

CSW60

Commission on the
Status of Women

14-24 March 2016

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT | SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



CSW 60 Side Events Gender Equality and Women and Girls' Empowerment and the World Humanitarian Summit

UN Women, together with UN OCHA, the Governments of Australia and Mexico, ActionAid and Oxfam International

Thursday, 17th March 2016, 3:00-4:15pm, Conference Room 11

Achieving Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Humanitarian Action through the World Humanitarian Summit



PERMANENT MISSION OF MEXICO
TO THE UNITED NATIONS



act:onaid

PANELISTS COMPOSITION

- Moderator: Yannick Glemarec, ASG and DED, UN Women
- Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, USG and ED, UN Women
- Stephen O'Brien, USG and ERC, OCHA
- Christine Matthews, Deputy Director, UNHCR New York Liaison Office
- Natasha Stott Despoja, Ambassador for Women and Girls, Australia
- Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda, Chair of the International Board, Action Aid
- Kim Henderson, Head of Gender Justice, Oxfam International
- Hibaaq Osman, Founder and CEO of Karama



BACKGROUND: WORLD HUMANITARIAN SUMMIT

The humanitarian system is inconsistent in respecting the rights of all women and girls, recognizing their capacities, and supporting them in leadership roles. While efforts to implement gender equality programming and support women's groups are increasing, significant barriers remain. A lack of funding for such work, especially for local women's organizations, as well as a lack of accountability to implementing the strong existing international normative framework on gender equality and women's empowerment must be overcome for progress to be made.

The first World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) taking place in Istanbul 23-24 May 2016 is the culmination of a multi-year process initiated by the UN Secretary General to improve humanitarian action worldwide. A central message that emerged from the WHS consultations was that humanitarian action cannot be effective unless it delivers equally for all women, men, girls, and boys. Gender inequality in service provision, protection, and decision making can no longer stand.

The WHS consultations affirmed the urgent need for all humanitarian actors to end gender discrimination in protection, including from gender based violence (GBV), and access to services, especially livelihoods and comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care. There was also widespread agreement that mechanisms to significantly increase women's participation and leadership roles in all aspects of humanitarian action are long overdue. The WHS Secretariat's synthesis report on the consultations highlighted all of these points as did the Global Consultation held October 2015 in Geneva.

The Summit presents a unique opportunity for all humanitarian actors, including national, local, and municipal governments, multilateral bodies and UN agencies, NGOs, CSOs, the private sector and others, to all come together to commit to the proposed commitment to make humanitarian action work for women and girls at the high level leaders roundtable on empowering women and girls.

Implementation of the proposed WHS commitments to women and girls would create a multiplier effect, assisting in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goal 5 on gender equality and women's empowerment, and in Security Council Resolution 2242 on Women, Peace and Security, and the Global Review of UN Security Council Resolution 1325. It should also leverage the Call to Action on Protecting Women and Girls in Emergencies, currently led by the government of Sweden, which is catalysing multistakeholder action to ensure that every humanitarian response provides safe and comprehensive services for survivors of GBV from a gender equality perspective. With such a comprehensive framework in place gender equality and women's empowerment in all settings can become a reality.



OBJECTIVE AND FORMAT

This side event will highlight women and girls' rights, resiliency and leadership roles in humanitarian action. Panelists will give examples of the impact of the participation of women of all ages and women's groups in recent humanitarian contexts. They will discuss how to scale good practice, such as the Roadmap for the Call to Action, and overcome current gaps in service delivery, protection, and inclusion of women in all levels of humanitarian decision making. Finally, panelists will address how stakeholders from all sectors and regions of the world can be part of the launch of gender equality and women's empowerment commitment at the World Humanitarian Summit.

The side event will be a roundtable discussion. Panelists will be seated in a u-shaped arrangement to facilitate discussion and create an environment that favors the exchange of ideas. The round table style aims to initiate dialogue among the panelists, to discuss possible commitments to GEWE at the WHS, and to maintain the momentum of humanitarian action during the time leading up to the summit.

The Moderator will make an opening statement about the current state of the international humanitarian system from a gender equality and women's empowerment perspective. S/he will highlight progress made in the Sustainable Development Goals, the Global Review of Women, Peace and Security, and the Sendai Declaration on Disaster Risk Reduction that is complementary and relevant to efforts in humanitarian settings. S/he will note that gender equality and women's empowerment emerged as a key theme in the WHS consultation process with a resulting commitment proposed for Istanbul. Moreover, the moderator will point towards the recently launched SG Report on the WHS and emphasize that the report reinforces commitments towards GEWE. Key points of the report addressing GEWE and GBV are in line with the package of gender commitments that were already outlined in the WHS synthesis report. Gender-based violence (GBV) is a pervasive and life-threatening health, human rights, and protection issue that is exacerbated in emergencies. Yet prevention of, and response to, GBV is not comprehensively addressed and prioritized as part of humanitarian response. Women and girls will continue to be left behind if their voices are not heard, their capabilities not recognized, and their opportunity denied to participate in and to lead decision-making.

Finally, the importance of endorsing and ensuring widespread sign on of the proposed gender equality and women's empowerment commitment at the World Humanitarian Summit will be addressed, including how different stakeholders can become part of the commitment at the Summit.