2016 Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP) placed Belize, Haiti and Suriname on its Tier 3 list; and Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago on Tier 2 Watch List. Barbados, Curacao, Guyana and Jamaica were on the Tier 2 list, while the Bahamas was the sole CARICOM nation on the Tier 1 list, with Sint Maarten.[23] In the 2017 TIP, there is some improvement since only Belize remained on Tier 3 list; Haiti and Suriname moved to Tier 2 Watch List, with Antigua and Barbuda; and Barbados, Curacao, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago continue on the Tier 2 list as well as the Bahamas and St. Maarten on the Tier 1 list[24].

C.   In the country of destination

The conditions of female lives before migration and the nature of the migration process have a considerable impact on the female migrant perspectives in the country of destination. Further experiences in the new place may either alleviate or reinforce existing vulnerabilities and impact positively or negatively on the individual, household and community consequent to migration. In the context of Caribbean migration, female migrants are often confronting new layers of discrimination in the country of destination, especially as they continue to integrate in the labour market with low-paying jobs that come with hard working conditions and in which jobs are often tied to the specific employer.

Considerable efforts have been undertaken in some Caribbean countries towards providing their nationals with internationally portable education and training, especially in healthcare occupations. This has contributed to some alleviation of brain waste at the destination through facilitation of recognition of competences, but barriers to skill retention and development continue to persist. Gaye and Jha (2011) cite research by Ozden and Neagu (2010) using a sample of the 2000 U.S. Census covering migrants from 130 countries to analyze female migrants' labour market participation. They found that migrants who completed their education in the United States were more likely to be employed with the exception of those from Jamaica, Ghana and Nigeria. The authors concluded that education levels are the most important variable influencing labour market outcomes, regardless of where they were obtained. However, data suggest that some female migrants continue to experience deskilling and brain waste.

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[23]   Countries on Tier 3 list are those whose governments do not fully meet the minimum standards and are not making significant efforts to do so. Tier 2 Watch List countries are those whose governments do not fully meet minimum standards but are making significant efforts to meet those standards, and the absolute number of victims of severe forms of trafficking is very significant or is significantly increasing. Countries on the Tier 2 list are those whose governments do not fully meet the minimum standards but are making significant efforts to meet those standards. Tier 1 countries are those whose governments fully meet the U.S. Trafficking Victims Protection Act's (TVPA) minimum standards.

[24]   United States, Trafficking in Persons Report, Department of State 2017, https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/271339.pdf.

There are multiple factors contributing to deskilling and many of them are linked to social norms. For example, when both spouses have jobs it is common that migration decisions are made to support the career needs of the male partners. In other cases, professions in which women dominate tend to be less prioritized by admission systems than those where men dominate and that can result in many skilled women being admitted as a spouse rather than with a job contract. Some exceptions to this trend exist, such as the situation of Caribbean female nurses, doctors and teachers overseas, mainly due to the fact that the demand for these professions is high, particularly in North America, as explained earlier.

Furthermore, women who migrate as spouses often experience difficulties in accessing jobs altogether, and face additional risks due to their dependence on the sponsor spouse for the residence permit. On arrival in the country of destination, violence and discrimination continue to be part of lives of many migrant women. Although domestic violence occurs in all societies and at all socio-economic levels, some of its triggers may be more prevalent in migrant households. Research in the United States indicates that intimate partner violence against migrant women often begins or increases after migration (Hass et al., 2000). Similarly, migrant women working on Canadian farms have little legal recourse to denounce harassment by male co-workers, supervisors and direct employers. Moreover, if they complain, they risk not seeing their contract renewed because employers have the final word and may decide to repatriate the worker, including in cases of pregnancy (Grez, 2011).

Migrant care workers play a crucial role in the global care chains yet with limited recognition of their contribution in policies regulating their stay and long-term opportunities. Globally, the common features of the organization of care are as follows: 1) caregiving is undervalued if not invisible; 2) continues to depend on unpaid or underpaid work performed by women; 3) public institutions rarely assume caregiving as social responsibility; 4) households are left to find own solutions, which include externalization and/or women's migration; and 5) global solutions to the care crisis have come to rely on female migration (UN WOMEN, 2013).

Low-skilled care workers and other labour migrants in lower skilled jobs often lack citizenship or permanent residency in the countries where they are employed. Many are irregular due to either irregular entry or overstaying, but also regular migrants are often struggling with extending temporary permits that are often tied to the single employer. They therefore have a limited set of political rights and labour protection. In addition, migrants, especially those with an irregular status, are often unable to effectively exercise their rights and access a number of important services, including health care services, for instance, because of lack of health insurance coverage or unaffordability of fees in countries of destination (CEDAW, 2008). Women in irregular situations are often legally denied the enjoyment of some fundamental human rights and their fear of being arrested, detained or deported deters them from seeking such services. Access to health and social services may be diminished or lacking altogether. Host community integration strategies and programs for agricultural seasonal workers, when they exist, are often designed for male migrant workers in mind. There are few, if any, spaces for women to come together across farms and to receive counselling on gender-specific problems (Grez, 2011).

Female migrants in general are less able to advance their own interests than male migrants. They have less decision-making power within the home, and whether migrating alone or as a dependent are less likely to have the time or capabilities to engage with political decision-making and policy processes (O'Neill and Domingo, 2016). Vulnerable migrant women also experience difficulties in accessing legal redress and assistance to escape the situations of abuse and exploitation, and be compensated accordingly.

Forced labour persists for adults of both sexes and for children throughout the Caribbean but again with some gender segmentation of employment. Men and boys were found to be exploited more in agriculture, construction, sawmills and mining whereas women were being exploited more in domestic and garment work and prostitution (IOM, 2010).

Moreover, within the Caribbean, survivors of human trafficking are often victimized and stigmatized as sex workers. For instance, although a persistent stereotype strongly relates human trafficking to sexual labour in Hispaniola, remunerated domestic work is another area of considerable risk for migrant women because it is unregulated in practice (Wooding and Sangro, 2009).

In addition, many workers in low-skilled occupations are neither eligible to bring family members along, or cannot afford to do so, nor can they afford to return to their country of origin. At the same time, female migrants are often blamed on plenty social ills, such as divorce, school drop-outs of children, youth violence and so on. These and other household impacts of migration are discussed further in the next section, but it is important to emphasize that individually, migrant women often face intense psychological pressure to perform well both in the destination community and in the family that remains in the origin country – to combine the productive and reproductive work transnationally.

When children do come along with their parents, in the Caribbean destination countries they often experience challenges due to language barriers and stigmatization, resulting in limited access to education (UNICEF, 2009).

Nevertheless, research does point to certain consistent gains with respect to women's empowerment and their autonomy. Within households, Latin American and Caribbean migrant women have often been able to use their wages and increased access to state services as leverage to attain more control over household decision-making, over personal and household expenditures, and over spatial mobility. Some broader studies also document greater male participation in household and childcare responsibilities. In instances of "stage migration," when men migrated first and resided abroad for years before their wives joined them, the men learned household tasks and were more willing to assist their spouses when the two were reunited in the United States. Conversely, when the family emigrated as a unit, the man generally expected his wife to replicate pre-existing gender practices, and many wives, including those who worked outside the home, complied with these wishes (Pessar, 2005).

Migration, and subsequently the flow of remittances, can also increase women's economic autonomy and opportunities by giving them more control over household finances and, thus, a decision-making power in the family. This is true of migrant women who, by sending remittances, acquire a role as the primary earner for their families, as well as women who remain in the country of origin and, by receiving remitted money, gain greater responsibility over household expenditures (Jain, 2015).

D. Staying put

International migrants often act as human and financial capital transfer channels able to bring home new values, create favourable opportunities, reshape attitudes and create new norms about women in the country of origin.

Very little evidence exists in the Caribbean on the important potential link between female and male migration and changes in the domestic gender relations and roles, and behaviour of male and female family members staying behind. Existing literature (Soto, 1987; Aymer, 1997 cited in Pessar, 2005) on the stay-at-home wives of migrants reveals that the outcomes for women are again conditioned by existing gender ideologies, the flexibility or rigidity of prescribed gender roles, family organization and post-marital residential norms.

The issue of control over remittances is key to the empowerment of women recipients and their autonomy (Debnath and Selim, 2009). In conditions where patriarchy prevails, women may find themselves residing with their husband's kin, and afforded little or no control over their actions, including income-generating activities, and the use of remittances. In other cases when women become provisional household heads replacing men, new tasks on top of existing responsibilities may increase women's burden, but at times wives may also become sufficiently empowered to attempt to emigrate themselves, even against their husbands' wishes (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994 cited in Pessar, 2005).

At the global level, female migrants send approximately the same amount of remittances as male migrants. However, research suggests that women tend to send a higher proportion of their income, even though they generally earn less than men. They also usually send money more regularly and for longer periods of time (IOM et al., 2007). By sending smaller sums more often, women tend to spend more on transfer fees. Therefore, reducing transfer fees and making different transfer options accessible would benefit these women and maximize the positive impact of remittances on their families and communities. Global remittance flows to the Caribbean subregion have grown in recent decades. In

2014, total remittances sent to the Caribbean via formal channels amounted to 9.7 billion USD, representing about 8 per cent of the total gross domestic product (GDP) of the subregion (MPI, 2016 on the basis of World Bank data). This figure did not include Cuba, which received an estimated 1.4 billion USD from Cubans in the United States in 2015.

Analyses by the World Bank and others suggest that remittances sent and/or received by females can have a positive effect on health, education and mortality of children. In some countries, women remitters and recipients tend to prioritize nutrition, health and education for the family (Escriva and Ribas, 2004).

Where women invest in small enterprises, their business ventures may be hindered by the same barriers to female entrepreneurship in the Caribbean discussed earlier, such as limited access to credit and land ownership, low financial literacy, limited experience in running a business and investments in saturated markets such as beauty salons seen as appropriate for women (UN INSTRAW, 2005). Many migrant women employed in low-paid sectors may not be in a position to save money to invest upon their return. Additionally, women may find it difficult to combine entrepreneurial activities with domestic and care responsibilities that are traditionally assigned to them.

Female migration in general has not led to redistribution of care tasks between men and women in the household in the country of origin, and female carer model persists. As opposed to male migration, female migration requires significant adjustments on the part of the now-transnational family. In global care chains, poorer women raise children for wealthier women while still poorer – or older or more rural – women raise their children. In many cases surrogate carers are elderly grandparents who need care themselves, which further exacerbates care drain in the countries of origin.

International comparative research suggests that living in a transnational family does not always lead to negative outcomes for children. However, several conditions are found to be important for the mental health of children: they should live with the same caregiver during the time parents are abroad; the children should have sufficient means of living, as children in post-conflict settings always showed worse mental health when they lived in transnational families relative to their counterparts living with both of their parents (Mazzucato et al. 2015).

In the Caribbean, UNICEF (2009) reports vulnerability of children in the transnational families that stay to live in countries of origin. They face various health and education challenges, as well as various psychosocial problems. Child shifting (moving from home to home) is common in the Caribbean, creating significant instability in children's lives. In many cases when children reside with their grandparents, as in Dominica in 2005 where 48 per cent of primary school children did so, younger female relatives may instead have to take up the burden or providing care (UNICEF, 2009).

E.   Coming back

Both voluntary and involuntary return migration of women and men is observed in the Caribbean with various motivations and impacts. Research with Dominican, Haitian, Jamaican, Mexican, and Salvadoran, immigrants in the United States reveals that women are more likely than men to pursue strategies to prolong their residence and attempt to reunite family members abroad (Pessar, 2005). Compared with men, migrant women from the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Jamaica are more likely to try to stay in the United States and bring their families to them rather than return home (Pessar 2005; Grasmuck and Pessar 1991). Among reasons for their reluctance to return, women cite difficulties to find waged work outside of home, limited access to time-saving technology, and less opportunity to participate in community organizations (Goldring, 1996). The women also perceived that their children would receive better education and employment opportunities in the United States.

Among Mexicans and many other Latin American and Caribbean populations, men often develop transnational ties that will facilitate their return (Pessar, 2005). Research on Mexican hometown associations and on Mexican local, state, and federal officials has revealed a definitive male bias. Migrant women are important actors in the fundraising necessary to initiate development projects in their hometowns. However, they are often deprived access to the increased power and social capital

enjoyed by male hometown association participants. This happens as decision-making and project implementation are perceived as male prerogatives, both by the men in the associations and also by the government officials who co-fund and co-implement the initiatives (Goldring, 2001).

Grasmuck and Pessar (1991) found that migrant women from the Dominican Republic might not have wanted to return home to former and traditional gender roles, but eventually did return due to social and familial concerns. Guarnizo (1996) finds that women's return was more family based and men's more individual. Only 26 per cent of women reported return as a personal preference, and were more likely than men to return as a result of someone else's decision, such as their spouse's.

There are indications that in societies where patriarchy is deeply rooted, working abroad is a transitory experience, and upon return many women are once again relegated to traditional roles of subservience (MPI/IOM, 2015). Various challenges experienced by transnational families may also result in family disintegration during migration or upon return, thus further complicating migrant reintegration opportunities and weakening the social support networks. The structural conditions, including gender inequality, which contributed to defining the pre-conditions for migration and a migrant's journey also predicate the preference for return and the possibilities for successful re-integration and full use of new skills and capital in the country of origin.

F. Conclusions

Migration has constantly shaped the history of the Caribbean. The subregion has been the scene of significant migratory movements that contributed decisively to the configuration of today's societies. Although contemporary migration arouses many concerns and also reveals opportunities and challenges, it still lacks a gender perspective that policies and agreements must urgently tackle in the subregion.

This study reflects on the increasingly complex gender dynamics that exist during the migration cycle and the impact on Caribbean women's empowerment and their autonomy in this process. Based on the information available, the feminization of international migration originating from the Caribbean and intra-regional migration in the Caribbean and the diversity and variability of female migratory status are among the main emerging trends in the subregion. Another important issue addressed by this study is the need for up-to-date data and for more comprehensive analysis of migration in the subregion that should include a gender perspective. The Caribbean subregion still lags behind in conducting systematic and regular data collection and analysis on the interrelationship between migration and women's empowerment and autonomy.

Moreover, the migration cycle in the Caribbean is described in an analytical manner in order to cover the different and interrelated phases of this phenomenon. Migration could empower women and boost their autonomy, and therefore reduce gender inequalities and asymmetries in certain circumstances on the one hand and it could subject women to further vulnerability, abuse and violation of their human rights and fundamental freedoms on the other hand. The answer to the question of whether or not migration strengthens women's autonomies is not simple or straight-forward; as it varies from the situation of women in each country of origin to their insertion in the country of destination and then to their possible return. Gender-sensitive and human rights based approaches are therefore crucial when addressing migration movements, policies and agreements in order to include these peculiarities in a broader context of advancing gender equality and women's autonomy in the Caribbean.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals present a unique opportunity for Member States and other stakeholders to advance the empowerment of women and girls, as this new transformative agenda places equality and dignity at its centre. It is also the first global development framework that explicitly considers migration within an integrated approach to economic, social and environmental development. This brings to light the need to do more to make linkages between migration, equality, dignity and sustainable development. By focusing on the importance of women's empowerment and autonomy throughout the migration cycle, this study, therefore, could contribute to the negotiation process leading to the adoption of the Global Compact for Migration in 2018, as well as to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This new Agenda is

aimed at guiding governments and other non-state actors to change current frameworks and structures that are impeding the achievement of equality. Gender equality and women's empowerment is thus an objective as well as part of the solutions for sustainable and inclusive development with equality by 2030. Women, regardless of their migratory status, are rights-holders and States are the guarantors of those rights. By respecting, protecting and fulfilling their rights, States will not only be able to provide to all women and girls an adequate standard of living and well-being that could have in its turn a positive impact on facilitating orderly, safe, regular and responsible migratory movements. They will also benefit from women's autonomy, their contribution and participation towards achieving inclusive, fairer, and sustainable societies, where half of the population will no longer be left behind.

III. Policy considerations

Empowerment can only happen when both women and men have the ability to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from growth and sustainable development processes in ways that not only recognize but value their contributions.

This study has shown that the links between migration and women's empowerment are complex and mixed, both globally and in the Caribbean context at every stage of the migration process. Beyond personal characteristics, the impact of migration will depend on the structural conditions and societal organization in the country of origin that pre-determine the motivations and conditions of migration and return, and their positive and/or negative consequences for female and male migrants, their household members and their communities. Much will depend on whether women migrate through regular channels, their opportunities to develop skills, access decent jobs and generate income before migration, and the extent to which they benefit from the provisions of immigration admission policies and the socio-economic environment at destination.

Persisting gender inequalities in countries of origin, transit and destination are reflected in the patterns of the migration process, and are often exacerbated when female vulnerability increases along the journey due to, for instance, unscrupulous recruitment, multiple discrimination in the workplace and new community, and pressures of coping with transnational family arrangements.

To this end, several areas of analysis and intervention are proposed for policy consideration, including for the negotiation process towards the adoption of the Global Compact for Migration, and, where applicable, programme implementation:

A. General recommendations to Member States

1.   Mainstreaming gender and migration into legal and policy frameworks

- Ensure that regional and national laws and regulations are in full compliance with State's obligations as parties of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW Convention), the provisions of the International Convention on the

Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families ,[25] relevant ILO conventions and other core international and regional human rights instruments and standards, including the Montevideo consensus on population and development, and the Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030, as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

- Encourage Member States that have not done so to ratify or accede to relevant human rights agreements and treaties, such as the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrants Workers and Members of Their Families.

- Apply a human rights-based approach and principles of equality, non-discrimination, empowerment and autonomy of women for all measures regarding migration policies and frameworks, including in national development policies and other related plans for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs. Tackling all multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, violence and abuse against women, adolescent and girls will contribute to the enjoyment and exercise of their human rights regardless of their migratory status.

- The right to a nationality is of paramount importance to the realization of other human rights, and needs to be addressed in the context of female deportation and statelessness of women and girls. [26]

- Foster cross-sectoral collaboration and interactions between all branches and levels of government, including national machineries for the advancement of women, interior and social development ministries, in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of migration policies and plans in order to address this complex phenomenon in a holistic and comprehensive manner, encompassing the social, political, cultural and economic dimensions and contributions of all migrants, including female migrants.

- Ensure adequate allocation of resources, including gender-sensitive budgeting processes that will consider the needs and priorities of migrant women, adolescent and girls in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of regulatory and policy migration frameworks.

2.   Awareness-raising, training and capacity building

- Develop public-information campaigns to bring about a change in attitudes towards migrant women and girls by organizing campaigns to raise awareness and combat all forms of discrimination, stigmatization, hate speech, fear, and intolerance against them regardless of their migratory status.

- Support efforts to raise awareness with gender-sensitive and human rights based approach education and training programmes on migration for national and local authorities, parlamentarians, the police, military forces, judiciary, social workers, immigration officials, the mass media, non-governmental organizations, diaspora networks, and migrant women themselves about their rights and duties, as well as on their contributions in the countries of destination. Training for migrant women and girls should strengthen their capacity to organize and advocate for their rights.

- Join the United Nations campaign to combat xenophonia, racism and discrimination called "Together-Respect, Safety and Dignity for All'. This campaign is a coalition of member States, the private sector, civil society representatives, youth, and individual's committed to

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[25]   Ratified by Guyana, Jamaica, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.
[26]   Recommendation emanating from the Caribbean Seminar on Women's empowerment and Migration in the Caribbean held in Montevideo, Uruguay, on 25 October 2016 http://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/news/files/womens_empowerment_event_-_report.pdf.

promote non-discrimination and tolerance towards migrants and refugees that could be replicated in the Caribbean region, including with the use of social media.[27]

3. Studies and statistics

- Conduct updated studies into the situation of migrant women and girls to pinpoint the trends and challenges that currently affect them. National data collection and studies should develop understanding on migration drivers, recruitment practices in the Caribbean subregion, and socio-economic inclusion of migrant women in the countries of destination. Those studies will serve as tools for discussing and analyzing the challenges faced by specific groups of migrants, including women and girls, and develop specific evidence-based policies to improve their well-being and address their specific needs at all stages of the migration process. Longitudinal studies, which consider the situation of women and girls from a life cycle approach, carried out at countries of origin and destination, and their potential return to the country of origin, including qualitative analysis, would improve the understanding of the complex links between migration and women's empowerment and their autonomy.

- Additional research is needed to better understand the impact of migration on areas such as the sustainability of social protection schemes in countries of origin; the implications of migrants returning to their countries of origin, including the social, economic and family dynamics of reunification and in the case of retirement purposes; the situation of Caribbean female migrants in detention facilities or other forms of deprivation of their liberty in the country of destination, as well as the conditions of women's deportees in the country of destination and their reintegration upon return to their country of origin; and the role being played by new social media platforms on women and girls on the move.[28]

- More research is also needed regarding the specific legal and protective measures for women, adolescent and girls who are forced to migrate due to disasters-related situations and the impact of climate change in the subregion, in order to have a better understanding of the intra-regionally and overseas migration dynamics that will help to identify protection gaps and targeted measures to overcome them during the relief, recovery and reconstruction efforts and arrangements.[29]

- Conduct systematic and regular data collection, analysis, and dissemination, disaggregated by age, sex, location, disability, ethnicity, and migratory status, in compliance with international standards on personal data protection and the right to privacy. More needs to be done to strengthen National Statistical Offices in the Caribbean and cross-sectoral collaboration among governments at all levels in order to improve data collection and analysis capacities and the measurement of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs through a migratory and gender lens.

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[27] https://together.un.org/.

[28] Additional recommendation from the Caribbean Seminar on Women's empowerment and Migration in the Caribbean held in Montevideo, Uruguay, on 25 October 2016, http://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/news/files/womens_empowerment_event_-_report.pdf.

[29] See, for instance, the initiatives of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee operational guidelines on the protection of persons in situations of natural disasters (available at: http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/IDPersons/OperationalGuidelines_IDP.pdf); the Agenda for the Protection of Crosss-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change (available at: http://disasterdisplacement.org/the-platform/our-response); Global Migration Group Principles and Guidelines, supported by practical guidance, on the human rights protection of migrants in vulnerable situations within large and/or mixed movements; and the the Peninsula Principles on Climate displacement within States (available at: http://displacementsolutions.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Peninsula-Principles.pdf); and the among others.

B. Specific recommendations for Caribbean countries of origin and return

1. Gender equality, adequate standards of living and autonomy

- Improve overall conditions and promote gender equality in the country of origin. These would make a notable impact on the motivations and opportunities of women, both those who stay and those who migrate and possibly return. Improving access of all women, including potential migrants and returnees to more varied skill development, better jobs, education financial capital, entrepreneurship opportunities, tackling the unequal sharing of reproductive, unpaid domestic work and caring responsibilities, and combating gender-based violence and discrimination would help to transform migration from a phenomenon that often stems from desperation, to a positive and safe experience that is led by motivations of acquiring new skills, capital, contacts, and getting to know new cultures. Particular attention should be given to the situation of teachers, nurses and doctors in the subregion and the impact of their migration on economic and social development in their country of origin.

- Migrant remittances provide a powerful mechanism for levelling income and consumption in many Caribbean countries, therefore it is important to improve access of women remittance senders and recipients, as well as women returnees to financial services and capital, lower remittance transfer fees, promote financial literacy, entrepreneurship trainings, access to information and technology, and more broadly, access to opportunities beyond the traditional gendered sectors.

- Cooperate with the diaspora or any development initiative involving migrants at the national and local levels, and create consultation and implementation frameworks conducive to the participation of female migrants or female members of migrant households in order to benefit from their contribution to sustainable development issues in their country of origin.

- Build the capacity of social services, educational institutions and community organizations to support transnational families, including through accessible, reliable and available information on the measures that currently exist that could help those families to enjoy their right to private and family life, including through family reunification.

2. Opportunities for safe, orderly and regular migration and mobility, protection and access to justice

- Improve regulation of international recruitment services and awareness for potential female migrants of their rights and responsibilities in seeking employment abroad.

- Remove remaining legal restrictions that restrict the mobility of married women, including in rules for applying for a passport, choosing where to live and conferring citizenship/nationality to children.

- Promote access to legal aid, advice and administrative assistance to migrant women before migration and upon return, in particular regarding travel documents and work contracts, as well as access to protection mechanisms from physical, psychological and socioeconomic abuses against them. Particular attention should be given to those in irregular situation who may fear reprisals by recruiters, employers, intimate partners or family members.

- Strengthen diplomatic and consular protection by sensitizing diplomatic and consular staff to the rights and specific needs of migrant women, adolescent and girls, including by providing interpreters, medical care, counselling, and shelter for those in need, and consider promoting

arrangements for providing consular services collectively due to the limited capacity of certain countries in the subregion[30].

- Consider providing a basic level of social protection to nationals working abroad through voluntary insurance, with particular attention to female migrants.

- Strengthen the efforts towards prevention and combating trafficking in human beings and human smuggling and recognize the increased risk of trafficking that women and girls face due to persisting gender inequalities and the use of new technologies and social media platforms that could place them in a vulnerable situation in the subregion.

C. Specific recommendations for countries of transit and destination, including those in the Caribbean

1. Opportunities for safe, orderly and regular migration and mobility, protection and access to justice

- Ensure that immigration policies incorporate a gender perspective and a human rights-based approach and be monitored with respect to their possible varied impacts on male and female migrants, and also ensure that policies and practices do not directly or indirectly discriminate against women, on the basis of age, disability, religion, marital status, legal partnership status, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity status. Areas of particular attention should include improving international recruitment regulation, upholding the rights of family migrants and low-skilled temporary workers, enabling family reunification, and addressing employer gender bias in worker selection.

- Review current regional agreements to foster regular and safe pathways for migration, through ensuring better coordination and coherence among the countries of origin, transit and destination regarding the matching of skills and employment opportunities, and the promotion of programmes that facilitate the regularization of the status of migrants in order to benefit from the social, economic, cultural and political contributions of migrant women.

- Promote the adoption of specific measures to combat all forms of violence, including sexual violence, harassment and abuse, in particular in the case of family migrants and women domestic workers, and to prosecute and punish those responsible, as well as providing reparation to victims without compromising their migratory or residence status.

- Foster measures to combat and eliminate all multiple and intersecting forms of discriminatory practices and gender stereotypes affecting migrant women and girls in the community and the workplaces in order to improve their inclusion and social cohesion.

- Ensure that migrant women have access to effective remedies from the competent national tribunals when their rights are violated, which includes access to legal assistance, interpretation and translation services, and accessible dispute resolution mechanisms without fear of reprisals. Migrant women should be able to seek help, protection and remedy without fear of reprimand or removal[31].

- Strengthen the efforts towards prevention and combating trafficking in human beings and human smuggling and recognize the increased risk of trafficking that women and girls face due to persisting gender inequalities in the subregion and the existence of new technologies and social media platforms that could place them in a vulnerable situation.

- Ensure that involuntary returns, deportations, removals and readmissions are ordered only in the event that all judicial options have been exhausted and that each case is treated

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[30] Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Migration (2017), A/71/728, para.53.
[31] François Crépeau, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants (2016) A/71/285, para.46.

individually, with due process and access to justice in accordance with international law, and in consideration of the gender-related circumstances, the situation as it relates to family unity and the risks of human rights violations in the country of origin, transit and destination[32].

2. Decent work, social protection and care services

- Ensure access of migrant women of various admission categories to job-matching services, recognition of qualifications and services facilitating their access to decent work and their broader social inclusion and career development.

- Strengthen efforts to facilitate inclusion of migrant women, including those in low-skilled occupations in temporary admission categories, in the social security system.

- Ensure proper inclusion of care and domestic work in the national labour legislation and developing state and non-profit mechanisms to ensure proper inspection and monitoring of household employment and the protection of the rights of domestic workers.

- Ensure that migrant women and girls could benefit from improved integrated health and social care services, including access to gender- disability and age-sensitive mental health, psychosocial, preventive and sexual and reproductive health care and medicines.

- Improve access of migrant women to financial services and capital in the country of destination, faster, lower and safer remittance transfer fees, promoting financial literacy and technology education, entrepreneurship, and access to opportunities beyond the traditional gendered sectors.

- Enable women migrant workers to unionize, associate and collectively bargain, promote effective state- and union-led protection of their labour rights in employment-related disputes, and ensure that these do not have negative impact on their future employment or eligibility for labour migration programmes[33].

- Promote country cooperation to ensure that migrant women receive equal pay for equal work. This should include the development of comparable non-wage benefits which requires further cooperation between countries of origin and destination to improve working conditions for migrant women.[34]

D. Recommendations for the private sector

- Businesses, including recruitment agencies and employers, should comply with international human rights norms in order to prevent all forms of gender based discrimination against migrant women, adolescent and girls, and implement the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights which provide guidance for businesses on contracting services, and for State on adopting appropriate legislation and regulations in conjunction with supervision, investigative and accountability mechanisms that will ensure compliance with norms for business activities and human rights, including in the context of migration.

- Employers recruiting and employing migrant workers internationally and in the local market, including migrant women could access a broader pool of talent and uphold their social responsibility by promoting the employer-pays principle in international recruitment, addressing possible gender bias in worker selection, and combating workplace discrimination among other measures.

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[32] UN Women (2017), Recommendations for addressing women's human rights in the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration. Outcome of expert meeting in Geneva, November 2016.
[33] François Crépeau, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants (2016) A/71/285, p.9.
[34] Recommendation emanating from the Caribbean Seminar on Women's empowerment and Migration in the Caribbean held in Montevideo, Uruguay, on 25 October 2016   http://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/news/files/womens_empowerment_event_-_report.pdf.

- Money transfer organizations and the banking systems in the Caribbean need to be strengthened in order to make better use of remittances in the subregion. Governments and other stakeholders may have to consider re-doubling their efforts to reduce the costs of transferring remittances flows and rebuild trust in the banking facilities in the Caribbean.[35]

- Foster multi-stakeholders engagements and interactions, including the private sector, the United Nations and international financial institutions in order to address the situation of those women and girls who are forced to migrate due to disasters and emergency related situations impacting their country of origin.

E. Recommendations for bilateral and multilateral cooperation fora and the international community

- Promote global, regional and national gender-responsive migration policies and governance that promote women's empowerment and their autonomy, value their agency and contribution in migration and avoid the victimization of migrant women, as well as combat measures criminalizing them due to their irregular migratory situation.

- Enhance regional and bilateral cooperation on regulating and monitoring international recruitment in order to have a better sharing of responsibilities among States and other stakeholders, through joint skill development and recognition of formal, non-formal and informal competences, combating trafficking in human beings, human smuggling and contemporary forms of slavery, dismantling criminal networks, promoting portability of social security, lowering remittance transfer costs, and collection and analysis of sex and age disaggregated migration statistics, and qualitative research on gender and migration.

- Establish regional online platforms for sharing information on current migratory legal and policy frameworks and data collection, including existing ones, such as the ECLAC Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, in order to identify good practices and persistent challenges in the subregion.

- Support the exchange of experience and sharing of best practices and challenges related to the situation of migrant women and girls within and between countries of the Caribbean subregion, including through the Caribbean Migration Consultations, driven by IOM with the support of UNHCR. This process should include the active participation of all stakeholders, including state authorities, international and regional organizations, international and regional financial institutions, national human rights institutions, civil society organizations for migrants and with migrant women, academia, diaspora communities, and the private sector.

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[35] Recommendation emanating from the Caribbean Seminar on Women's empowerment and Migration in the Caribbean held in Montevideo, Uruguay, on 25 October 2016 http://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/news/files/womens_empowerment_event_-_report.pdf.

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