

Position on the World Humanitarian Summit

The World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) aims at major structural reforms to better protect and assist people affected by crisis. The Gender and Development Network (GADN), Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS UK), InterAction, and the undersigned member organisations believe that transformative change in the humanitarian system is impossible unless reforms account for gender equality and gender-based violence (GBV).

The WHS process is posing challenging questions over how the humanitarian system can empower local actors, bridge the development and humanitarian divides, innovate, hold emergency response efforts accountable to crisis-affected populations, and strengthen commitment to international humanitarian law. If responses to these important questions fail to address their specific implications for women and girls, then they will be inadequate.

Research and experience have demonstrated how the failure to address the gendered impacts of crises, including GBV, is one of the biggest weaknesses and recurrent gaps in the international and national responses to disasters. More lives will be saved, and recovery and resilience efforts will be strengthened, if we put enhanced attention to women and girls at the heart of WHS-instigated reforms.

All too often, humanitarian leadership fails to hold actors accountable to gender-responsive funding, planning and programming or to prioritize actions that ensure lifesaving GBV services and risk reduction. GBV coordination mechanisms lack capacity, limiting action on the ground and advocacy to mobilise other humanitarian sectors on GBV risk reduction. Women and girls are excluded from humanitarian assessment, design, planning and implementation. All these factors lead to poor and insufficient gender analysis which, in turn, leads to a paramount failure to (i) put in place specialised GBV services, (ii) to ensure risk reduction approaches across all programming to prevent GBV, or (iii) to identify opportunities to support the transformation of gendered power relations in the work of all humanitarian sectors.

We urge all stakeholders involved in the WHS to work with us towards realizing a transformative change in the way the humanitarian community prioritizes, integrates and coordinates gender equality and GBV in emergency response efforts. Towards this end, we call on governments, UN agencies, civil society, private sector and others to take the following WHS pledges:

- 1. Empower women and girls from crisis-affected populations to participate in humanitarian assistance, protection and recovery programmes, as well as in ‘accountability to affected populations’ efforts.** Women and girls often play important roles in humanitarian response as well as post-crisis recovery, yet pre-existing gender inequality prevents their full participation. All stakeholders at the WHS can do more to support their contribution within the WHS focus on ‘accountability to affected populations.’ All stakeholders should commit to ensure deliberate steps are taken to enable inclusive and meaningful participation by women and girls in

emergency assessments and response design, monitoring and evaluation (including disaster risk reduction, resilience, emergency preparedness and response strategies). This requires donors to encourage women's participation from implementing partners and UN agencies, as well as greater investment in capacity building and specialised programmes such as 'safe spaces', in which women and girls are able to organise themselves, voice their views and contribute to decision-making. A continuous analysis must be undertaken to ensure that women and girls are not excluded due to age, ethnicity, disability or other forms of discrimination. Multiple entry-points and strategies are also required to ensure that Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse policies and mechanisms are effective.

2. **Prioritize the engagement of local women's groups in humanitarian action through reforms in humanitarian funding, partnerships, leadership and coordination.** Local women's groups are often amongst the first responders, but their contributions remain inadequately recognised. Major reforms are required in structures like the GBV Area of Responsibility (AoR), the wider cluster coordination system, humanitarian country teams and country-level gender task forces to promote a more inclusive approach and make their leadership visible. For example, WHS stakeholders should pledge to strengthen their partnerships with local women's organisations on humanitarian assistance and protection; including on both policy decision-making and practice.
3. **Strengthen government capacity to address gender equality and GBV in national disaster risk reduction (DRR), resilience, preparedness and response strategies and programmes.** The WHS has a major focus on empowering local and national actors in humanitarian action. To ensure that gender equality and GBV are factored into these efforts, three key elements need to be prioritised. Firstly, priority should be given to building state capacity for gender budgeting and gathering sex-disaggregated data to inform decision-making, monitoring and accountability in DRR, resilience and preparedness and response efforts (as well as other information on age, disability and other exclusion factors which result in discrimination and barriers to assistance and protection). Secondly, national government capacity to deliver GBV prevention and response services should be built; informed by best practices and standards including the new Inter-Agency Standing Committee Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action (IASC GBV Guidelines). Thirdly, national plans on DRR, emergency preparedness and response should ensure women's and girl's meaningful participation in all stages (consultation, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation).
4. **Put minimum standards on gender equality and GBV at the heart of WHS outcomes on humanitarian aid effectiveness and accountability.** The WHS should promote and strengthen three important initiatives in this regard: the new IASC GBV Guidelines provide minimum commitments for reducing risks of GBV through action across all sectors of humanitarian response. At the same time, the IASC 'Gender Marker' – a tool to encourage accountability for gender-related programming through humanitarian funding – is being reformed with a pilot to extend the monitoring of 'gender equality measures' across the full cycle of programming. In addition, the Inter-Agency Working Group on Reproductive Health in Crisis Situations (IAWG) has

released a global study assessing gaps in frontline service provision for reproductive health in emergencies. Recommendations from these initiatives should be integrated into WHS outcomes on humanitarian effectiveness and accountability. All WHS stakeholders should align their efforts in crises with minimum standards on gender equality, GBV and SRH in emergencies.

5. Use the ‘Call to Action on protection from GBV in emergencies’ Roadmap to 2020 and the 15th anniversary review of UNSCR 1325 to guide gender equality and GBV outcomes of the WHS; and include specific references to GBV in WHS outcomes on International Humanitarian Law. Links should be fostered between the WHS, the Call to Action on Protection from GBV in Emergencies and UNSCR 1325. In particular, WHS outcomes and commitments should be guided by the forthcoming Call to Action Roadmap to 2020 and recommendations on the ‘relief and recovery’ pillar of UNSCR 1325 in its 15th anniversary review. In addition, WHS outcomes on International Humanitarian Law and conflict should include specific reference to GBV; reaffirming and building on the commitments made by the Call to Action, the G7, UN Security Council, participants at the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict in 2014, and regional initiatives like the African Union’s efforts on gender mainstreaming and the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICLGR) Kampala Declaration on Sexual and GBV of 2011.

July 31st 2015.



The Gender & Development Network (GADN) brings together expert NGOs, consultants, academics and individuals committed to working on gender, development and women's rights issues. Our vision is of a world where social justice and gender equality prevail and where all women and girls are able to realise their rights free from discrimination. Our goal is to ensure that international development policy and practice promotes gender equality and women's and girls' rights. Our role is to support our members by sharing information and expertise, to undertake and disseminate research, and to provide expert advice and comment on government policies and projects.

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Gender Action for Peace and Security UK (GAPS)

GAPS is the UK's only Women, Peace and Security civil society network. We are an expert membership organisation with 17 members who encompass a range of development, human rights, women's rights, humanitarian and peace-building NGOs.

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InterAction

InterAction is the largest alliance of US-based international NGOs focused on the world's poor and most vulnerable people. The organization maintains an active Gender-Based Violence Working Group within the Humanitarian Policy and Practice Unit of the organization. The Humanitarian Policy & Practice (HPP) team provides leadership and staff support to InterAction members that are active in humanitarian response and advocacy, represents the American NGO community on the global level, and seeks to improve programming in various aspects of humanitarian action.

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