

Introduction of UN Women's Humanitarian Strategy  
Informal Meeting of UN Women's Executive Board

There is increasing recognition that women's engagement in humanitarian action can reduce the likelihood of crisis, increase the efficiency of the humanitarian response, and accelerate recovery. We know from Bangladesh, that involving women in the identification and design of evacuation routes and shelters can dramatically reduce the number of casualties during a flood. Ensuring that women IDPs and refugees benefit from food aid can increase the nutritional status of the entire target community.

The increased recognition of the importance of women's engagement in humanitarian action is the result of normative developments, including:

- The Sendai Framework;
- The outcomes of the World Humanitarian Summit; and
- Security Council resolution 2242 (2015), which links women's engagement in peace and security, with humanitarian action

However, there is still significant work to be done to translate this recognition into action. Only six of 26 emergency plans prepared in 2015 incorporated a full gender analysis, identifying the types of targeted actions needed to ensure that women will be engaged as leaders and change agents in the humanitarian response. Many critical humanitarian responses for women, such as those relating to gender-based violence, are still not seen as a humanitarian emergency at the same level as shelter or food aid. One out of five women victims of crisis will be the victim of gender-based violence, yet there is very little investment in this area. In South Sudan, the UN published an appeal for USD \$30 million to address gender-based violence, but could mobilize only USD \$800,000. We see that most responses are still not gender-sensitive, and gender-focused initiatives are still not deemed important.

However, UN Women has seen increased demand for support from States and partner organizations to address the gap in humanitarian action, and engender prevention and response and recovery efforts. UN Women's humanitarian programme has increased by 400% in the last four years; from eight countries in 2013, to 31 countries in 2016. 'Women's Engagement in Peace, Security and Humanitarian Action' is the fastest growing and largest area of action of UN Women.

UN Women's three main areas of work on humanitarian action are:

1. Addressing the gender inequality of risk (e.g., women are more likely to die from disaster) by integrating gender in natural disaster prevention and preparedness efforts;
2. Addressing the gender gap in the humanitarian response by integrating gendering in needs-assessments, coordinating many of the gender-related aspects of humanitarian response, and localizing the response by leveraging the huge capacity of women civil society organizations to reach out to those who are most likely to be left behind; and
3. Promoting a durable solution for vulnerable women and girls, by making sure that we bridge the silos of humanitarian response, early recovery, sustainable development and resilience.

We thought it could be useful to provide the Executive Board with a presentation of UN Women's Humanitarian Strategy, including specific presentations on:

1. What it means to address the gender inequality of risk in natural disaster prevention and preparedness efforts;
2. Fostering and promoting durable solution for vulnerable women and girls; and

3. Identifying enabling factors that will allow UN Women and its partners to maximize the organization's development impact; these enabling factors are very much in the hands of the Member States, and our civil society and private sector partners.

These presentations are particularly critical for UN Women, as we are beginning of the process of the formulating our 2018-2021 Strategic Plan. This session will provide us with important recommendations on how we can better ensure that our responses and activities on humanitarian action meet the expectations of the Executive Board.

In closing, I would like to thank several partners. We thank Australia, who has been key partner for us in terms of financial support. I would also like to recognize the government of Japan, and the government of Sweden, who have helped in enabling to UN women to meet with the increased demand in these areas. Thank you to all our partners, thank you to all the civil society organizations that have contributed their expertise and commitment, to our work. Thank you to all the program countries, that have entrusted us with this critical agenda.