Inclusive development, share prosperity, and decent work for refugee women have historically been governed by a complex set of laws and policies across institutional levels. The 1951 Geneva Convention, for instance, provides that “shall accord to refugees the same treatment as is accorded to aliens generally” (Article 7). The Convention however remains ambiguous in defining different migration statuses such as present lawfully, staying lawfully, and residing lawfully, and how they affect different levels of protection. This gives states significant discretion to the extent that rights accrue to refugees incrementally depending on the legality of their situation in their host country and the duration of their stay.

At Beijing + 25, we have made some progress, but much remains yet to be achieved. While the 2018 Global Compact on Refugees provides important guidelines on inclusive development, share prosperity, and decent work for refugees by means of outlining measures for jobs and livelihoods (Part 2.2), refugee women remain sidelined in these trajectories. According to the Compact, economic growth and decent work for both, host communities and refugees, must remain subject to relevant national laws and policies.

In the case of Muslim refugee women in Europe this means being subjected to national or state-based religious garb policies that limit access to employment. Similarly, under the 2016 Jordan Compact, pre-existing restrictions to labor market access for non-Jordanians carry significant gender dimensions: employment sectors that are open to non-Jordanians include manufacturing, construction and agriculture, while sales, education, hairdressing, and most professional sectors such as medicine and academia etc. remain closed to non-Jordanians.

To ensure that economic justice and rights for refugee women can be achieved, the Center for Migration, Gender, and Justice has five key demands for the international community at Beijing +25.

1. PUT HUMAN RIGHTS AT THE INTERSECTION OF MIGRATION AND GENDER AT THE TOP OF THE AGENDA!

2. PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS OF REFUGEES ON THE MOVE AND IN HOST COUNTRIES!

3. ADVANCE KNOWLEDGE AND EDUCATION ABOUT REFUGEE EXPERIENCES!

4. DENOUNCE ANTI-REFUGEE AND GENDER-BASED HATRED AND VIOLENCE!

5. PROMOTE PARTNERSHIPS WITH REFUGEE COMMUNITIES!