

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

The role of migrant women in the new sexual division of labour

[Madrid, Spain – 1 December 2008] The United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW) and ACSUR-Madrid opened the international meeting “*Migrant women, women caregivers: new sexual division of labour*,” which will take place at the Autonomous University of Madrid (UAM), from 1 to 3 December 2008.

In the framework of the VI Solidarity Week of the UAM, civil society representatives, organizations and academic institutions from Spain, Bolivia, Colombia and the Dominican Republic will meet to explore and debate migrant women’s access to global labour markets and citizenship rights.

In addition, the impact of women’s migration on the organization of society and their households in their countries of origin will be discussed, as well as the new global dimensions of the old sexual division of labour.

Women from both the Global South and the North will participate, as among them María Jesús Izquierdo, profesor at the Autonomous University of Barcelona and Director of the Research Project “Caregivers without frontiers: female Filipino migration and care chains” (Servidoras sin fronteras: migración filipina femenina y redes de cuidados); Denise Paiewonsky, Dominican sociologist and Professor at the Gender Studies Center of the Technological Institute of Santo Domingo and Amelia Ticona Vergara, Director of the National Federation of Domestic Workers.

Special attention will be given to exploring the potential impacts of changes in the Special Social Security Regimen, which regulates domestic service, on migrant women in particular. Participants will hear from domestic workers (Association of Domestic Workers from Bizkaia, and SEDOAC-Active Domestic Service), unionists (CC.OO.) and the Spanish Ministry of Labour and Immigration.

The “care crisis” in developed countries has contributed to the feminization of migration processes by opening labour opportunities for women domestic workers as well as care-givers. As a result of this situation, transnational global care chains have been created with the objective of sustaining households on a daily basis.

Within this context, the meeting aims to introduce the terminology and meaning of global care chains, highlighting that the provision of care is the basis of any social and economic system. Among the reflections that will be debated are: What is the impact of the feminization of migration in countries of origin? Are we exporting the care-giving crisis from countries in the North? To what extent is the ruling economic and social development model globally sustainable? Are migrant women’s rights being respected? How can we fight for the improvement of domestic workers’ rights? What dynamics for resistance exist both locally and overseas? What alternatives can we propose?

This initiative falls under the framework of the UN-INSTRAW project “Building networks: Latin American Women and Global Care Chains,” which is being implemented in Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, and Spain.

The meeting is being organized with support from Platform 2015 and More, the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) and the Autonomous University of Madrid (UAM).