



**UN** Commission on the  
Status of Women

## **Background Guide**

Committee: UN Commission on the Status of Women  
(UN Women)

LAMP Invitational Model United Nations (LIMUN)  
January 16th-18th

**Chair:** Vielka Ebadan  
**Secretary:** Shane Enriquez

## **Welcome Letter from the Dias**

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to LAMP Invitational Model United Nations (LIMUN) 2018! We are beyond excited to meet you in January, and I am eager to welcome three days of productive and stimulating debating.

For us, Model United Nations has become integrated into our lifestyle; we view it as educational as much as it's empowering to have the ability to construct opinions on global issues through the eyes of several different countries. We hope that as soon as you walk into the committee session you learn something new and that hopefully by the end of the conference you have grown in one way or another; whether it's your ability to overcome your fear of public speaking or your ability to lead large groups of people. If this is your first Model United Nations Conference then don't worry too much and feel free to approach any of us at any point in the conference if you need any form of support. We all know how it feels like to walk into your first conference and feel a little lost in the process of it all!

The Commission on the Status of Women (UN Women) is the principal intergovernmental body entirely dedicated to the advancement and advocacy of gender equality and the empowerment of women around the globe. The Commission prepares reports presented to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations on the status of women's equality and its progress in furthering this cause. Additionally, the Commission produces Agreed Conclusions on the priority theme discussed at its annual plenary meeting. In order to accurately simulate the Commission, it will be key for delegates to emulate the normative and best practice-setting approaches of the Commission's annual plenary meetings.

This Background Guide serves as an introduction to the topics for this committee. However, it is not intended to replace individual research. I encourage you to explore your member state's policies in depth and use the annotated bibliography to further your knowledge on these topics. In preparation for the Conference, each delegation will submit a position paper on the first night of committee (January 16) in accordance with the guidelines stated in this Background Guide. If you want to be considered for an award, I implore you to submit a position paper.

The topics under discussion for this committee are as following:

1. Addressing the impact of female genital mutilation
2. Addressing the impact of honor killings
3. The rights of female refugees and migrants

The topics chosen for UN Women explore a vast amount of political, social, and economic issues. Therefore, it's only realistic to state that we haven't dissected every issue to its core, which is why it's important that your pursuit for knowledge on the matter isn't solely limited to this guide. As a Dias, I am eager to listen to independent case studies and new policies that provide a new dimension to solving the matter at hand, and that's only possible if you study the subject matter with extreme depth.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me at [vrosario1127@gmail.com](mailto:vrosario1127@gmail.com) for any concerns you have. I cannot wait to meet all of you!

---- Vielka E.

## **POSITION PAPERS**

### **What is a position paper?**

A position paper is what its name suggests: a paper in which a Member State or Observer sets out its position on a set of topics. For LIMUN, delegates are asked to submit a position paper on the topics that are outlined in their Committee Background Guide. Although position papers are short, they are a critical part of preparing for a NMUN conference.

As opposed to a working paper or a resolution, which are written during the conference and reflect the work and thoughts of several Member States working together, a position paper is written prior to a conference and reflects the position and actions of a single Member State. For each topic, the position paper should provide a succinct policy statement representing the relevant views of your assigned Member State or Observer. You should establish what the key issues are for each topic and identify and address international and regional conventions, treaties, declarations, resolutions, and other precedents that are relevant to the topic, as well as what your Member State has done to address the topic thus far.

LIMUN will not tolerate plagiarism, which includes copying directly from the Committee Background Guides provided to delegates. Violation of this policy may result in dismissal from the conference. In addition, although documentation issued by the United Nations is considered within the public domain, LIMUN does not allow the verbatim reproduction of these documents.

### **How do I write a position paper?**

I have set standards for the format of position papers. Thus, position papers submitted to UN Women should adhere to the following:

- Position papers should address the following topics: your country's position on the topic, how the issue affects your country, past attempts at a resolution, and possible future solutions.
  - For each topic, do address the global/regional context of the topic (including relevant statistics and information); what the international/regional community and your Member State or Observer have previously done to address the topic; and provide both broad and specific actions that your committee and the international community can take to address the topic going forward.
- Unlike in most academic papers, you should not include citations in your position paper. Write the position papers as if they are policy statements from a foreign ministry. Accordingly, please avoid using footnotes, endnotes, or in-text parenthetical citations in your position paper.
- Page length must be between half a page and a page.
- 12 pt. Font and Times New Roman or Arial.
- Lines must be single-spaced.
- Do not include the name of your school or sponsoring organization anywhere in the position paper.

- In the top-left corner of your paper, you should label the position paper with the committee name, your country, and the topic.
  - Example:
    - Country: United States of America
    - Committee: UN Women
    - Topic: Addressing the impact of honor killings

### **Why do I need to write a position paper?**

Position papers are a critical part of delegate preparation, and they help to identify which delegates are best prepared for the conference and are most likely to take a strong leadership role in committee sessions.. Thus, in order to be considered for a delegate award, you must submit a position paper for all three topics. For me, position papers provide an effective indication of which issues capture delegates' interest, and they help me design a strategy for the facilitation of committee debate.

This committee will grant a position paper award in recognition of outstanding pre-conference preparation. While LIMUN emphasizes the educational significance of delegate participation, we also seek to recognize delegates who have put exceptional work into their preparation for the conference, as seen through the position papers.

I use the following criteria to evaluate position papers:

- Overall quality of writing, proper formatting, grammar, etc.;
- Citation of relevant international, regional, and national resolutions / documents;
- General consistency with bloc / geopolitical positions and constraints;
- Consistency with the constraints of the UN;
- Analysis of issues and the use of original research, rather than reiteration of the Committee Background Guide.

Position papers are due the first night of committee, and I highly recommend attending this session if you want to be considered for an award. If for some reason you will not be able to attend, you may email me your position papers at [yrosario1127@gmail.com](mailto:yrosario1127@gmail.com).

## **TOPIC ONE**

### **Addressing the impact of female genital mutilation**

#### **Introduction:**

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a harmful and destructive traditional that has no known origin. The customary practice of FGM has been labeled as a violation of various rights of women and children: the right to health, the right to be free from violence, the right to life and to physical integrity, the right to non-discrimination, and the right to be free from cruel treatment. According to statistics from the World Health Organization (WHO), more than 200 million girls and women alive today have gone through FGM, usually at the age “between infancy and 15 years”.<sup>1</sup> The procedure provides no health benefits to the victim and can cause a multitude of issues including infections and cysts later on.

FGM is carried out for many reasons, with beliefs that it deters women from engaging in ‘illicit’ sexual activities, with others believing that female genitalia is impure, or unfeminine. Moreover, the prevalence of FGM is decreasing, but the percentage of women who have gone through this continues to be worryingly high in many nations, with eight nations having the rates above 80%.<sup>2</sup> There are variations within nations, but the trends seen in the data lead to the belief that ethnicity is the main contributing factor to the difference in the type of FGM that is carried out.

There are four main types of mutilation, which are defined as;

**Type 1:** Often referred to as **clitoridectomy**, this is the partial or total removal of the clitoris (a small, sensitive and erectile part of the female genitals), and in very rare cases, only the prepuce (the fold of skin surrounding the clitoris).

**Type 2:** Often referred to as **excision**, this is the partial or total removal of the clitoris and the labia minora (the inner folds of the vulva), with or without excision of the labia majora (the outer folds of skin of the vulva).

**Type 3:** Often referred to as **infibulation**, this is the narrowing of the vaginal opening through the creation of a covering seal. The seal is formed by cutting and repositioning the labia minora, or labia majora, sometimes through stitching, with or without removal of the clitoris (clitoridectomy).

**Type 4:** This includes all other harmful procedures to the female genitalia for non-medical purposes, e.g. pricking, piercing, incising, scraping and cauterizing the genital area.

FGM is believed to have begun as a distinguisher of class in ancient Egypt, but there is not much more information than that on where, or when, it came to be. Moreover, FGM has been documented in around 30 countries, and is mainly prevalent in African and Middle-Eastern nations. The issue has received many responses from the international community, with international organizations, nations, and states working from legal frameworks to research to grass-root level programs to eliminate the practice of FGM.

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<sup>1</sup> “Female Genital Mutilation.” *World Health Organization*, World Health Organization, [www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs241/en/](http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs241/en/).

<sup>2</sup> “New UNICEF Report on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: Turning Opposition into Action.” *UNICEF*, 19 July 2013, [www.unicef.org/protection/57929\\_69881.html](http://www.unicef.org/protection/57929_69881.html).

## **Discussion of the topic:**

The issue requires a wider range and approach in order to deal with all the aspects it presents. One such aspect is the education of citizens living in isolated or tribal communities where FGM is more likely to be practiced, as well as general education on the issue as a whole. Making sure that the cultural heritage of the communities targeted is also an important facet of the issue, as well as the socio-economic effect of all the decisions taken for this issue. Consider the causes of mentioned previously, and the factors weighing in for the issue.

UN Statistics have claimed the reduction of FGM practices in countries where surveys have been had repeatedly, therefore leading the international community to believe in success of certain measures. Establishing a legal framework would allow both the spending of government resources on the reduction and elimination of this practice by deterring individuals in healthcare facilities or traditional circumcisers to carry on with the procedure any longer. However there is also the concern that this measure is not working, such as in a few countries where more than 80% of the female population has gone through FGM even though it is illegal to do so. Therefore the establishment of best practices and the like would bring nations closer to success in this regard.

The healthcare of current victims is a crucial point to be discussed, with effects ranging in the long term in both physical and psychological aspects. The provision and overseeing of these healthcare facilities, as well as maintaining its quality is an important factor to think about.

While it is true that the highest concentration of FGM is in African nations, it is not to be forgotten that there are many incidences of FGM in Asia, Middle East and there have been cases in other continents, such as in Europe and North America, thus pervading as a global and not regional issue.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, there has been no relation found between religion and the practice, though some falsely believe that it is tied with religions such as Islam or Christianity. Its origin predates the formation of both these religions, and there have been no mention of the procedure in either the Quran or the Sunnah. Moreover, sociocultural reasons are the ones cited the most as causation for the procedure to take place, such as beliefs that FGM increases the woman's desirability, or it being a necessary requirement for marriage. And with high importance being focused on marriage for the economic upholding of a woman in society, the custom carries on.

## **Questions to consider:**

1. Has your country criminalized FGM?
2. What has it done for the protection of the rights of women and children in this regard?
3. Are there healthcare centres focused the treatment of women and children dealing with the
4. What are the long term effects of FGM?
5. How effective are FGM healthcare centers?
6. Is your nation working (with any international organization/NGO/national group or independently) to educate rural areas of FGM?
7. How does your country plan on dealing with the possible backlash from traditional communities?

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<sup>3</sup> "New UNICEF Report on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: Turning Opposition into Action." *UNICEF*, 19 July 2013, [www.unicef.org/protection/57929\\_69881.html](http://www.unicef.org/protection/57929_69881.html).

## TOPIC TWO

### **Addressing the impact of honor killings**

#### **Introduction:**

Every year, young women and girls are murdered by their own families in the name of honor. According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), an estimated 5,000 honor killings occur annually; however, many of these crimes go unreported or are covered up as suicides. The actual number is likely far higher.<sup>4</sup> Few studies have been done on honor killings and the term remains loosely defined, leading to some disagreement as to what constitutes an honor killing. Honor killing is defined by Human Rights Watch as “Acts of vengeance, usually death, committed by male family members against female family members, who are held to have brought dishonor upon the family.”<sup>5</sup>

Honor killings are particularly prevalent in the Middle East and South Asia; however, acts of honor-based violence have been reported across all regions of the world, including Europe and the United States. The idea of honor is difficult to define but is deeply influential to many cultures and communities, particularly in patriarchal societies. The concept of honor is typically linked to female sexuality and is theorized to be connected to a male desire to control female reproduction. Women are viewed as having dishonored the family when they violate cultural norms relating to the subordinate sexual role of women with the following actions: premarital sex, refusing arranged marriages, committing adultery, seeking divorce, dressing improperly, speaking to men they aren't married to, marrying men the family disapproves of, or disrespecting their husbands. Victims of rape are occasionally murdered by family members or forced into marriages to protect the family's honor. Even rumors of improper behavior can result in violent retaliation, as the family wants to protect their reputation in the community.<sup>6</sup> Common forms of murder include stabbing, stoning, beating, and strangulation. While honor killings are the most notorious form of honor based violence, women who are viewed as dishonorable face a variety of forms of violent retaliation. These can include beatings, mutilations, and acid attacks. Women who become pregnant before marriage may be subjected to forced abortions or forced marriages. Those who flee a family home or abusive marriage for protection may be abducted and forcefully returned.<sup>7</sup>

All of these forms of violence deny women agency over themselves and their bodies. Although the practice is not condoned by the ideologies or teachings of Islam, honor killings are particularly prevalent in Islamic societies. While there is no basis for honor killings in any Islamic text and the practice has been disavowed by many prominent religious leaders, extreme conservative interpretations of Islamic law have been used to justify this violence. Despite this fact, many communities in Muslim majority nations accept the practice of honor killings. Honor killings in western Europe, The United States, and Canada are associated with immigration and are mainly prevalent in Muslim migrant communities. Oftentimes these acts are committed by male family members as a way of maintaining control over female relatives having adopted

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<sup>4</sup> Zoroya, Gregg. "Honor killings: 5 things to know." USA Today. June 09, 2016. Accessed December 24, 2016. <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2016/06/09/honor-killings-united-nations-pakistan/85642786/>.

<sup>5</sup> "Honor Killings." Human Rights Watch. Accessed December 21, 2016. <https://www.hrw.org/tag/honor-killings>.

<sup>6</sup> "Women's Rights." Amnesty International USA. Accessed December 21, 2016. <http://www.amnestyusa.org/ourwork/issues/women-s-rights>.

<sup>7</sup> "Forms of 'honour' based violence and oppression." International Honour Based Violence Resource Centre RSS. Accessed December 22, 2016. <http://hbv-awareness.com/forms-of-hbv/>.

western roles.<sup>8</sup> The stress involved in relocation and adapting to isolation in urban environments exacerbate these issues amongst immigrants. Honor killings are in no way exclusive to Muslim communities, however. Indonesia, the country with the world's largest Muslim population, does not experience honor killings and honor killings do occur outside of the Muslim world. India has a high level of honor killings in some Hindu and Sikh communities on a regional basis. The Haryana, Punjab, and Rajasthan regions see the highest rates of honor killings accompanied by approval amongst community members.<sup>9</sup>

While honor killings are not particularly prevalent outside of Asia and the Middle East, the underlying issues of domestic violence and gender inequality exist across all cultures. Honor killings can be made even more dangerous when sanctioned by law. Nations which criminalize extramarital sex, known as Zina under Shari'a law, further enforce the idea that women should be punished for non-traditional sexual behavior. Some countries allow for leniency in sentences for crimes based on honor. Article 192 of Syria's penal code allows a judge to issue reduced sentences for killing based on "honorable intent."<sup>10</sup>

Additionally, those who commit honor killings often use methods to gain legal favorability or escape punishment altogether. Forced suicide, or "self-immolation," is commonly used in place of honor killings, allowing the perpetrators to avoid punishment. This practice is particularly prevalent in Kurdish regions of Iran.<sup>11</sup> Families will also frequently recruit a minor to commit the murder in order to potentially reduce their sentences. Furthermore, law enforcement may not take these cases seriously. A lack of legal support for victims of honor-based violence allows these crimes to continue undeterred. Many nations have taken legislative steps to prevent honor killings and punish perpetrators of such actions. Turkey has established a life sentence for anyone involved in honor killings.<sup>12</sup> In October 2016, Pakistan passed a law that ended that practice of pardoning perpetrators of honor killings if they were forgiven by the victim's family.<sup>13</sup> While these legislative steps are important in combating the issue of honor killing, legal measures alone are not enough to combat the social and cultural complacency and even approval in these crimes.

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<sup>8</sup> Iftikhar , Arsalan. "Honor Killings Are a Global Problem." Time. Accessed December 22, 2016. <http://time.com/4415554/honor-killing-qandeel-baloch/>.

<sup>9</sup> "Honour Killings By Region." International Honour Based Violence Resource Centre RSS. Accessed December 22, 2016. <http://hbv-awareness.com/regions/>.

<sup>10</sup> "Syria: No Exceptions for 'Honor Killings'" Human Rights Watch. July 28, 2009. Accessed December 23, 2016. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2009/07/28/syria-no-exceptions-honor-killings>.

<sup>11</sup> SULAYMANIYAH, J.H.Y. "Why are so many Kurdish women setting themselves on fire?" The Economist. March 18, 2014. Accessed December 24, 2016. <http://www.economist.com/blogs/pomegranate/2014/03/suicidekurdistan>.

<sup>12</sup> Iftikhar , Arsalan. "Honor Killings Are a Global Problem." Time. Accessed December 22, 2016. <http://time.com/4415554/honor-killing-qandeel-baloch/>.

<sup>13</sup> Chen, Kelly. "Pakistan passes milestone law for women." CNN. October 8, 2016. Accessed December 24, 2016. <http://www.cnn.com/2016/10/06/asia/pakistan-anti-honor-killing-law/>.

## TOPIC THREE

### **The rights of female refugees and migrants**

#### **Introduction:**

In 2015 the number of international migrants rose to 244 million, which includes 150 million migrant workers, a number that is 1.4 times larger than 15 years ago and is expected to increase.<sup>14</sup> Migrants are those that “choose to move not because of a direct threat of persecution or death, but mainly to improve their lives by finding work, or in some cases for education, family reunion, or other reasons.”<sup>15</sup> Migrants are differentiated from refugees, who are defined in the *1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* as persons who move because of political circumstances including fleeing war, conflicts, and violations of human rights in their origin countries. The *United Nations (UN) Convention on Migrant Rights* defines a migrant worker as a “person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a State of which he or she is not a national.”<sup>16</sup> Migrant workers fill a shortage in the labor force and raise the birth rate of receiving countries, and their remittances – money sent back to their country of origin – account for a significant proportion of global finance flow.<sup>17</sup>

Women migrants account for almost half of all international migrants, and women migrant workers are seen as one of the most vulnerable groups suffering from violence and human rights abuses.<sup>18</sup> Most are engaged in traditionally- women-filled sectors of work such as domestic work and hospitality work, and are at times subjected to violence and discrimination.<sup>19</sup> Women migrant workers are exposed to sexual violence, trafficking, poor access to health care services, and can be emotionally affected by separation from their children.<sup>20</sup> Thus, at every stage of migration, from pre-departure to post-return, women migrant workers are especially vulnerable to human rights violations, and to both physical and psychological forms of violence.<sup>198</sup> Combating all forms of violence against women migrant workers is an urgent issue for the international community as the number of women migrant workers continues to rise.<sup>21</sup> The UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) views the topic of combating violence against women migrant workers as a significant concern for the international community.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> UN DESA, *International Migration Report 2015*, 2016, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> UNHCR, *UNHCR viewpoint: ‘Refugee’ or ‘migrant’ – Which is right?*, 2016.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> UN-Women, “Promoting and Protecting Women Migrant Workers’ Labour and Human Rights: Engaging with International, National Human Rights Mechanisms to Enhance Accountability”: ‘Protecting the labour and human rights of women migrant workers in the context of addressing large movements of migrants: Event prior to HLM on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants, 2017.

<sup>19</sup> CEDAW, *General recommendation No. 26 on women migrant workers (CEDAW/C/2009/WP.1/R)*, 2008.

<sup>20</sup> UN-Women, *Women Migrant Workers’ Journey Through the Margins: Labour, Migration and Trafficking*, 2016, p. 82.

<sup>21</sup> UN-Women, *Women Migrant Workers’ Journey Through the Margins: Labour, Migration and Trafficking*, 2016, p. 10.

<sup>22</sup> UN General Assembly, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Rashida Manjoo (A/HRC/26/38)*, 2014.

## Psychological Forms of Violence:

Women migrant workers are exposed to psychological violence, including discrimination by race, nationality, and/or religion; xenophobia; and trauma after violent experiences.<sup>23</sup> While racial discrimination includes exclusion by appearance such as skin color and facial features, xenophobia is “an attitudinal orientation of hostility against non- natives in a given population.”<sup>24</sup> An increasing rate of racism and xenophobia is seen to be caused by many reasons including the uncooperative attitude of governments toward protecting migrants, the existence of strict immigration policies, and/or rising crime rates.<sup>25</sup> As the negative images of migrants are often promoted by the media and political leaders’ perceptions, passive factors such as biased employers, gendered language, and lack of gender perception in services can be a large cause for discrimination.<sup>26</sup> In addition, there is also an increasing need for Member States to promote multiculturalism and the better integration of diversity in relation to global migration.<sup>27</sup>

Physical and psychological violence often happens simultaneously.<sup>28</sup> For example, women migrant workers often feel embarrassed to report sexual abuse or harassment in their workplace, which limits their access to proper healthcare or HIV testing.<sup>29</sup> The factors that heighten their risks for HIV infection include exposure to sexual violence, especially during transition, and a lack of access to healthcare services.<sup>30</sup> They may suffer from the stigma and discrimination of HIV as “carriers” of infection often due to false knowledge and misunderstanding.<sup>31</sup> A program called Prevention of HIV/AIDS Among Migrant Workers in Thailand (PHAMIT), led by NGOs, has provided educational materials on reproductive healthcare, contraceptive devices, and voluntary HIV counseling and testing.<sup>32</sup> PHAMIT started in 2003 and reached 442,000 migrants with information on reproductive health.<sup>33</sup> Action for Health Initiatives (ACHIEVE) is one of the best known NGOs in the Philippines. ACHIEVE implements “Developing Interventions to Address Stress and Mental Health Problems among Women Migrant Workers,” funded by the European Commission and the UN Joint Migration and Development Initiative (JMIDI).<sup>34</sup> It collected data on mental health issues of women migrant workers through a national survey and held a workshop as an opportunity to discuss the issue with other women migrant workers by disclosing the results of the survey.<sup>35</sup>

## Conclusion:

The number of migrants is expected to rise due to various reasons, including the declining labor population, low fertility rates, the continued rise of globalization, and the increasing economic gap between and within countries.<sup>36</sup> Further, the worldwide flow of labor is seen as beneficial for both sending and

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<sup>23</sup> ILO et al., *International Migration, Racism, Discrimination and Xenophobia*, 2001, p. 11.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> UN-Women, *Women Migrant Workers’ Journey Through the Margins: Labour, Migration and Trafficking*, 2016, p. 64.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Torriente, *Migrant Domestic Workers, Health and HIV*, 2016, p. 1.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>32</sup> Pinyosinwat, *PHAMIT: A program on HIV/AIDS prevention among migrant workers*, 2009, p. 1.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> ACHIEVE, *Developing Interventions to Address Stress and Mental Health Problems among Women Migrant Workers*, 2017.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> UN-Women, *Report of the Expert Group Meeting on the CSW 61 Priority Theme: Women’s Economic Empowerment in the Changing World of Work*, 2016, pp. 4-9.

receiving countries with appropriate responses at the international and regional levels, and with cooperation with CSOs.<sup>37</sup> However, the current situation is far from ideal in the case of women migrant workers, due to the many forms of violence they may endure.<sup>38</sup> A lack of access to information on safe migration processes, exploitative working conditions, and discrimination from negative stereotypes of migrant workers all play a role in perpetuating violence toward women migrant workers. There remains a need for the international community to take human-centered approaches to combat various types of violence that women migrant workers experience throughout the migration process.

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.