

## **Session 1.5 : Migration, Gender Identities and Empowerment**

*Sponsors: Women and Gender Institute of Miriam College (WAGI-MC), International Gender and Trade Network(IGTN), Isis International Philippines, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Philippines*

*Schedule: 25 September/ 1:00-3:00pm/ Leyte Function Room*

### **Session Abstract**

Migration engenders change as movements of people intensify. National borders have become highly permeable with the liberalized criss-crossing of migrants who are meeting the demands of the global market. Despite the seeming liberalization in the global economy, the migration of peoples for labor or for other purposes remains problematic to many developed countries. Many governments in fact pose very restrictive policies for migrants that constrict, restrict and limit the opportunities for migrants. In many instances migration policies themselves are gendered based on stereotypical constructions of migrants' identities.

Cultural and gender restrictions remain impediments in the adjustment of migrants, converging, in fact, with specific job-skill demands. These imperatives challenge the individual migrant to reconstruct one's identity as a strategy to facilitate entry into the new site of settlement. Identity is socially constructed, and the age of globalization generates a persistent push for change compelling changes in the identity and self in the process of negotiating for rights and citizenship of migrants in a foreign setting that is sometimes restrictive and hostile.. The global environment is discursive, and essentially characterized by change and diversity in all its dimensions. Changing identities is both a source of strategy and empowerment in this divisive environment. This session addresses the dynamics of changing identities as globalized influences persistently prevail.

### **Session Objectives**

1. To critically analyze the different ways in which migrants' identities are socially constructed by migration policies and the media and others;
2. To discuss the migrants creative strategies to negotiate and assert their identities and rights within the context of restrictive migration and immigration policies; and
3. To propose reforms in migration policies that discriminate and disregard migrants' rights to respect of their cultural, national and gender identities.