



Concrete Action for Women and Girls Needed at the World Humanitarian Summit

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The Women's Refugee Commission has always been a force for change, calling on the humanitarian community to recognize the importance of providing for the particular needs of women and girls and to recognize the importance of their participation in the design and implementation of humanitarian programming. We are pleased to see the Secretary-General unambiguously recognize that "[w]omen and girls' full and equal participation in civil, political, economic and social spheres and in decision-making at all levels must become the standard to which all actors, including the United Nations, are held accountable in their development and humanitarian programming and funding."

His report to the World Humanitarian Summit, *One Humanity: Shared Responsibility*, is a long-overdue and much-needed admonishment that "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." We believe the Secretary-General's recognition of the challenges faced by women and girls, including those with disabilities, as well as the contributions they can make, is an important part of the work of the Summit.

We urge governments, international and nongovernmental organizations, the private sector, and civil society attending the summit to consider serious commitments to the initiatives outlined in the Agenda for Humanity that strive to empower women and girls and promote their equal participation in society.

The Women's Refugee Commission **encourages participants to use the Summit as an opportunity to become partners in the *Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies***, and join the comprehensive initiative of diverse organizations to address and prioritize gender-based violence as part of every humanitarian response. The Summit is an ideal time to make commitments toward the *Call to Action* five-year Road Map.

Recognizing that gender discrimination in nationality laws is a significant driver of statelessness, which exacerbates the vulnerability of women and their families, the Women's Refugee Commission **encourages participants to come to the WHS with a commitment to the Summit's call for an end to statelessness by 2030** via support for the Global Campaign for Equal Nationality Rights.

The Women's Refugee Commission **supports the WHS's recognition of the importance of the principle of *non-refoulement*** and encourages States, including the United States, to reaffirm the values that drove them to become signatories of the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol. This is especially important as donor countries struggle with their responses to massive influxes of refugees from Central America in the Western Hemisphere and from Syria and other countries in Europe.

The Agenda for Humanity call on actors to address the needs and capacities of persons with disabilities, ensuring that they are no longer “left behind” in humanitarian action. The Women’s Refugee Commission **urges participants to commit to the development of globally endorsed standards and guidelines on disability inclusion in humanitarian action**, which will in turn strengthen the meaningful participation of and leadership from persons with disabilities in humanitarian settings.

The Women’s Refugee Commission applauds the Agenda for Humanity for the recognition that livelihoods interventions can be empowering for women and girls and their communities. We know that livelihoods programming can cause harm when it does not account for the risks of gender-based violence faced by women and girls as they take on non-traditional roles. We **encourage participants to develop livelihoods programming that mainstreams gender and protection in order to prevent and mitigate risks and engender self-reliance**.

The Agenda for Humanity appropriately supports the need for comprehensive reproductive health services, including those that respond to gender-based violence. The Women’s Refugee Commission also **encourages full support for the priority life-saving activities in the standard of care known as the Minimal Initial Services Package (MISP) at the onset of every emergency and safe abortion care services where legal for all displaced women and girls**.

As co-lead with UNHCR of the Global Refugee Youth Consultations — the first ever series of consultations with refugee and displaced youth taking place across the world in 2015-2016 — the Women’s Refugee Commission appreciates the special attention the Secretary-General gives to the participation and leadership of young people in national, local, and international humanitarian and development programs and processes. We **encourage participants to better understand the needs and desires of refugee and displaced youth, to strengthen youth programming and to provide opportunities for them to emerge as leaders**.

The Women’s Refugee Commission is steadfastly focused on improving the lives and protecting the rights of refugee women, children and youth and we are heartened to see real commitment to humanitarian programming that reflects our priorities. For more than two decades we have identified the gaps in the provision of sexual and reproductive health, in the prevention and response to gender-based violence and in programming to promote the economic and social empowerment of refugee women and girls. We believe the Secretary-General’s promotion of these goals with the World Humanitarian Summit will provide the impetus for real and lasting change.