Participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions for migrant women have historically been governed by a complex set of laws and policies across institutional levels (SDG 16). The 1976 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, for instance, provides that contracting states “ensure equal rights of men and women to the enjoyment of all civil and political rights” (Article 3). The Convention does not qualify this right by migration status, rather it holds that “all persons” are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law (Article 26). This non-discriminatory principle applies to protections against discrimination on grounds such as “race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status” (Article 26).

At Beijing +25, we have made some progress, but much remains yet to be achieved. While the 2018 Global Compact for Migration provides important guidelines on participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions for migrant women, it stresses political participation and engagement of migrants in their countries of origin, rather than in host countries (Objective 19). In its provisions for political participation and engagement in countries of origin, the Compact supports the involvement of migrants in peace and reconciliation processes, elections and political reforms, and parliamentary representation.

While governments across the world have declared themselves as “doing” feminist politics (notably Sweden), political representation within these governments often lacks intersectionality. Bracketing nationality and citizenship requirements that limit the possibilities for migrant women to run for office or vote, other forms of political participation and engagement have similarly been marginalized.

To ensure that participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions for migrant women can be achieved, the Center for Migration, Gender, and Justice has identified 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 Migrants on the Move and in Host Countries!
3. Advance Knowledge and Education about Migrant Experiences!
4. Denounce Anti-Migrant and Gender-Based Hatred and Violence!
5. Promote Partnerships with Migrant Communities!