



Women's Refugee Commission Humanitarian Accountability Framework Statement

The Women's Refugee Commission advocates vigorously for laws, policies and programs to improve the lives and protect the rights of refugee and internally displaced women, children and young people, including those seeking asylum—bringing about lasting, measurable change. The Women's Refugee Commission works to ensure that displaced persons are safe, healthy and self-reliant.

As an affiliate of the International Rescue Committee, the Women's Refugee Commission upholds the [Principles of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent \(ICRC\) Movement and NGOs in Disaster Response Programmes](#)¹ (commonly referred to as Code of Conduct). The [Fundamental Principles of the ICRC](#),² set forth in 1965, affirm the importance of the right of all persons to receive and give assistance and state that assistance must be provided impartially, while the Code of Conduct guides NGO standards of behavior. The Women's Refugee Commission also upholds the International Rescue Committee's [Code of Conduct against sexual exploitation and abuse](#)³ as well as InterAction's [Standards for Private Voluntary Organizations](#).⁴

As a member of the [Humanitarian Accountability Partnership](#)⁵ (HAP), founded in 2003 to further ensure the responsible use of humanitarian power and accountability to beneficiaries, the Women's Refugee Commission undertakes its work with a commitment to the HAP Principles of Accountability and HAP Principles for Humanitarian Action. As such, it is committed to:

- respecting and fostering humanitarian standards and the rights of beneficiaries;
- setting standards within a framework of accountability to stakeholders, and building its internal capacity to do this;
- communicating with stakeholders, particularly beneficiaries and staff, about the standards adopted, programs to be undertaken and mechanisms available for addressing concerns;
- ensuring participation of beneficiaries in our research and projects;
- monitoring and reporting on compliance with standards;
- enabling beneficiaries and other stakeholders to report complaints and seek redress safely; and
- supporting the implementation of these principles if and when working through implementing partners.

The Women's Refugee Commission's commitments to the HAP principles are outlined in the Commission's accountability framework and quality management system. The accountability framework consists of the minimum standards the Women's Refugee Commission is committed to, an implementation plan for achieving them and a monitoring plan of how stakeholders can hold us to account for them. The quality management system is a specific set of activities to implement, monitor and continuously improve these established commitments over time.

The Women's Refugee Commission's work is guided and informed by other established international instruments, conventions, conferences, protocols, guidelines and standards, including the SPHERE Project's Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response. We are committed to facilitating age, gender and diversity mainstreaming among displaced populations.

The principles of informed consent and transparency are particularly relevant to the Women's Refugee Commission's field research and advocacy. Because of the special nature of our work, we have developed *Ethical Guidelines for Working with Displaced Populations*. We adhere to these guidelines and to sound research methodologies to gather and share information from beneficiaries. We are also committed to sharing our research findings and recommendations with beneficiaries.

¹ International Federation of Red Cross Red Crescent Societies (1994). [Principles of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent \(ICRC\) Movement and NGOs in Disaster Response Programmes](#). Last accessed November 5, 2009. <http://www.ifrc.org/publicat/conduct/code.asp>

² International Committee of the Red Cross (1979) Fundamental Principles of the ICRC: Commentary. Last accessed November 5, 2009. http://www.icrc.org/Web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/html/EA08067453343B76C1256D2600383BC4?OpenDocument&Style=Custo_Final.3&View=defaultBody

³ International Rescue Committee (2007). Code of Conduct on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crises. Last accessed November 5, 2009. http://www.ineeserver.org/education_structures/IRC.pdf

⁴ InterAction (2007), Private Voluntary Organization (PVO) Standards. Last accessed November 5, 2009. <http://www.interaction.org/document/interactions-pvo-standards>

⁵ See <http://www.hapinternational.org/>