

Title

Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies: social protection for women and girls in emergencies

Location and Time

Wednesday, 20 March, 1:15-2:30 PM
Conference Room D

Sponsors and Organizers

Canada, the **European Union—European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations** (DG ECHO) and the **International Organization for Migration** (IOM) will co-host this side event, moderated by the **Women’s Refugee Commission** (WRC) and in partnership with **Nigeria** and the **GBV Area of Responsibility** (GBV AoR) led by the **United Nations Population Fund** (UNFPA).

Format

10-minute keynote speech from the EU followed by senior-level technical discussion

Overall Event Objective

In line with this year’s Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) themes – *social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls* – panelists in this event will explore how the *Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies* (Call to Action) is helping to strengthen the protection of women and girls during humanitarian crises.

Humanitarian crises tend to exacerbate pre-existing vulnerabilities due to the breakdown of existing social protection systems, both at State, community and family levels. This environment exposes crises-affected populations, especially women and girls to higher risks of violence, exploitation and abuse, including gender-based violence (GBV). Having access to essential services and resources are factors that can contribute to increase individual resilience. By enabling access to essential support and services like healthcare, livelihoods and shelter, among others, humanitarian actors can prevent and mitigate risks as well as the potential consequences of GBV. Moreover, by supporting these systems from the onset of an emergency, the humanitarian response can lower the burden on national social protection systems and accelerate the response and recovery process. It is in this context that the Call to Action initiative pushes humanitarian responses to integrate GBV risk mitigation and response, and mainstream gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls to prevent GBV, from the onset of an emergency.

This discussion will thus contribute to increasing knowledge and support around efforts currently under way to mitigate and respond to the unique vulnerabilities women and girls may face from the onset of an emergency, reflecting on commitments articulated in the *Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies* (the Call to Action).

Background

In 2013, Sweden and the United Kingdom launched the *Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies*. As a global initiative, the Call to Action strives to galvanize all actors and partners within the humanitarian system to foster accountability and drive systemic change in integrating GBV prevention, mitigation and response throughout humanitarian crisis action. Based in a human rights approach, the Call to Action seeks to develop, implement and ensure the accessibility of services intended to protect against and mitigate the risk of gender-based violence in times of emergency, ultimately pushing for women and girls' safety, dignity, empowerment and equality.

Eighty-two members have joined the Call to Action as of the current day, including a wide range of States/donors, UN agencies, international organizations, and NGOs/CSOs. Through their Membership, these partners seek to fulfill the values and goals enshrined in the Call to Action and report annually on specific commitments they have made to advance progress towards its ends.

Objectives of the Call to Action

The Call to Action is operationalized through the Road Map 2016-2020, which serves as its overarching guiding framework and sets out the three following objectives:

1. Establishing specialized GBV services and programs for any and all persons at risk of or exposed to gender-based violence;
2. Implementing specific actions to mitigate and reduce GBV risk at all stages of humanitarian action;
3. Mainstreaming gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls throughout humanitarian programming and response

To advance these objectives, the Road Map 2016-2020 outlines six concrete measures to be adopted, complimented by a monitoring and evaluation plan to measure progress. These specific outcomes range from integrating GBV prevention and response into needs assessments, analyses and planning processes, to increasing funding for GBV prevention and response and implementing relevant protection services into each phase of humanitarian action, among others.

Panelists will explore their own outcomes selected under the Road Map 2016-2020 to advance efforts to ensure assistance and protection to women and girls from the onset of an emergency. These commitments engage not only the CSW themes, but broader aims established under the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well.

Discussion Objectives

- Update on progress made towards meeting outcomes articulated in the Call to Action Road Map
- Discuss experiences from the field in implementing Call to Action commitments, developing tools and working with national and local partners
- Reflect on the Call to Action initiative as an integral facet of broader United Nations efforts towards promoting the empowerment of women and girls and mainstreaming gender throughout social protection systems and humanitarian programming

Agenda

Featuring a senior-level technical discussion, the panel will discuss various elements of the Call to Action and the impact that the initiative has had on efforts to support social protection systems and ensure women and girls' access to services in emergencies:

- As the lead of the Call to Action from June 2017-December 2018, the EU (Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations– DG ECHO) will provide a global overview of this initiative and accomplishments achieved towards fulfilling established goals
- The GBV Area of Responsibility (GBV AoR) will speak on sectoral Call to Action commitments and efforts to develop minimum standards for GBV programming, improving the quality of and access to GBV prevention and response services for those in need
- The Nigerian Representative will share perspectives and experiences from developing national- and local-level action plans towards operationalizing and implementing Call to Action Country-Level Road Maps
- The International Organization for Migration (IOM) will outline recent organizational commitments such as the new GBV in Crises (GBViC) Framework and the impact of the Call to Action upon IOM's operational capacity and crisis response

Chair and Moderator

- Joan Timoney, Senior Director of Advocacy and External Relations, Women's Refugee Commission

Panel Composition

- Eduardo Fernandez-Zincke, Counsellor, Head of Section Humanitarian Affairs, Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations
- Anetu-Anne Aliu, Director, Women and Gender Affairs; Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, Nigeria
- Jennifer Chase, Coordinator, Gender-based Violence Area of Responsibility
- Tristan Burnett, Head, Preparedness and Response Division, International Organization for Migration

Background Material

Call to Action Road Map 2016-2020:

https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/49545f_a1b7594fd0bc4db283dbf00b2ee86049.pdf

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