



Oral STATEMENT
38th session of the Human Right Council

Item 3
Clustered ID
Special Rapporteur on Human Rights of Migrants

MMM thanks the S.R for his reports on the human rights of migrants. We agree that in the context of returns, women and girls need particular attention – And we want to draw attention to the particular case of mothers, many of which work as domestic workers, caring for children or older people in their destination countries.

Migration changes a mother's status and life in ways that can make their return difficult:

Firstly, migrant mothers often have to leave their children behind, often in the care of the father. Thus migration challenges the traditional gender roles in the family, with the mother becoming the main breadwinner through remittances, and the father becoming more involved in caregiving. So the mother does not necessarily find her place in her family when she comes back.

Especially if we consider that after a long stay abroad, migrant mothers become trapped between 2 cultures upon their return, and that can also be a source of conflict and stigma within their family and community.

Secondly, migrant mothers have usually enjoyed economic independence during migration. However, they do not necessarily freely choose how to spend and manage their money, personal savings or freely decide when to retire and return home to their families. Still, when they return, they may face unemployment or reduced independence, as well as lower economic and social status, or even discrimination.

It is a pity, because in fact, migrant mothers are important actors for the development of a country:

- Not only do they contribute to the economy through their remittances, but in most cases they also financially support the education and health of their children - an investment in the future workforce
- Migrant mothers also bring back knowledge and intercultural skills to their family and community.

MMM is therefore calling on governments to recognize the contributions of migrant mothers to their country, and to support their return through a portability of pensions, health and social security benefits.

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Make Mothers Matter (MMM) is an international NGO created in 1947 to raise the awareness of policy makers and public opinion on the contribution of mothers to social, cultural and economic development. MMM has no political or religious affiliations, and thus transparently voices the concerns of mothers at international level with permanent MMM representatives at the United Nations (General Consultative Status), UNESCO and the European Union.